Punishment is Purple: The Political Economy of Prison Building[1]

John M. Eason
Brown University
Urban Institute

Mary E. Campbell
Benjamin Ghasemi
Eileen Huey
Texas A&M University

ABSTRACT: The United States is unique among rich countries in the world in its level of contemporary mass incarceration, a massive social change that has reshaped the nature of inequality and social mobility. We have more than tripled the number of prison facilities since 1970. Despite employing nearly 450,000 corrections officers, occupying a land mass of roughly 600 square miles, and costing conservatively $30 billion to build, this massive public works project has transformed the American countryside virtually unnoticed, with nearly 70 percent of U.S. facilities being built in rural communities. We suggest that mass incarceration—more than 2 million locked up annually—was not possible without the transformation of the American countryside through the prison boom—the increase from roughly 500 to nearly 1700 carceral facilities. There is a longstanding belief that the rural town leaders and politicians responsible for the prison boom are almost exclusively white, male, Republicans. We explore the political, social, and economic influences of prison building across states, regions, and cities/towns. Using multilevel modeling, we find that racial and economic disadvantage predicts prison building in towns, and party affiliation of state legislatures predicts prison building across different periods of the prison boom. While others find a link between Republican Party strength in state legislatures and mass incarceration, our findings suggest that prison building, like other types of punishment, result from bipartisan political support for the state's ability to punish. We conclude by advancing an expanded theoretical approach to the prison boom.

[1] We would like to acknowledge the Caitlin Bourbeau and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Applied Population Lab for producing the maps and Luna Chandna of Texas A&M University for producing the graphs. Please direct correspondence to John Eason Watson Family University Associate Professor of Sociology and International and Public Affairs, 111 Thayer Street, Brown University, Box 1970, Providence, RI USA 02912-1970 john_eason@brown.edu.

Introduction

The United States is unique among developed countries as the world leader in contemporary mass incarceration, a massive social change reshaping the nature of inequality. More than half of Americans have a family member or know someone in prison (Enns et al 2018). This unprecedented level of incarceration is underpinned by the tripling of prison facilities since 1970. Despite employing nearly 450,000 corrections officers, occupying 600 square miles, and costing conservatively $30 billion to build, this massive public works project has transformed the American countryside virtually unnoticed, with nearly 70 percent of facilities being built in rural communities (Eason 2010; Eason 2017). *Mass incarceration*—the annual imprisonment of more than 2 million Americans—was not possible without the *prison boom*—the increase from roughly 500 to nearly 1700 prison facilities between 1970-2010. We created strong incentives to lock up many more Americans, in part by more than tripling the number of prison facilities.

Scholars rarely consider where and why prisons are built, how these places are changed by a prison, and the impact of prison closures. In this inquiry, we investigate the political, social, and economic influences of prison building across states, regions, and cities/towns. Specifically, we explore two interrelated empirical questions: 1.) What are the local community predictors of placement during the prison boom? 2.) What are the state-level predictors of building across the prison boom? Despite Murakawa (2014) suggesting that federal crime legislation during the rise of mass incarceration resulted from bipartisan efforts, scholars rarely consider the role state politics in expanding the carceral state (Barker 2006; Jacobs and Carmichael 2001; Lynch 2009; Schoenfeld 2018; Western 2006). Using multilevel modeling, we find racial and economic disadvantage predicts prison building in towns across the prison boom. We also find Democratic party affiliation of state legislatures predicts prison building across the prison boom. These

findings, combined with existing findings on the impact of Republican party affiliation on increasing imprisonment, suggests prison building, like other instruments of the carceral state, results from bipartisan political efforts. In other words, punishment is not just Republican (red) or Democratic (blue), it is purple.

There are multiple interrelated theoretical implications of the *prison boom*. First, we propose a perspective to deepen our understanding of the New Iron Cage, where justifications for prison building have been replaced "with the system taking on a life of its own, giving rise to adaptive behavior serving secondary interests" (Garland 1990). The most insidious form of the new iron cage is the penal-industrial complex—the set of interconnected institutions that create and sustain prison building. We provide a new view of these secondary interests focusing on rural communities. Second, we develop theories for better understanding the political economy of rural communities and their role in the carceral state. Our findings provide strong support of the rise of the rural ghetto causing the prison boom (Eason 2010; 2017). We also suggest recentering how we understand the prison boom from the almost exclusively Marxian approach to a Weberian perspective. This expanded perspective allows us to consider the prison from the standpoint of communities most impacted by the rapid expansion of this peculiar institution—rural, southern, communities of color—a.k.a. the rural ghetto (Eason 2010; Eason 2012; Eason 2017). Most prisons are built in racially heterogenous rural communities, which are more likely to have conflicts between Black middlemen and white elites. From here, we operationalize and build a theory of carceral capacity, "the physical and capital resources that a society dedicates to punishment" (Schoenfeld 2018, p. 19). Highlighting this and the fact that more than 85% of US prisons are public (Eason 2017; Eisen 2019), we argue the prison boom was a Democratically-led massive public works project that serves as an intervention for disadvantaged rural

communities—especially rural communities of color.

Past conceptions of mass incarceration generically rest on a uniform trend of imprisonment, when both quantitative (Eason 2010; Eason 2017b) and ethnographic (Eason 2017a) data demonstrate that the building of what we call the penal-industrial complex rests upon rural inequalities, institutions, and cultures. Specifically, the rise of the rural ghetto ripened the conditions for prison proliferation, and made mass incarceration possible. We see that the penal complex today continues to be sustained despite considerable rising protest and policy focused on abolishing police and the prison. We conclude by briefly touching on the broad policy implications of this study, specifically for those wanting to understand the impact of prison openings and closures on poor rural communities and their infrastructure. To this end, we focus on the centrality of rural spaces. Their precarity is critical to understanding the past and future of the penal complex.

