Crime, Criminal Justice Policy and Space: Thoughts on the Rise of a Rural Prison Economy

The Untied States has the world's largest prison population and the highest crime rate of any "western democracy," yet historiography largely ignores these recent developments. Criminologists often link increasing crime and incarceration in the U.S. with structural economic changes that swept across the country's industrial landscape in the late 1960s. Massive unemployment created the conditions for expanding illicit drug markets and other crime associated with it.[1] Most of the recent historical scholarship on this period focuses on deindustrialization, suburbanization, urban decline, and the birth of unusual new urban forms, like edge cities. Many scholars also concentrate on explaining the rise of political conservatism that accompanied the large structural changes. With this renewed emphasis on the political and economic shifts since World War II, why has the largest increase in prison populations ever received so little treatment?

Historians began analyzing how "space" or "place" mediated the large structural transformations of the 20th century and how this affected different communities in varying ways. History since the "spatial turn" now considers space as a politicized aspect of the production and maintenance of inequality in postwar America.[2] The spatial theory, which inform this literature, provides a useful concept for thinking about how criminal justice policy created inequality over time through space. It is also useful to examine how some Americans realized that spatial political strategies could help them mitigate the disastrous effects of economic restructuring.

This paper consists of two parts. The first part suggests answers the question posed above: why have historians neglected criminal justice policy in the last twenty years? It also

reviews some important developments in the historical treatment of space that enlightens recent criminal justice policy. The second part of the paper will discuss how some lessons from the new spatial historical literature apply to the development of rural prison economies in areas suffering from unemployment.

Political developments since the 1960s that hindered a discussion of race and inner city communities also deter similar discussions of criminal justice policy, which is discursively linked to "race" in the Untied States. Large bipartisan support for increased incarceration also removed political forums to discuss criminal justice policy. Widespread belief in the institutional failure of prisons and corrections transformed the prison as an instrument of rehabilitation into a "warehouse" for criminals. It prevented alternative policy formulation and presented growth opportunities to groups seeking to benefit from prison siting and expansion. Many rural areas began vying for prisons to replace departing agricultural and factory jobs that disappeared in the postwar period. This economic strategy was contingent on similar employment dislocations in central cities, which impoverished large sections of African-American communities and encouraged the rise of lucrative drug economies. The increased criminalization of drug trafficking in the 1980s and 1990s created such large strains on existing prison systems that governments responded with massive prison building programs. Renewed public spending on new prisons presented rural communities with opportunities for developments uniquely suited to their location outside of urban areas. While prisons did not revitalize rural economies or spurred dramatic growth, some rural areas mitigated economic losses by exploiting their spatial advantages over urban areas. Many communities even discovered new spatial benefits.

Part I

Disappearance of the Obvious: Crime, Criminal Policy and History

Conservative politicians achieved command of the topic of crime by the 1970s. Long dormant in political discourse, the topic of crime became a prime rhetorical tool in elections after the urban disturbances of the 1960s, civil rights protests, and the anti-war movement. The term, "crime," became a code word "race" in political discourse as it often only referred to crimes committed by inner-city African-American youth. By the 1980s, liberal and left scholars retreated from open discussions of crime because conservatives controlled the political field, often appropriating scholarly work and misusing it for programs diametrically opposed to policies championed by liberals and the left. This process resembles the same trajectory of discussions of race, poverty, and "culture" in academic literature.

The fallout over the Daniel Patrick Moynihan's report on African-American families crippled the discussion of race from a liberal perspective for decades. Moynihan's unflattering account of the social pathology in African-American family structures provoked a backlash from the political left. Liberal and radical leaders derided Moynihan for factual errors and his dismissive characterization of behavior that many other cholars described as adaptive to urban poverty.[3] More importantly, Moynihan's report provided a political tool for conservative politicians who wished to dismantle welfare programs. Conservatives argued that the report substantiated their claims that welfare produced dependency and laziness.[4] The shifting political field that Moynihan revealed also severely constricted a wider debate on crime, which was becoming a large problem during the 1960s.

