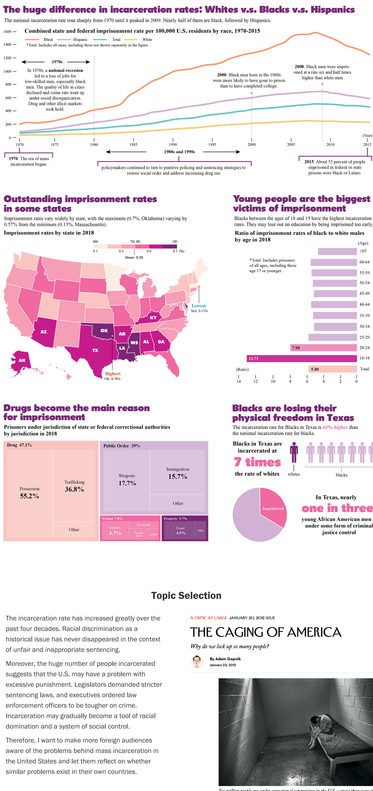
JMM 331 Project 1 Making-of article

Mass Incarceration in the U.S. Reflects Racial Discrimination and Excessive Punishment

Final Version of the Infographic (tabloid size)



Topic Selection

The incarceration rate has increased greatly over the past four decades. Racial discrimination as a historical issue has never disappeared in the context of unfair and inappropriate sentencing.

Moreover, the huge number of people incarcerated suggests that the U.S. may have a problem with excessive punishment. Legislators demanded stricter sentencing laws, and executives ordered law enforcement officers to be tougher on crime. Incarceration may gradually become a tool of racial domination and a system of social control.

Therefore, I want to make more foreign audiences aware of the problems behind mass incarceration in the United States and let them reflect on whether similar problems exist in their own countries.

A CRITIC AT LARGE JANUARY 30, 2018 ISSUE

THE CAGING OF AMERICA

Why do we lock up so many people?

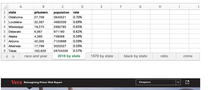
By Adam Gopnik
January 30, 2018

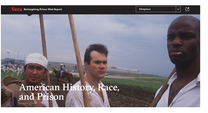
Six million people are under correctional supervision in the U.S.—more than were in Stalin's gulags. Photograph by Steve Liss / American Poverty

Data & Reference

The data I used were all from Bureau of Justice Statistics, including:

1. Imprisonment rates by state in 2018
2. Ratio of imprisonment rates of black to white males by age in 2018
3. Prisoners under jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities by jurisdiction in 2018
4. The number of prisoners in Texas by race, 2015-2018
5. Combined state and federal imprisonment rate per 100,000 U.S. residents of a given race or ethnicity, 1970-2015

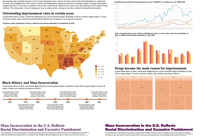




After obtaining the original data, I reorganized the data according to my focus. This will make my subsequent work more organized and clear. Then, I put the sorted data in the same file and put them in several work sheets by different categories.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	state	prisoners	population	rate					
2	California	21,156	39400011	0.54%					
3	Louisiana	30,397	4660646	0.65%					
4	Mississippi	19,111	2992333	0.64%					
5	Delaware	5,877	911176	0.65%					
6	Maine	4,390	1338404	0.33%					
7	Maryland	19,456	6006401	0.32%					
8	Massachusetts	10,000	6859819	0.15%					
9	Nevada	14,438	2839099	0.51%					
10		race and year	drink by state		1970 by state	black by state	ratio	crime	

The article "American History, Race, and Prison" gave me an insight into the history of incarceration and race in the United States as well as important points and events. I used it as a reference to create a timeline between incarceration and race. My timeline highlighted events corresponding to significant years, as well as specific policies over a specific period of time



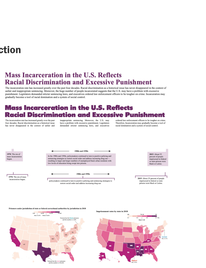
Visualization & Drafts

Selection of Charts & Maps

- Line Graph: used for "Combined state and federal imprisonment rate per 100,000 U.S. residents of a given race or ethnicity, 1970-2015". Use different colors to represent the four races. This can clearly allow the audience to see the difference in the rate and form an intuitive contrast. It can also show the trends of each race and the changes over time.
- Choropleth Map: used for "Imprisonment rates by state in 2018". It can use different color depths to visualize the values of different geographic areas, and let audiences intuitively know the location of the geographic area.
- Bar Chart: used for "Ratio of imprisonment rates of black to white males by age in 2018". The length of each bar can show the numerical difference between categories. The Y axis of the chart shows the different ages being compared and the X axis represents a discrete value scale.
- Treemap: used for "Percent of sentenced prisoners by most serious offense in 2018". It can not only show the proportion of crimes in each category, but also show the proportion of specific crimes in the lower level by visualizing the hierarchical structure of the tree diagram.
- Timeline: used for "mass incarceration black history". The timeline can help audiences know the major decisions and legislation about black imprisonment over the past few decades, and let audiences know a summary of events that occurred at important points.

Progress

- Draft: Select charts that fit different types of data; Partition the canvas and select the size of the different charts.
- First Version: Choose a color palette; Repartition the canvas and stretch the timeline across the canvas from left to right.
- Second Version: Change the fonts of all main headings and subheadings; Reduce paragraph size; Increase the blank space between different partitions; Remove the unnecessary color blocks below the Timeline; Change the number of prisoners in the choropleth map to scale.
- Final Version: Reduce unnecessary description of charts; Cut the introduction of the main heading into three paragraphs from one paragraph; Align the number of the line graph; Unify the X axis and Y axis styles of the line chart and the bar chart.



Reflection

• Heading & body copy

Use different fonts for headings and paragraphs. Headings should use a sans-serif font and paragraphs should use a serif font. Headings needed to be big and obvious enough to allow audiences to visually separate the different parts of the infographic.

• Keep the canvas clean

Cut out unnecessary color blocks. Keep enough space between each section, otherwise it will be visually burdensome and easy to confuse the different sections. Do not run paragraphs from left to right across the canvas, as this will strain the audiences' vision. Instead, break them up into several short paragraphs.

• Use charts correctly

Don't use the Choropleth Map to represent the total number of prisoners in each state. Use a bar chart instead. It would make more sense to use the Choropleth Map to represent the percentage of prisoners per state.

• Keep the chart style consistent

The palette, spacing, font style, font size, and vertical and horizontal marks of all the charts on the canvas should be consistent, so that the whole infographic can be coherent and consistent.

• Highlight important information

Important information can be highlighted by magnifying the font and changing the color of the font to make the information hierarchical.

Powered by Adobe Portfolio