Theoretical Framing: Politics and Place in Prison Building

In Michel Foucault's classic work, *Discipline and Punishment*, he establishes the carceral society as a cultural form of surveillance that metastasizes from the prison into all aspects of life. State politics are an essential element for increased rates of imprisonment (Gilmore 2006; Gottschalk 2014; Lynch 2009, 2010, 2011; Barker 2006, 2009; Schoenfeld 2018). While the carceral state can be understood as the politics of *supervision,* a bourgeoning area of scholarship related to the carceral state investigates how, why, and *where* we house bodies once people are processed into the criminal justice system.

In her seminal work on prison building, "Golden Gulags," Ruthie Gilmore posits that prison building is a process resulting in increased incarceration. This increased carceral capacity

includes all "resources dedicated to detecting, apprehending, processing, and punish[ing] people deemed criminal" (Schoenfeld 2018, p. 19). The thrust of Gilmore's argument is that the prison building boom in California resulted from surplus state financial capital, surplus rural land, and a relative surplus of undesirable populations consisting primarily of the chronically unemployed. The confluence of surplus capital, land, and labor is activated by crisis. De Giorgi (2007) frames this crisis as a post-Fordist system of production. According to Gilmore, "crises are spatially and sectorally uneven, leading to different outcomes for different kinds of people in different places" (Gilmore 2007, p. 55). She employs a Keynesian economic approach in analyzing political forces that drive prison expansion within California. Although most prison building occurs in southern states (Eason 2010) that often lack surplus state financial capital, Gilmore's model is important to test in this region because of the comparatively vast surplus of land and population. Gilmore concludes that, at best, prisons are a mixed blessing for a local community, and at worst, they are harmful for the towns where they are built (Gilmore 2007, p. 180). This assertion is based in a scholar-activist framing informed by a neoliberal approach to prison abolition.

In *Big House on the Prairie*, Eason (2017) offers a different approach to decarceration and prison abolition. Both Eason and Gilmore grapple with how the "prison-fix" is framed as a panacea for troubled communities and the complicated discursive connection between the political economy of rural and urban communities. By highlighting the prison-building process from the point of view of communities where most prisons are built—rural, southern communities with high proportions of African-Americans—Eason (2017) shows how meaning is attached to prisons in racially segregated, economically depressed rural areas and the local winners and losers in prison building across and within local towns. He conceptualizes *prison building* as the opening/construction of a prison within a municipality.

To explore why the US built more than 1,100 prisons in 35 years, he uses an ethnographic case study selected from a national analysis of the population of US prison towns across region, state, county, municipality, rurality, and period (Eason 2010; Eason 2017). Eason (2017) argues prison building—and therefore increase carceral capacity—results from locales' need to manage their stigmatized reputation. Stigma results from disinvestment, causing the rise of the rural ghetto. The current investigation builds from these foundational pieces by examining political and social factors that shape the expansion of carceral capacity. We operationalize carceral capacity by measuring prison building over time and place. Then, given the blurred lines between academic and activist work on prisons, implicitly or explicitly, the scholars view the three pillars of the so-called "*Prison Industrial Complex"* (*PIC*) as (Schlosser 1998):

1. Private companies seeking profits by serving or operating prisons.
2. Politicians exploiting crime legislation to secure votes.
3. Rural town leaders using prisons for economic development.

However, within the *PIC* framework, there is a longstanding belief that the rural town leaders and politicians are almost exclusively white, male, and Republicans. This assumption is built on the fiction that only white supremacists could engage in such extreme exploitation. Scholars investigating the role of state politics in punishment typically measure Republican Party strength across state legislatures as key predictor of mass *imprisonment* (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001; Western 2006). While this is a fundamental measure for mass imprisonment, there has not been an empirical investigation testing whether party strength across state legislatures predicts a state's *prison building*. This is highly salient because while the literature demonstrates that Republicans fill prisons (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001; Western 2006), this current investigation interrogates the role of party affiliation across the prison boom.

Building from earlier scholarship (Barker 2006, 2009; Gottschalk 2014; Lynch 2009, 2010, 2011) demonstrating the efficacy of states and support for increased punishment across party affiliation, empirical studies do not always show that conservative Republicans increase mass imprisonment. In fact, Schoenfeld (2018) demonstrates that party affiliation matters but in a very counterintuitive manner by arguing "that the national conversation on 'law and order' reflected state politicians' confrontations with literal and rhetorical fights over civil rights." Simply put, politics and racism are at the center of the expansion of mass imprisonment, and quite separately these social forces also play a significant role in prison construction. The federal policy response in turn accelerated state reformers' ongoing efforts to modernize and thereby rid the state from vestiges of its racial past.

Within states, why do we build prisons in the specific towns we do? To measure the local predictors of building during the prison boom, we focus on *prison placement*—the process associated with the political-economy of prison building within a municipality, with particular attention to the role of civic leaders and local political elite. We measure disadvantage, racial composition, population size, and prior prison building to predict building at the US Census place-level. We conceptualize *prison placement* as part of a two-part process also involving *prison siting*—emphasizing the role of state and federal agencies in selecting municipalities for prison building. This segment of the process can be significantly influenced by the party politics in the state. Gilmore makes a sound theoretical argument that the three primary drivers of prison building at the state level are surplus land, labor, and capital (2007). We test the empirical salience of each by measuring each of these variables for each state in each year. Because prior studies (Eason 2010; 2017) suggest inequality predicts prison building at the place level, we also control for income inequality at the state level by including the Gini index. Thus, *placement* is

the local community *pull* while *siting* is the external political *push* for prison building. To disentangle these complex processes, we assembled a unique set of data for all Census-defined places in the United States between 1984-2004.