Crime rates slowly rose in the late 1950s and increased during the next decade. The late 1960s marked a substantial shift upwards in property and violent crime that continued into the

late 1970s and early 1980s, becoming a major policy concern for both political parities. This shift closely parallels the economic crisis that engulfed western industrial democracies in the last quarter of the 20th century. [5] Indeed, rising crime occurred in all these countries as well.[6] Often assumed to be just a white reaction to civil rights, criminal justice policy responded to an actual rise in property and violent crime, behaviors characteristic of economic crisis and restructuring. High crime rates provoked increased public outcry over criminal justice policy and law enforcement—a political discussion that conservatives gradually dominated.[7]

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, longstanding crime prevention and penology practice crumbled under successive waves of criticism and institutional failure. Radical prisoner movements challenged the "rehabilitative ideal" of the criminal justice system, arguing that the real motive behind imprisonment was class and racial oppression. Prisoner activism included spectacular prison escapes, revolutionary writing, liaising with radical political groups outside and large prison uprisings. States responded to these activities with force. The massacre at Attica Prison in upstate New York in 1971 overshadowed a much more general shift toward the extreme hardening of prison discipline and control.[8] Many academics also joined the critique of rehabilitation, arguing that treatment programs intended to reform criminals actually produced unfairness, brutality, and worse criminals. Criminology experts, prison administrators, and political radical shared the common notion that when it came to rehabilitation, "nothing works."[9]

Conservative politicians capitalized on the destabilizing of the penal reform philosophy and soon dominated discussion of criminal justice policy. Liberal concerns over fairness and proposals to use prison as a "last resort" soon appeared politically untenable.[10] If prisons could not reform criminals, they could still incapacitate and punish them.

This message won elections. Bipartisan support for increasingly punitive laws and sentencing grew during the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s as both parties campaigned on "law and order" issues. Commonly seen as an indication of punitiveness, capital punishment reappeared in 1976 after an unofficial ten year moratorium on executions.[11] During the mid-1980s, a new form of smokable cocaine, called "crack," appeared on the streets transforming urban drug markets and criminal policy for twenty years. Conservative and liberals alike portrayed the crack problem in moralistic terms, emphasizing the evil and harm that it caused. It an atmosphere of moral panic, legislatures easily passed extremely harsh new sentences for drug possession. These laws especially targeted African-Americans by overly criminalizing drugs typically found in the inner-city markets, like crack.[12] Other sentencing reforms, like "truth-in-sentencing" and "mandatory minimums" legislation, lengthened prison terms and removed the incentive of early release, which was the hallmark of rehabilitative penology. These new laws gained the support of even liberal Democrats, like Senator Edward Kennedy and the Reverend Jesse Jackson.[13] The subsequent massive increase in prison populations stemmed from a shared political approach toward crime emphasizing long prison sentences and the intense policing of central cities.

In this political climate, liberal and left academics lost the political authority to discuss poverty, crime, and the central cities in a direct manner, especially when focusing on the problems of individuals or groups in central cities. Instead, historians and other academics began exploring the broader structural factors that caused deindustrialization, suburbanization, urban poverty, and the collapse of the New Deal coalition. By turning to these large structural processes, researchers demonstrated how federal programs, municipal leaders, and businesses transformed the urban and suburban landscape through financing, housing incentives,

demolition, and neglect. This "spatial turn" in history provides an alternative conceptualization of inequality and its production over large geographic space and time. It enriches discussions of the broad support and impact of crime and criminal justice policy, which extend beyond the inner city.

The "Spatial Turn" in Postwar History

William Julius Wilson provoked hostility similar to the reaction against Moynihan for his 1978 book, *The Declining Significance of Race*. Wilson's frank discussion of the problems of female-headed households, transient males, unemployment, and the inner city hopelessness occurred at a time when the same problems provided political capital for conservatives.[14] Wilson did not plan to aid conservatives and rebuffed efforts by the right to court his favor. Despite the political pitfalls of speaking about race, poverty and crime, Wilson's text provided a useful analysis about the importance of space in the production of urban inequality.

