On De-coupling Race, Crime, and Punishment

Lawrence D. Bobo
W.E.B. Du Bois Professor of the Social Sciences
Harvard University

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7,225,800 adults under correctional supervision

1Totals for 1998 through 2009 exclude probationers in jail or prison.
Prison Inmates per 100,000 Males, 1925-2009
1 in 100 U.S. Adults Behind Bars, New Study Says

By ADAM LIPTAK
Published February 28, 2008

For the first time in the nation's history, more than one American adult is behind bars, according to a new report.

Nationwide, the prison population is up by 25,000 last year, bringing the total to almost 1.6 million. Another 100,000 people are in local jails. The number of American adults is about 1 in every 100, meaning that one in every 100 American adults is behind bars.

Incarceration rates are closely linked to the economy; for example, 36 Hispanic adults is behind bars.

The report, from the Pew Charitable Trusts, notes that only one in 255 whites and 39 in 100 blacks were behind bars.

The report's methodology differed from that used by the Census Bureau, which calculates the incarceration rate by using the total population as the denominator. Using the department's statistics, America's incarceration rate is falling.

The Los Angeles Times

National

Report: More than 1 in every 100 Americans now behind bars

From the Associated Press
11:07 AM PST, February 28, 2008

VISITING ROOM: L.A. County Sheriff's Deputy Jack McClellan peers through the cell bars, while standing in the visiting room, during a tour of the Sylmar Benefits Institute Women's Jail in Monterey Park.

For the first time in history, more than one American adult is in jail or prison, according to a new report.

The report, released today, notes that more than $49 billion was spent on state and federal prison facilities last year, about $10 billion more than the year before.

The report also notes that the rate of state prison education spending jumped 44% after 2000, to $3.5 billion, in part because of the state prison population's rise.

The report, released by the Sentencing Project, says that over 1 million Americans are in jail or prison.

The Washington Post

New High In U.S. Prison Numbers; Growth Attributed To More Stringent Sentencing Laws

The Washington Post - Washington, D.C.

Author: NC Aizenman - Washington Post Staff Writer
Date: Feb 29, 2008
Start Page: A1
Section: A SECTION

[... when it comes to preventing repeat offenses by nonviolent criminals -- who make up about half of the incarcerated population -- less-expensive punishments such as community supervision, electronic monitoring and mandatory drug counseling might prove as much or more effective than jail]
One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008
Seven Distressing Facts

- The Black incarceration rate in 1999 was 2.8 times the rate in 1980.
- The Black incarceration rate in 1999 was 8.2 times the rate for non-Hispanic Whites.
- Approximately 2% of the Black population was incarcerated in 1999 (in Federal or State prison).
- Approximately 8.3% of Black males in their 20s were in State or Federal Prison in 1999.
- Roughly 30% of Black males in their 20s are under some form of criminal justice supervision (i.e., on probation, parole or in prison).
- In some jurisdictions, greater than 50% of Black males in their 20s are under criminal justice supervision.
- Of Black males born in the 1990s, approximately 28.5% will serve time in a State or Federal prison as compared to only 4.4% of non-Hispanic Whites.

WHO'S BEHIND BARS
A sampling of incarceration rates by various demographics. Additional information available in Appendix A-6.

According to data analyzed for this report, as of Jan. 1, 2006 more than 1 in every 100 adults is behind bars.

For the most part, though, incarceration is heavily concentrated among men, racial and ethnic minorities, and 20- and 30-year-olds. Among men the highest rates are with black males aged 20-34. Among women it's with black females aged 35-39.

MEN
White men ages 18 or older 1 in 106
All men ages 18 or older 1 in 54
Hispanic men ages 18 or older 1 in 36
Black men ages 18 or older 1 in 15
Black men ages 20-34 1 in 9

WOMEN
White women ages 35-39 1 in 355
Hispanic women ages 35-39 1 in 297
All women ages 35-39 1 in 265
Black women ages 35-39 1 in 100

SOURCE: Analysis of "Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2006," published June 2007 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. All demographic statistics, with exception of "1 in every 100 adults" are midyear 2006, not 2008 figures.
Total Population and Prison Percentages by Race for Males, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>U.S. Population</th>
<th>Prison Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The War on Drugs and Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System

Sources: U.S. Population figures come from the American Community Survey, 2006; Monthly Drug Users figures come from National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2005; Drug Arrest figures come from Uniform Crime Reports, Crime in the United States, 2005; Drug Convictions data comes from National Judicial Reporting Program, 2002; Prison Sentences comes from Bureau of Justice Statistics,
Effects of Mass Incarceration

- Powerfully diminishes already weak employment prospects
- Fundamentally alters life-course trajectory for low-skill black men (changes the fabric of communities)
- De-stabilizes already weak families and communities
- In effect, transforms stratification system (minimally alters utility of economic indicators)
- Felon disenfranchisement distorts electoral outcomes
- Reinforces old anti-minority stereotypes, esp. stereotypes regarding black men
Dilulio’s “Two Million Prisoners are Enough” (1999)

The Problem

- “Current laws put too many nonviolent drug offenders in prison.”

- “Spending on correctional institutions is crowding out spending on other proven crime-reduction strategies, including improved policing.”
Dilulio’s “Two Million Prisoners are Enough” (1999)  

The New Recommendations

- “REPEAL mandatory-minimum drug laws”
- “REINVENT and REINVEST in probation and parole.”
- “STOP federalizing crime policy, and MODIFY federal sentencing guidelines.”
- “STUDY and PROMOTE faith-based crime prevention and restorative justice.”
- “REDOUBLE efforts at juvenile crime prevention.”
Du Bois on Race, Crime, and Prejudice

- Hardens Attitudes Toward African Americans
  - “There is a widespread feeling that something is wrong with a race that is responsible for so much crime, and that strong remedies are called for...Indeed to the minds of many this is the real Negro problem” (p. 241).
Friend or Relative Incarcerated by Education, Income and Race


1Whites were only asked this question in the 2001 Race, Crime and Public Opinion Survey.