Data and Methods

Data for this project were obtained from several sources. First, the *2010 Directory of Adult and Juvenile Correctional Departments, Institutions, Agencies, and Probation and Parole Authorities* (American Correctional Association 2010; hereafter, the ACA directory) include data on the latitude and longitude, U.S. census place, name, and year of construction for the more than 1600 correctional institutions in the United States and its territories run by state, federal, and Native American governments, as well as private contractors. The directory includes both the street and mailing addresses, as well as additional data on the facility's opening date, capacity, security level, average daily population, gender and age of population, number of full-time and part-time staff, cost of care per day, and so on.

Trained coders reviewed the entries from the ACA directory, correcting errors, eliminating duplicates, and locating missing data (for example, if the only address listed for the facility was a post office box or the state department of corrections office rather than a physical location for the facility). Coders contacted the state department of correction or the individual facilities in order to locate this missing information. The first author and the coders also used ICPSR data and Google Maps satellite views to determine accurate coordinates for facilities and confirm street addresses when available. The location information was verified for each separate facility first by coders, then by the first author, and then finally again by a new coder.

These data were merged with Geolytics' decennial U.S. Census demographic and

economic data using GIS software. The resulting dataset contains a record for every U.S. census place from 1970-2000, normalized to 2000 decennial boundaries (N=25,150). The 1,663 prisons found in the 50 states are each linked to a census place. Finally, these data were merged with data on state-level economic, political, and public policy data maintained by the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research (UKCPR). These data include annual economic indicators like unemployment and poverty rates, annual political data such as the party affiliation of the governor and legislature, and annual demographic data for every state from 1980-2019.

Our completed dataset includes a record for every place-year from 1984 to 2004, creating a hierarchical dataset with annual records nested within states. We use variables measured at the state- and place-level to predict whether a prison is built in each place in each year. Because no facility is ever built in a day, all independent variables are measured with a 3-year lag; that is, we are testing whether the characteristics of a place in year x predict a prison being built in year x+3. We use mixed-effects logit regression to model this hierarchical data. Some variables, such as the state unemployment rate and the political control of the legislature, are measured in each year. For those measured only once a decade (such as the percent of the place that is Black), we linearly interpolate between Census years (so, for example, the value for 1985 is halfway between the values for 1980 and 1990). If linear interpolation resulted in an impossible number (e.g., less than 0 or more than 100 percent Black), we truncated the values.

Key Variables

The dependent variable is the building of a prison facility (1=corrections facility built in that place-year). Some places have more than one facility, so this variable is 0 in all years for some places, 1 just once for some places, and 1 in multiple years for other places.

Prison Siting Variables (State-level)

We use the *Gini index* as our state-level measure of inequality. Our measure of state politics is *Democratic strength,* modeled on a measure used by others (e.g. Jacobs and Carmichael 2001, Beckett and Western 2001, Campbell, Vogel and Williams 2015). This measure is the interaction of two variables: (1) a dummy variable where 1=Democratic governor in that year and 0=not Democratic governor; and (2) percentage of Democrats in the state legislature. Multiplying these two variables together means in place-years where a Democrat was the governor, the variable measures how much support that governor has from his or her party, and in years where a Republican or Independent is governor, the Democratic strength is 0. Thus, this variable measures the power the state Democratic party has in that year to pass and sign legislation without opposition. We measure surplus land with the *log of state prisons per capita* and the *population density* of the state (average population per square mile). Surplus labor is captured annually with the *state unemployment rate*. Surplus capital is captured with the natural log of the *state gross product* and the natural log of *per capita personal income* in the state.

Prison Placement Variables (Place-level)

At the place level, we include demographic measures drawn from the decennial Census: the *percent who are non-Latinx Black*, the *percent who are Latinx,* and the *percent who are foreign born*. To measure the overall level of economic deprivation in the place, we created a *disadvantage index,* a standardized index (with a mean of 0) combining five factors measuring the disadvantage of the Census place: the poverty rate, the unemployment rate, the percent of workers over the age of 25 who have graduated from high school, the median home value, and

the median household income. We also include a dummy variable measuring whether the place already *has a prison facility* in it, built before that place-year. We also include the natural log of the *population of the place* (plus one, because a few Census places have zero population).

Modeling Strategy

We test multilevel models that (1) combine all places in the United States, (2) separate the places by region (Southern versus non-Southern, because the majority of prison building occurs in the South) to allow the effects of these independent variables to vary across region, (3) separate the place by metropolitan places versus non-metropolitan places (using Rural Urban Classification Codes), and (4) combine all of the above. All models account for the nested structure of the data and use listwise deletion for missing data. For this research note we will use graphs to discuss the predicted probabilities generated from these models.

Results

Descriptive statistics

As Table 1 shows, prison building was most common in the non-metro South. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the pattern of the prison building before and after 1970, showing the number of new carceral facilities dwarfs the number existing before the prison building boom. New facilities are especially concentrated in the eastern half of the United States (with an explosion of building in states like Texas).