Wilson explained the rise of African American poverty and socially destructive behavior in the central cities as the outcome of a geographical mismatch between good employment and residential location. The loss of employment in urban areas hurt inner city residents the worse. Other groups who retained a greater degree of geographic mobility could follow work or find different employment. With little re-investment, job opportunities in inner cities disappeared. This process also enticed away middle class blacks who acted as a buffer against social pathology.[15]

Wilson's thesis of industrial relocation and African-American concentration in inner-city ghettos subsequently became influential in postwar history, but many authors abandoned his more forthright focus on how these changes affected inner-city social behavior, crime, and criminal justice policy. These new approaches share the common theoretical theme that "space"

or "place" is a critical factor in the development of persistent social inequality. While many recent historical works do not deal with criminal justice policy explicitly, they provide a conceptual tool for analyzing this policy in the late 20th century and the present.

Thomas Sugrue, Bruce Schulman, and Mike Davis present three variations of the spatial theme to explain the current urban and regional situation in the early 21st century.[16] These themes are: (1) the poverty and the policies of spatial mismatch, (2) preferential social investment, and (3) containment and the militarization of space. Although, these overlap in each author's text, I draw them out of narratives that focus on them more exclusively. These three themes suggest that similar processes occurred in the expansion of the rural prison economy.

Poverty and the Policies of Spatial Mismatch

Thomas Sugrue demonstrated in *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* that the narrative of "white flight" did not adequately explain suburbanization and the development of inner city poverty. The "white flight" narrative mistakenly located the political shifts that underscored the demise of liberalism in the 1960s. According to this thesis, whites abandoned the Democratic Party in response to anti-poverty programs, civil rights, and urban rebellion. Sugrue argued that white racism was not new, and structured urban race relations for decades in Detroit. Liberalism in the 1940s was lily-white.[17] It provided union protection and housing for largely white workers. Benefits for African-Americans were a secondary concern and only welcomed if they did not encroach on white privilege.[18] Whites fled from African-Americans when they moved into white neighborhoods, but this dynamic alone could not explain the concentrations of blacks in the inner city.

African American concentration in urban Detroit resulted from conscious decisions taken by federal and local officials and business leaders who moved industry and controlled housing

markets. Detroit's heavy industries relocated factories outside the city limits to take advantage of cheaper land, transportation, and looser business regulations.[19] This move drew the largely white workforce away from the cities in the same process. Private and public financial and business leaders played a crucial role in the relocation. They encouraged suburbanization by loosening mortgage rules and providing new housing construction for migrating whites.[20] These same leaders instituted restrictive policies that prevented African-Americans from following a similar strategy of residential mobility when good-paying jobs left Detroit. Mortgage lenders routinely denied loans to African-Americans as a matter of policy, especially if they planned to move into a "white" neighborhood.[21] Contained by restrictive housing and urban renewal projects that established other physical barriers, African-Americans living standards dwindled with few good-paying industrial jobs and decent homes available. Mounting tensions caused by unemployment, poor housing, and political neglect erupted in the 1960s in a large scale uprising by African-Americans.[22]

Sugrue argued that the bleak economic prospects for African Americans in Detroit encouraged the spread of illegal, underground economies dealing in drugs and prostitution.[23] Many whites, who rarely ventured into these areas of the city, identified the inner city space and African Americans with these illicit economies and associated high levels of violence. The racialization and criminalization of inner city space coupled with the collapse of legal inner city employment became constitutive parts race relations in late 20th century Detroit.[24] Federal programs as the War on Poverty provided woefully inadequate funding and misguided job training programs that did little to correct the evaporation of work, employment discrimination, and restrictive residential patterns.[25] The massive inequalities that developed by the late 1960s resulted from deliberate policy choices that benefited white workers and the middle class, but

contained African-Americans in urban centers. Urban poverty created what criminologists often refer to as "crimogeneic" conditions, spurring illicit trade and violence.