Table 2 includes descriptive statistics for each place-year in the sample, with state-level and place-level independent variables. This table shows local and state conditions varied widely over this time period. For example, state unemployment rates ranged from 2.3 percent to more

than 17 percent, and the places varied from zero percent Black (or Latinx or foreign-born) to 100 percent. Population density ranges from very few residents per square mile (Alaska) to more than 1,000 (Rhode Island).

Analytic results: Prison siting (state-level predictors)

Figures 3 and 4 include prediction plots for prison openings from multilevel regression models for all US Census Places as well as all Southern and non-metro Places from 1984-2004. At the state level, there are no predictors consistently related to the probability of building a prison in that place-year across all models. There is considerable variation in these relationships across different regions. Party affiliation, as measured by Democratic strength, has a complex relationship with prison siting. When looking at all places, an initial negative relationship quickly becomes a position relationship, but for Southern and nonmetro places, a flat initial relationship becomes positive, except for the places with the most Democratic representation, where the association again becomes negative. State-level income inequality, as measured by the Gini index, consistently has a curvilinear relationship, with the greatest probability of prison siting for places with a middling level of inequality. Relationships with surplus capital diverge. We see that *per capita personal income* is positively related to prison opening across all, Southern, and rural places. However, *gross state product* has a curvilinear relationship with prison opening. When *gross state product* is high, then places are less likely to build.

Analytic results: Prison placement (place-level predictors)

The most consistent positive predictors of building a new prison facility in the place-year across all models are (1) having a prior prison in the place and (2) the log of the place's population.

However, as population density increases across all, Southern, and non-metro communities the likelihood of opening a prison is diminished. Disadvantage and population density are almost as consistent except for rural communities. While the relationship between disadvantage across all and Southern communities is curvilinear, increases in disadvantage in rural communities is a strong predictor of prison building. This curvilinear pattern holds across the racial composition of places as well. Foreign-born populations have a strong, negative relationship, especially in rural communities. All told, the patterns for disadvantage and racial composition support theory based on an ethnographic case study that the rise of the rural ghetto caused the prison boom (Eason 2017).

The Penal-Industrial Complex: Towards a Political Economy of Prison Building

Prison towns are quite different than the average rural town without a prison. Our findings affirm prior studies that find prison towns have higher total populations and population density, poverty rates, and proportions of African American and Latinx residents in comparison to the average rural town (Eason 2010; Eason 2017; Eason 2017b). These factors are critical to understanding the various and contradictory ways prisons impact communities. Many believe prison building results from politicians reacting to urban racial/economic inequality, but we demonstrate how prison *placement* results from community-level racial and economic stratification across rural spaces. Our findings also suggest region, rurality, Democratic party affiliation of state legislatures, and racial/economic inequality are key factors driving prison siting by states. Past research shows us that Republicans filled prisons (Jacobs and Carmichael 2001; Western 2006); now we have clear evidence that Democrats built them. These findings have theoretical and policy implications worthy of future exploration.

In an early piece on the geography of prison building, Lawrence and Travis (2004) boldly assert prisons have forever altered the physical, social, economic, and political landscape of rural America. The literature on mass imprisonment has since expanded across multiple disciplines and is now considered as a foundational form of stratification and inequality in social science. By comparison, we are only beginning to empirically explore the political economy of the prison boom across regions, states, and towns. For poor, rural communities of color, the boom has altered the purpose and the psychological effects of the prison. These communities find deep meaning in prison beyond just jobs—the prison offers a way to rebuild their town's spoiled reputation (Eason 2017). Thus, in this particular policy moment, we urgently need research on what happens when correctional facilities are shuttered. Specifically, how can we anticipate and mitigate any negative economic fallout? What can we learn from efforts to repurpose prisons not just for job creation, but to rebuild community health and wellness centers in rural communities? These are just a few examples of the pressing policy concerns that can be best informed by a clear-eyed theoretically- and empirically-informed perspective.

The shifting purpose of the prison must be incorporated not only in policies aimed at prison abolition, but also emergent theories of punishment. DeGiorgio (2017) urges us to rethink the political economy of punishment. Simes (2021) advances how we understand the political economy of smaller municipalities by highlighting the importance of place in punishment. We use these calls to account for the multiple, conflicting motives in prison building, to reconsider the dominant narrative of the so-called "*Prison Industrial Complex"* (*PIC*). Our findings suggest that the traditional Marxian framing of prison proliferation should be tempered by a Weberian rearticulation of a Penal-Industrial Complex. In fact, the findings here go beyond suggesting a lacuna for pillars of the so-called "*Prison Industrial Complex,"* If we consider the small role

private interests played in the prison boom (as the vast majority of prisons are public), and the inconsistent role of surplus land, labor, and capital, the empirical support for the so-called "*PIC"* is lacking. Therefore, one could suggest we jettison this framework all together for better explanations of the prison boom. By broadening our theoretical perspective, we incorporate the empirical reality of prison building beyond the racial exploitation and profit-making perspectives. This allows us to see the prison boom for what it is—a Democratically-led massive public works project that served as an intervention for disadvantaged rural communities of color.

While the difference between the *PIC* and the Penal-Industrial Complex may appear only nominal, the key difference lies in the primary functions—adaptive behavior serving secondary interests rather than increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need. Profit-making undoubtedly serves secondary interests, but not all adaptive behaviors of prisons are motivated by profit. This reframing allows inquiry into the bureaucratic function of punishment. When we consider the penal industrial complex as the economic, social, and political institutions of the prison boom, we can better understand the multiple purposes of prison building, including profit, bureaucratic functions, and the local culture of markets for complex institutions. This perspective allows us to better incorporate the precarity that many rural communities of color suffer. Given that findings from this paper support the claim that the rise of the rural ghetto facilitated the prison boom (Eason 2017), using the Penal-Industrial Complex allows us to fine-tune our focus on the precarity of rural communities.

When scholars use the term precarity, they are typically using a neo-liberal understanding of this term that focuses on people's tenuous connection to the labor market. Waverly Duck (2015) expands how think about precarity by concentrating on how his participants live, and not just their labor. Duck details how his interviewees are, "at best, employed only intermittently,

and their entire existence, not just their income, is insecure" (Preface, page X). He also goes on to refer to this group as members of the so-called "underclass"—Black folks suffering the dual sting of concentrated disadvantage and residential segregation. Beyond having tenuous labor, he is clearly arguing that entire existence of Black folks in America is insecure.

While imagery and understandings of the so-called "underclass" is affixed to northern, urban cities like Chicago, he reimagined how the intersections of racism and extreme poverty are shaped and shape places in *Extending the Hyperghetto* (2012) by arguing that the massive expansion of the criminal legal system has reorganized space across rural communities through the prison boom and hyper-incarceration. Like Duck, we preface the intersection of disadvantage and racism (not just race or poverty) in creating precarious living in the shadow of the rural hyperghetto as part of the prison town.

Future studies should use the empirical findings and theoretical pathways here as signposts for future inquiry into the prison boom and bust.

Works Cited

Barker, Vanessa. 2006. “The Politics of Punishing: Building a State Governance Theory of American Imprisonment Variation.” Punishment and Society 8 (1): 5–32.

Barker, Vanessa. 2009. *The Politics of Imprisonment: How the Democratic Process Shapes the Way America Punishes Offenders*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Beckett, Katherine and Bruce Western. 2001. “Governing Social Marginality: Welfare, Incarceration, and the Transformation of State Policy.” *Punishment & Society , 3(1), pp.43-59.*

Campbell, Michael C., Matt Vogel, and Joshua Williams. 2015. “Historical Contingencies and the Evolvig Importance of Race, Violent Crime, and Region in Explaining Mass Incarceration in the United States.” *Criminology*, *53*(2), pp.180-203.

Campbell, Michael C., and Heather Schoenfeld. 2013. "The transformation of America’s penal order: A historicized political sociology of punishment." American Journal of Sociology 118, no. 5: 1375-1423.

De Giorgi, Alessandro. "The criminalisation of international migrations: towards an actuarial model of control?." *Re-Thinking the Political Economy of Punishment*. Routledge, 2017. 125-152.

Duck, Waverly. 2015. *No way out: Precarious living in the shadow of poverty and drug dealing.* University of Chicago Press.

Eason, John. 2010. “Mapping Prison Proliferation: Region, Rurality, Race and Disadvantage in Prison Placement.” *Social Science Research* 39(6):1015–28.

Eason, John M. 2016. “Reclaiming the Prison Boom: Considering Prison Proliferation in the Era of Mass Imprisonment.” *Sociology Compass* 10(4):261–71.

Eason, John M. 2017a. *Big house on the prairie: Rise of the rural ghetto and prison proliferation*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Eason, John M. 2017b. “Prisons as panacea or pariah? The countervailing consequences of the prison boom on the political economy of rural towns.” *Sociology* 6 (1): 1–23.

Eisen, Lauren-Brooke. 2017. *Inside private prisons: An American dilemma in the age of mass incarceration*. Columbia University Press.

Enns, Peter K., Youngmin Yi, Megan Comfort, Alyssa W. Goldman, Hedwig Lee, Christopher Muller, Sara Wakefield, Emily A. Wang, and Christopher Wildeman. "What percentage of Americans have ever had a family member incarcerated?: Evidence from the family history of incarceration survey (FamHIS)." *Socius* 5 (2019): 237802311982933

Garland, David. 1990. *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. *Golden Gulag: Prison, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gottschalk, Marie. 2006. *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2014. "Democracy and the Carceral State in America." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 651 (1): 288–95.

Jacobs, David, and Jason T. Carmichael. 2001. "The Politics of Punishment across Time and Space: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis of Imprisonment Rates." *Social Forces* 80(1):61–89.

Jacobs, David, and Jason T. Carmichael. "The Political Sociology of the Death Penalty: A Pooled Time-Series Analysis." *American Sociological Review* 67 (2002): 109–31.

Jacobs, David, and Richard Kleban. "Political Institutions, Minorities, and Punishment: A Pooled Cross-National Analysis of Imprisonment Rates." *Social Forces* 82 (2003): 725–55.

Lawrence, Sarah, and Jeremy Travis. 2004. *The New Landscape of Imprisonment: Mapping America's Prison Expansion*. Urban Institute report downloaded on November 1, 2007, from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410994_mapping_prisons.pdf.
Western, Bruce. 2006. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage.
Hawkins, Darnell F. "Beyond anomalies: Rethinking the conflict perspective on race and criminal punishment." *Social Forces* 65 (1987): 719–45.

Hawkins, Darnell F., and Kenneth A. Hardy. "Black-white imprisonment rates: A state-by-state analysis." *Social Justice* 16 (1989): 75–94.

Lynch, Mona. 2009. "Punishment, Purpose, and Place: A Case Study of Arizona's Prison Siting Decisions." *Studies in Law, Politics, and Society* 50: 105–37.

———. 2010. *Sunbelt Justice: Arizona and the Transformation of American Punishment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

———. 2011. "Mass Incarceration, Legal Change, and Locale." *Criminology and Public Policy* 10 (3): 673–98.

Murakawa, Naomi. 2014. *The first civil right: How liberals built prison America*. Oxford University Press.