Urban poverty and crime also helped create a more decisive political realignment. Democrats lost the political support of many whites who reacted against the rising inner city unrest by voting for Republicans and segregationist, George Wallace. Conservatives called for the dismantling of what little social service support existed for the poor.[26] Sugrue claimed that this reaction was not new, but a continuation of prior racist policies and exclusive, white working-class behavior that stretched back before World War II. By the 1960s, New Deal coalition could not contain the disruptions caused by the policy-driven, spatial inequalities between white and black communities.[27]

Preferential Social Investment

In *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt*, Bruce Schulman examined how the policy decisions of the New Deal administrations in the 1930s shaped the postwar industrial collapse 40 years later. In an effort to eliminate southern poverty and economic "backwardness," the Roosevelt administration restructured the Southern economy by equalizing wage differentials, standardizing labor norms, and building purchasing power. They hoped that these polices would make the South a more stable economic region and entice investment.[28] Many southern politicians resisted this interference at first fearing that anti-poverty programs would upset established racial and class hierarchies.[29]

At the onset of World War II, Southern politicians realized they could obtain federal funds for defense related programs and industry that entailed less federal oversight and encouraged the development of Southern industry. These politicians oriented government sponsored regional investment toward "growth" rather than "redistribution" or anti-poverty

efforts.[30] Defense spending spurred the growth of related industries, like computers technology, and it required enormous infrastructure development.[31] Through preferential government assistance, the South gained new highway systems and science educational funding that transformed its economy.[32]

The federal government redistributed tax revenues from the North and Mid-west to the South from the 1930s onward. This enriched Southern industry while redirecting monies away from the declining northern industrial economies and cities.[33] Schulman claims that this disparity grew out of New Deal liberal policies designed to eliminate poverty and integrate the South. Southern leaders selectively directed the investment, producing growth on the top and continuing poverty on the bottom. Schulman concludes that the "modernized" hierarchies that result from deliberate policy decisions contributed to the rise of Southern Republicanism in the late 20th century and the continual presence of poverty, low health standards, and poor education in the South.[34]

Containment and the Militarization of Space

Mike Davis claims that the current obsession with control and security in urban areas is the outcome of the decline central cities. Business leaders in Los Angles reacted to the destruction of the Watts Riot in 1965 by devising plans, with the help of the police and other civic leaders, to relocate critical financial centers away from volatile impoverished areas of the city.[35] While the city gradually isolated the abandoned poor sections of town, construction in these new areas emphasized security and fortress-like impregnability to defend against any possible unrest.[36]

The police subjected the city's poorer areas to intensive scrutiny and control through prohibitive architecture, pseudo-military force, and incarceration. Davis argues that the

restructuring of capital markets that destroyed urban industry during the 1960s and 1970s also created the need to contain cast-off workers and other lower class people that failing industries left behind.[37] Davis depicts this containment in Skid Row, a 50-block area where the police corral the homeless. This "containment zone" in central Los Angles is "the nation's largest outdoor poorhouse," according to Davis, and indicative of the unwillingness to engage in social reform.[38]

Davis argues that the rise in security consciousness that pervades the city extends the reach of the police beyond containing the homeless in the inner city. Wealthy residents of Los Angles, in their heightened concern with security, also provide the police with an additional form of militarized social control. Wealthier areas of Los Angles invested in an array of new security measures to protect their neighborhoods from crime. This included electronic security systems and walls as well as the increased use of private security firms.[39] It also led, Davis argues, to the near deputization of many residents in the inner ring suburbs if the form of Neighborhood Watch programs and "enforcement zones" that rely on the cooperation of residents for information and extra surveillance.[40]

Davis concludes his 1998 book *The Ecology of Fear* by noting the rise of the "gulag rim," an outer ring of prisons built by the state and federal government.[41] These prisons, located outside urban areas, house the swelling ranks of convicted felons produced by the War of Drugs. Criminal justice spending blossomed in California during the 1980s and 1990s, and the states' correctional workers union now exerts considerable political influence.[42] The state currently spends more on corrections than on the University of California system.[43] This shift in priorities toward incarcerating larger populations of poor people created spatial opportunities for those outside urban areas.