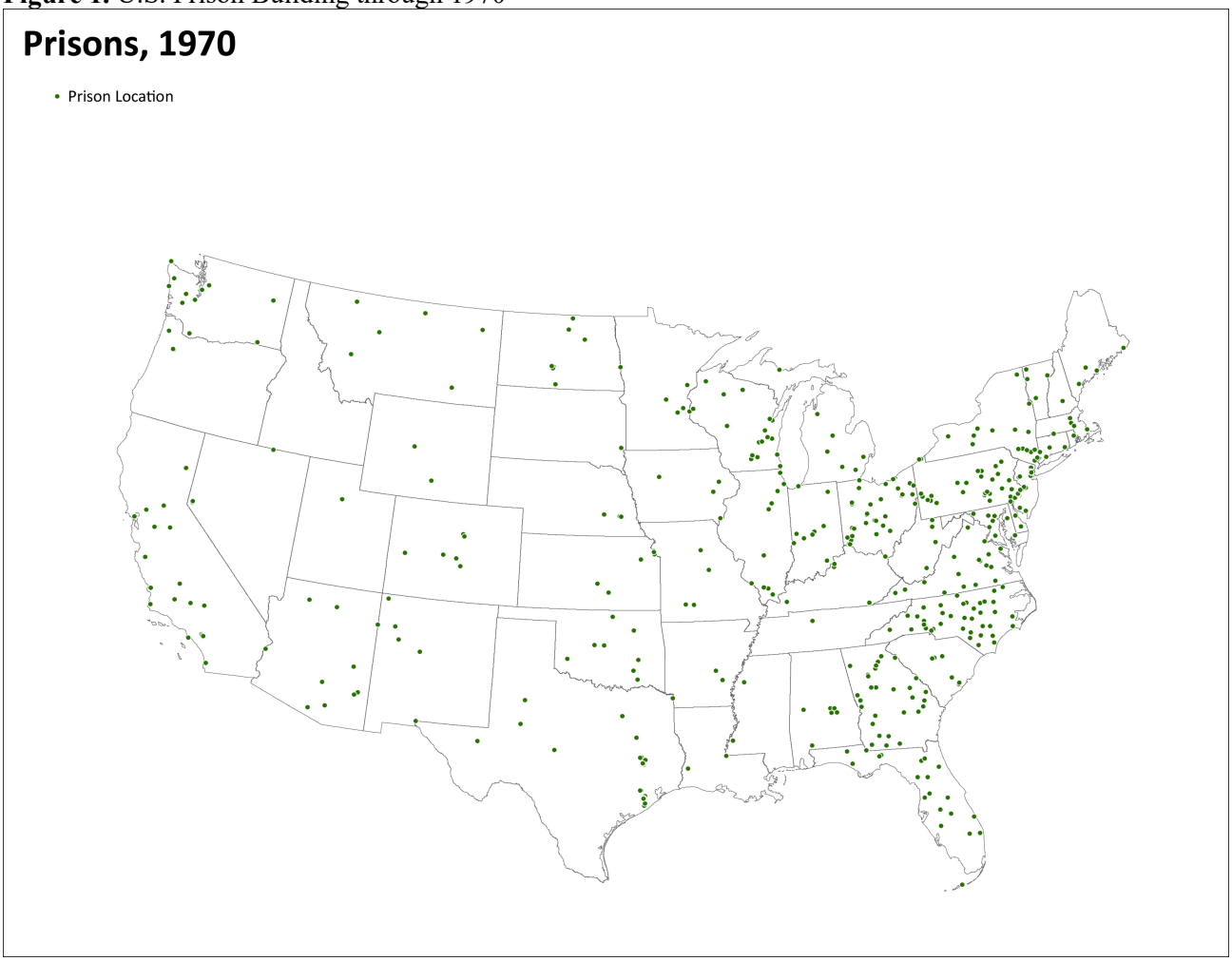
Prison Proliferation Project. John M. Eason.

Schoenfeld, Heather. *Building the prison state: Race and the politics of mass incarceration*. University of Chicago Press, 2018.

Schlosser, Eric. 1998. “The Prison-Industrial Complex.” *Atlantic* 282 (6): 51.

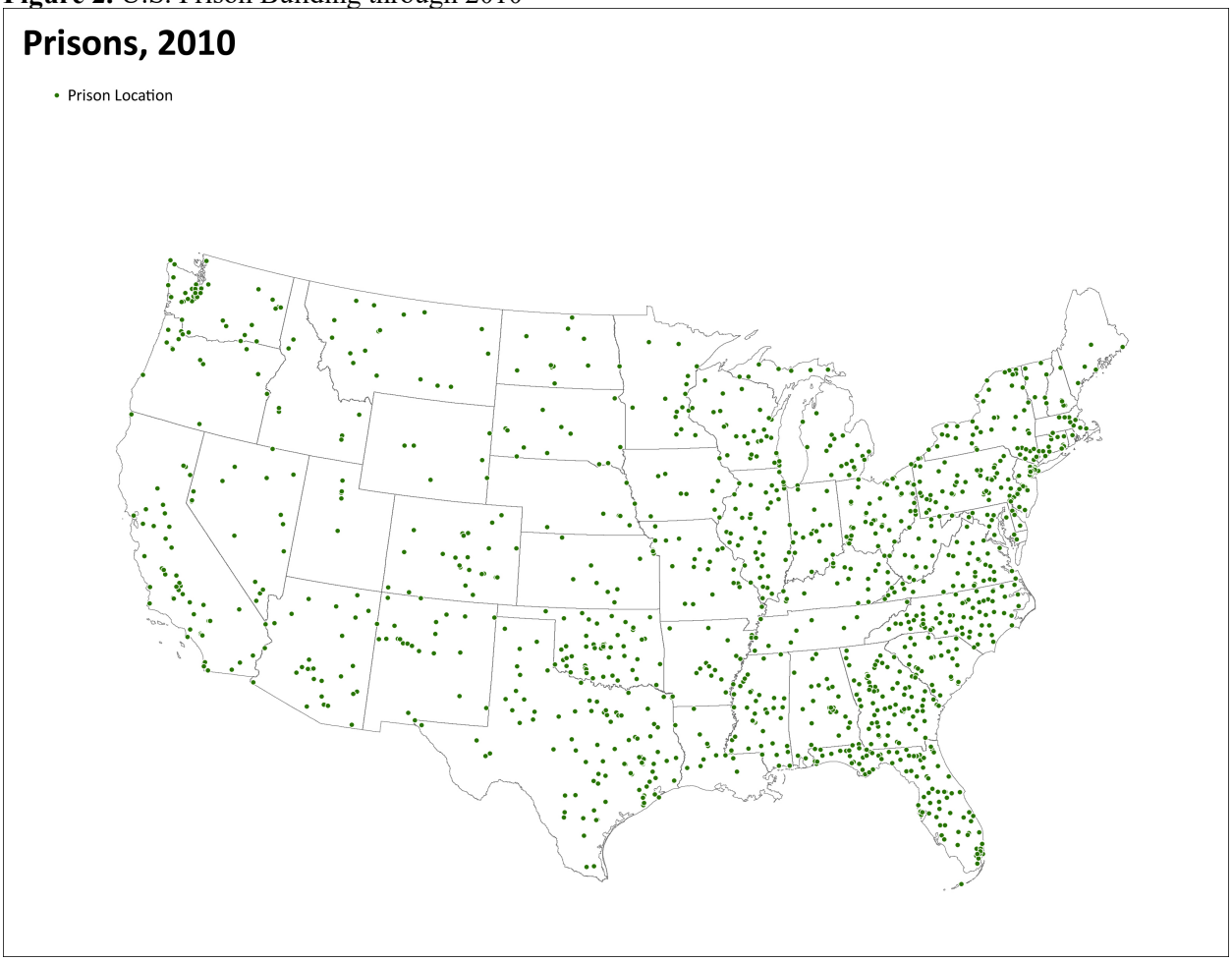
Simes, Jessica T. 2021. *Punishing Places: The Geography of Mass Imprisonment*. Univ of California Press.

Figure 1. U.S. Prison Building through 1970



Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***

Figure 2. U.S. Prison Building through 2010



Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***

Table 1. Prisons built from 1984 to 2004, by Region and Metropolitan status

Time period	Southern		Non-Southern		
	Metro	Nonmetro	Metro	Nonmetro	*Total*
1984-92	55	114	106	99	*374*
1993-04	85	147	112	103	*447*
Total	*140*	*261*	*218*	*202*	

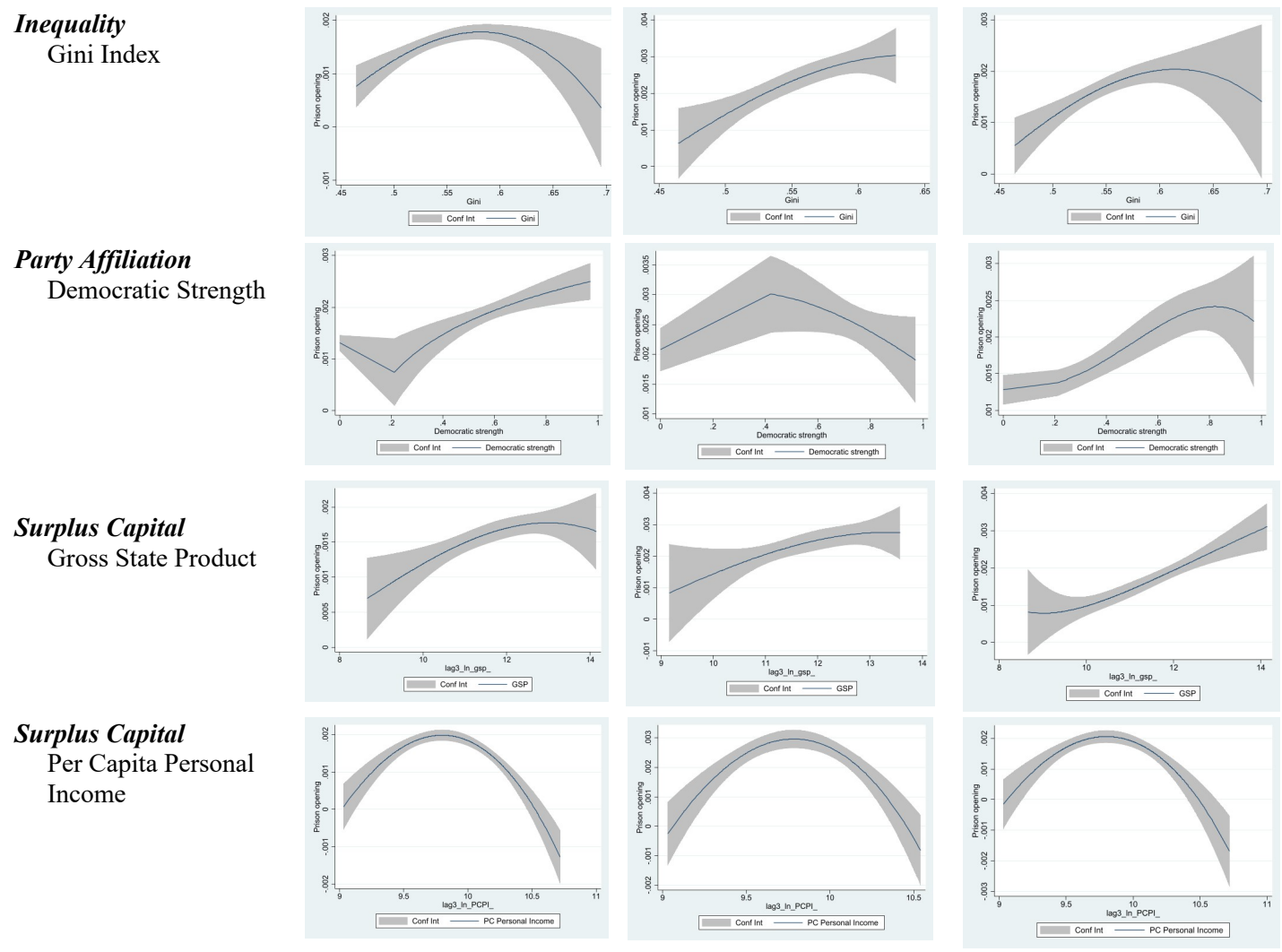
Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, full sample (place-years)