Part II

Spatial Inequality and the Rural Prison Economy

Davis called the three-mile radius around Los Angles city hall "a vast penal colony," with urban jails and the Metropolitan Detention Center holding over 25,000 prisoners.[44] Yet, in the broader use of imprisonment in the last 30 years, states and the federal government located very few prisons within large urban areas. State and federal officials opened bidding wars throughout the last two decades between small communities as they expanded their correctional capacities in rural areas.

This movement of prisons outside urban areas was not entirely new. Governments located many prisons built during the 19th and early 20th century in more remote locations hoping to prevent security breeches and ensure the safety of both the populace and inmates.[45] Building prisons in urban areas presented too many difficulties for governments. Urban land was often too expensive for constructing a prison, and it was usually reserved for industrial enterprises. Many urban residents feared escape and simply did not wish to live near a prison. Many businesses did not want such institutions located nearby as well. These concerns are still present in recent prison siting. Nevertheless, many rural or economically disadvantaged communities began intense competition for prisons during the 1980s.

State and federal officials expanded their correctional capacities over the last two decades, trying to keep pace with enormous prison populations. Incarcerated populations remained stable over the course of the late 19th century and into the 1950s. They briefly expanded in the late 1930s, coinciding with the Great Depression, but then the size returned to pre-1930 levels. However, prison populations started a long upward expansion in the early 1970s, and then skyrocketed after the passage of drug law and sentencing reform in the 1980s.[46]

Increasing prison populations outstripped institutional capacity at old prisons. Governments responded with massive prison building projects. State and federal governments sited prisons in about 350 rural counties since 1980.[47] By 2004, the United States was the world's largest incarcerator with over 2.1 million inmates and 5,069 prisons and jails.[48] This expansion revealed a larger public policy decision to forsake the problems of inner cities by restricting funding for social programs and work creation. Instead, lawmakers criminalized large sections of urban populations and allocated funds to contain the most unmanageable of these populations in rural areas.

Politicians and local boosters argued that prisons provided an employment opportunity for impoverished rural communities. Sugrue's and Wilson's thesis of the disappearance of work and geographic immobility in the inner-city has parallel, if not as dramatic, corollary in the decline working class suburbs of many formerly industrialized cities and the devastation of rural extractive industries, like mining. The departure of heavy industry also harmed rural workers dependant on suburban, and sometimes rurally located, factories and mines. Agricultural industries also suffered downturns during the same period. The rural workforce had lower levels of education attainment and job training and little access to social services and other employment opportunities. Public transportation systems rarely serviced rural areas, which reduced workers ability to find employment in urban or suburban areas. These communities, which may have resisted nearby prison building, now welcomed it as an economic savior.[49]

Boosters claimed that prisons were ideally suited to the rural workforce and small communities. As non-polluting, quiet industries, prisons were less ecologically damaging than industrial factories. They were also resilient to economic downturns. Unlike steel plants, prisons did not export operations overseas to take advantage of inexpensive labor markets

elsewhere. They provided well-paid construction jobs and staff positions, and could become the basis of regional development. Prisons required tertiary businesses to operate, which would generated more jobs. Boosters argued that a new prison would attract other employers who would compete for a variety of prison contracts for services such as food provision. Officials who won prison-siting contracts with state or federal governments could also claim the political windfall of saving the local economy as new employment and businesses would generate increased tax revenues.[50]

In the last twenty years, this argument convinced many communities, but academic researchers are more skeptical. Although they agree there have not been enough studies yet, many researchers claim that there is little evidence proving the reality of the promised economic miracles. The Sentencing Project, a criminal justice policy group, best represents this school of thought. They argue that rural counties that obtained prisons have not experienced any economic benefit over similar rural counties without prisons. Rural residents rarely get the good-paying jobs that prisons generate: construction jobs are too specialized for local builders and guards often transfer from other parts of the state. Businesses that follow prisons tend to be low-wage employers like Wal-Mart and provide little regional economic development. Many other businesses do not cater to prisons or prefer not to associate with them.[51]

The Sentencing Project's argument correctly demonstrated the flaws in the prison boosterism, but it still cannot account for the continued competition for rural prisons. Even if it not at high levels, prisons delivered some employment for rural communities that suffered from massive economic restructuring in the last 30 years. Many new prisons replaced military bases in rural areas after they closed following the end of the Cold War. This was the case in Beeville, Texas, which lost a Navy pilot training center. After the base closed, the town of only 28,000

residents obtained another state prison to accompany its old, maximum-security facility. Soon, they also added a correctional officers training school.[52] Some small towns, like Beeville, lobbied for several prisons and now structure their entire economies around the facilities. Huntsville, Texas, about the same size as Beeville, has six prisons located in its jurisdiction, as does Ionia, Michigan.[53] These prison "hubs," as journalist Joseph Hallinan called them, are unlikely to attract any other large businesses, but housing thousands of inmates provided jobs in devastated economies. As a former Texas prison warden told Hallinan:

> Oil prices went down. Real estate market went down. Everybody was having a hard time—except the folks that were around the prisons. So somebody says: Hey, wait a minute. That's better than anything I can think of. I'd get a constant flow of money comin' in here, and those folks in Huntsville like, I guess, so why don't we get one?[54]

Prison hubs in Texas drew other correctional services and administration, which replicated much of the tertiary service and retail business that military bases provided.

The Sentencing Project's study of prison economies failed to consider the options these small communities had for economic development. Many of these communities suffered from the same dislocations that crippled inner city communities during the 1970s, albeit not as severe. Unemployment in Crescent City, California exceeded twenty percent after the demise of the sawmill industry before the state located Pelican Bay State Prison there.[55] For the most part, these rural, and sometimes suburban, communities weathered the economic collapse better than the inner cities. Residents faced fewer restrictions on their movement, and could find employment easier. Large drug economies were absent, but so were many local opportunities. If prison boosters did not deliver the promised employment bonanza, they still tapped into

a widespread community fear and hopelessness about the rural economy in the late 20th century.

Small communities held one resource in abundance—land. Yet, with many other communities also competing for prisons, small towns had to entice prison officials with cheap land or free land grants, utility connections, and roads. Many communities gambled enormous sums of scare money to make their bids for prison more competitive.[56]

These small communities quickly became adept at exploiting the additional spatial advantages that prisons provided. Prison towns extracted unanticipated benefits from incarcerating large amounts of out-of-town inmates. Few boosters mentioned the advantages that thousands of additional (incarcerated) residents would provide to small towns. Entrepreneurial local officials realized that could claim prisoners as citizens for census counts. Higher census figures entitled these communities to larger federal formula-grants, such as road building, job-training, and community development funds.[57] Ionia, Michigan, for instance, used federal money to build a community center and upgrade municipal vehicles with computers based on its population of 10,569, of which 4,401 are prisoners.[58]

Some states also tied financial assistance to federal census statistics. Calipatria, California, home of the electric "death fence" surrounding its maximum-security prison, obtained state funding to repair its streets based on census calculations. In 1999, over 4,000 inmates lived behind the death fence in Calipatria, which has a total population of 7,289.[59] Since states are responsible for prisoners, towns that benefit from prisoners presence have not had to spend additional money on them.

Prisons, which have few employed inmates, also make towns eligible for federal anti-poverty funding. Impoverished inmates artificially lower per capita income for communities. Coxsackie, New York obtained extra assistance from the Department of Housing and Urban Development because prisoners, which made up almost 30 percent of the population, drove down income levels according to the 1990 census.[60] Some politicians opposed to the counting of prisoners for the census worried that the practice could lead to new methods of gerrymandering political districts.[61]