Prison Siting (state-level predictors of prison building)	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Inequality:					
Gini index	516,450	0.55	0.04	0.46	0.70
State politics:					
Democratic strength	516,184	0.28	0.32	0.00	0.97
Surplus land:					
Log state prisons per capita	516,450	12.11	0.78	10.10	14.15
Population density	516,450	161.81	186.93	0.76	1162.81
Surplus labor:					
State unemployment rate	516,450	6.03	2.09	2.30	17.40
Surplus capital:					
Log gross state product	516,450	11.73	1.06	8.66	14.14
Log per capita personal income	516,450	9.88	0.32	9.03	10.72
Prison Placement (place-level predictors of prison building)					
Percent Black	516,450	6.33	14.73	0.00	100.00
Percent Latinx	516,450	5.24	13.50	0.00	100.00
Percent foreign born	516,450	3.60	6.42	0.00	100.00
Disadvantage index	516,450	-0.01	0.78	-4.07	8.06
Prior prison	516,450	0.01		0/1	
Log of population	514,497	7.18	1.74	0.00	15.90

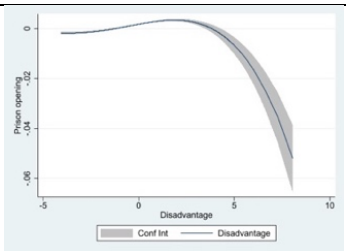
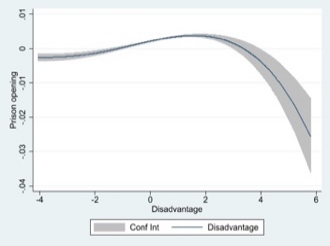
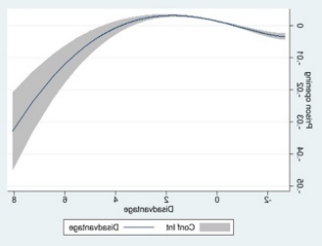
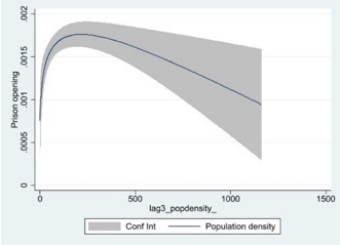
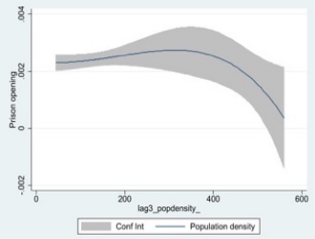
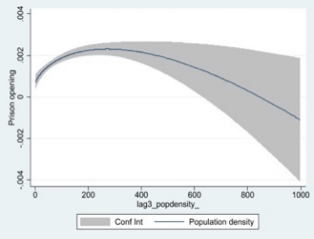
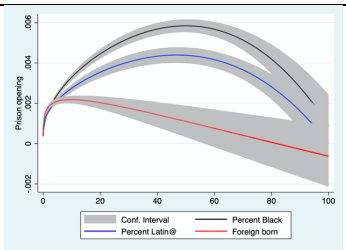
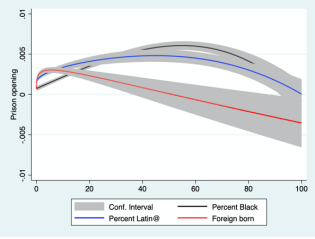
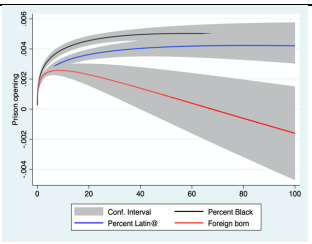
Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***

Figure 3. Predicted Probability Plots for Prison Siting from Multilevel Models for all US Census Places, Southern, and Non-metro Places from 1984-2004.



Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***

Figure 4. Predicted Probability Plots for Prison Placement from Multilevel Models for all US Census Places, Southern, and Non-metro Places from 1984-2004.

Prison Placement			
Disadvantage Index			
Population Density			
Racial Composition Percent Black Percent Latin@ Percent Foreign-Born			

Source: ***Prison Proliferation Project.***