Like cities recapturing suburbs, small towns annexed prisons that lay beyond municipal boundaries in the hopes of gaining more "captives" for the census. The strategy became so enticing in Arizona that the state passed legislation specifically permitting the annexation of prisons.[62] This law placed several towns adjacent to larger prisons in structural competition for census-inflating prisoners. The town of Buckeye defeated a rival attempt by the nearby town of Gila Bend to incorporate the Arizona State Prison Complex-Lewis within its borders in 1999.[63] Florence, Arizona "expanded it borders three times to annex nearby lockups and boost the town's head count."[64] Many similar small towns annexed military bases in the past, but soldiers and other personnel that provided "extra heads" for the census also enjoyed many of the benefits financed by census-linked funding. Prisoners have not shared in the wealth that they indirectly brought to prison communities.

The urban communities, where most prisoners originate from, suffered the most from census-based funding and political apportionment. While many residents of communities affected by high crime approved increased sanctions and policing, they lost census-based funding. Prisoners from these communities were not considered

residents in census surveys, thereby lowering absolute population numbers and distorting actual poverty rates. Census surveys included prisoners in rural political districts inflating representational numbers, when these same prisoners are usually ineligible to vote in their own communities due to felony disfranchisement laws. As noted by Wilson and Sugrue, many of central urban communities already suffered from inadequate welfare services, unemployment, high crime, and generally poor health and housing conditions. In a process similar to that described by Schulman, the loss of additional funding over the last twenty years due to competitive census politics by depressed rural communities has not helped matters for urban communities.[65]

Criminologists, currently debating the impact of mass imprisonment on urban areas, claim that just removing significant portions of young males from communities exacerbates the social problems identified by Wilson in the late 1970s. Family members have difficulty visiting incarcerated loved ones in prisons located far from urban communities. Most criminologists agree that maintaining family connections helps inmates survive prison, readjust to life outside after release, and significantly lowers recidivism.[66] Some health officials also worry that the increased diseases rates in prisons, for chronic illnesses like Hepatitis C, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, affect home communities after prisoners' release.[67] Ex-prisoners have increased difficulty obtaining work and shelter after release, contributing to the high levels of unemployment and homelessness caused by central city labor market collapses.

Locating prisons in rural communities and incarcerating unprecedented numbers of people from the inner city created an unusual racial polarity inside the walls of prisons. Most rural prison communities contain large white majorities, often exceeding

ninety-five percent, which usually provide most prison staff. The recent drug laws that led to the disproportionate imprisonment of African-Americans and Latinos from inner cities established racial inequalities replicated in prison populations and staff. Policies that created these imbalances will likely inform perceptions of race and criminality for years to come.[68]

Conclusion

The structural focus on inequality adopted by historians during the 1980s reveals many similar disparities of wealth, political priorities, and social investment in the rise of a rural prison economy. Rural prison communities obtained advantages by manipulating their location and government funding while inner city neighborhoods suffered form poverty, criminal justice policy, and rural political strategies. This suggests that "criminal justice policy" must be re-examined as a socio-economic, political, and racial contest mediated and constituted by "space." Rural prison communities discovered a way to mitigate economic downturn, if not recover from them entirely, by exploiting their spatial advantage and the spatial disadvantage of inner city communities. As policy makers abandoned anti-poverty programs in favor of criminalization, they created the conditions for a rural economic strategy focused on prison expansion. How this rural extension of the urban social control apparatus will affect race relations remains to be seen, but increased racial tension in prisons over the last twenty years suggests that it has been detrimental. The rural carceral strategy maintains and deepens inequalities produced by economic restructuring and prevents the formations of broader political coalitions and support for social welfare. Hopefully, the political "success" of this containment policy will not further inhibit scholarly discussion on crime and criminal justice.

Notes

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[2] Matt Lassiter, "The New Suburban History II: Political Culture and Metropolitan Space," *Journal of Planning History*, vol. 4 no. 1, February 2005: 76-7.
[3] William Julius Wilson, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 149-57.
[4] Ibid.
[5] David Garland, *The Culture of Control*, 145-54, 208-9; Michael Tonry, *Thinking About Crime: Sense and Sensibility in American Penal Culture*, 105-8.
[6] Tonry, *Thinking About Crime*, 27-34.
[7] Garland, *The Culture of Control*, 90-126.
[8] The best treatment of this is Eric Cummins, *The Rise and Fall of California's Radical Prison Movement* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).
[9] Francis Allen, *The Decline of the Rehabilitative Ideal: Penal Policy and Social Purpose* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981) 32-59.
[10] Adam von Hirsh, *Doing Justice: The Choice of Punishments—Report of the Committee for the Study of Incarceration* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976) Introduction.
[11] Christian Parenti, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (London: Verso, 1999) 3-68.
[12] Ibid., 55-63.
[13] Ibid., 50-62.
[14] William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
[15] Ibid., 88-143.
[16] This discussion does not summarize the larger field of postwar history after the spatial turn.
[17] Thomas Sugrue, *Origins of The Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) 181-207.
[18] Ibid.,3-14.
[19] Ibid., 127-52.
[20] Ibid., 42-3, 182-97
[21] Ibid., 44-72.
[22] Ibid., 259-62.
[23] Ibid., 217, 261.
[24] Ibid., 217-8, 262.
[25] Ibid., 264.
[26] Ibid., 265-7.
[27] Ibid., 58-9.
[28] Bruce J. Schulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt: Federal Policy, Economic Development, and the Transformation of the South, 1938-1980* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994) 3-38, 63-87.
[29] Ibid., 42-4.
[30] Ibid., 112-34.
[31] Ibid., 139-73.
[32] Ibid., 158-71.
[33] Ibid., 143-8.
[34] Ibid., 171-83.
[35] Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992) 230; Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space," *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) 158-9.
[36] Ibid., 236-46, 257-60.
[37] Mike Davis, *The Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998) 361-2.
[38] Ibid., 364, 382-7.
[39] Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles," 172-3.

[40] Davis, *The Ecology of Fear*, 387-91.
[41] Ibid., 411-18.
[42] Ibid., 416-7.
[43] Ibid., 417.
[44] Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles," 176.
[45] David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971) 57-108.
[46] Joseph T. Hallinan, *Going Up River: Travels in a Prison Nation* (New York: Random House, 2003) 216-7.
[47] Ryan Scott King, Marc Mauer, and Tracy Huling, "An Analysis of the Economics of Prison Siting in Rural Communities," in *Criminology & Public Policy*, vol. 3. no. 3, July 2004:455.
[48] Figures from http://www.prisonstudies.org/
[49] King, Mauer, and Huling, "An Analysis of the Economics of Prison Siting," 454-5.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 455-75.
[52] Hallinan, *Going Up River*, 3-20.
[53] Tracy Huling, "Building a Prison Economy in Rural America," in Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind, ed, *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment*, (New York: New York Press, 2002) 207.
[54] Hallinan, *Going Up River*, 83.
[55] Parenti, *Lockdown America*, 212.
[56] Huling, "Building a Prison Economy," 200-1.
[57] Huling, "Building a Prison Economy," 210-2.
[58] Nicholas Kulish, "Crime Pays: Since Census Counts Convicts, Some Towns Can't Get Enough," *Wall Street Journal*, August 9, 2001.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Tracy Huling, "Prisoners of the Census," Mother Jones online, May 10, 2000 http://www.motherjones.com/commentary/columns/2000/05/census.html.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Kulish, "Crime Pays," *Wall Street Journal*; Tracy Huling, "Building a Prison Economy in Rural America.," 211.
[65] Huling, "Building a Prison Economy," 211-2.
[66] Eileen Baldry, "The Effect of Post-Release Housing on Prisoner Re-Integration into the Community," *Corrections Criminology*, eds., Sean O'Toole and Simon Eyland, (Sydney: Hawkins Press, 2005) 183-189.
[67] Paul Farmer, "The House of the Dead: Tuberculosis and Incarceration," in Mauer and Chesney-Lind, ed, *Invisible Punishment*, 239-257.
[68] Huling, "Building a Prison Economy," 208-210.

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