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Review of Carceral State Studies and Application

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Abstract

This review considers a range of literature that contributes to a critical conversation encompassing radical opposition to the Carceral State and its logics, practices, and technologies. The *carceral* concept has been adopted and applied to multiple areas of the social world. With few exceptions, the term "Carceral State" has been used by many scholars without a comprehensive or agreed definition of the concept. This review is an attempt to piece together various pieces of literature that offer theoretical explorations of mass incarceration, as well as, how punishment and the logics of prison have informed economic, political, and social landscapes, compromising what has been identified by many scholars as a Carceral State.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The carceral concept has been adopted and applied to multiple areas of the social world to describe how institutions, people, and processes embody the logics, practices, and technologies of prison. While the term Carceral State[1] has been used by several scholars, and some have argued for a reconceptualization or an expansion of the concept Carceral State, rarely have scholars explicitly defined what the Carceral State is (for exception see Meiners, 2015).

Ideas of the Carceral State largely take place in critical conversations that include radical opposition to mass incarceration. Some have identified this area of scholarship as a critical carceral studies subfield (Meiners, 2016; Petrella, 2016). I will use the term *carceral state* studies to highlight that this review ultimately is an attempt to distinguish the use of the term Carceral State from other similar, yet distinct, terms. As with any critical conceptual analysis, there are various terms used to identify the Carceral State, including hyper-criminalization or punishment, the prison-industrial-complex, golden gulag, the new Jim Crow and prison nation, to name a few. What these concepts have in common is an exploration of the nuances of mass incarceration, including its origin and expansion, which is fundamental to carceral state studies. What distinguishes the Carceral State from other terminology, is an exploration of how carceral logic and carceral control expand beyond the prison, and is in fact embedded in the social fabric of the United States.

This paper is an attempt to identify commonalities in an emerging body of literature, as well as some unique distinctions. Some commonalities that will be explored in this paper, include: tough on crime politics; the relationship

between historical and modern forms of carceral oppression; and the resulting ease with which the divestment from social services has led to "creating crime." Lastly, this review will explore how the logics, practices, and technologies that regulate life inside prisons have been replicated in other "non-punitive" social institutions, which distinguishes the term Carceral State from other terms often used simultaneously (Meiners, 2015). This includes an exploration of carceral humanism, and what I have identified previously as carceral services (Richie & Martensen, 2020).

2 | TOUGH ON CRIME POLITICS

Highlighting the complexities of a Carceral State, Richie (2012) conceptualizes the *prison nation*[2] as a complex relationship between neoliberalism and tough-on-crime politics that diminish social support for disadvantaged groups and create punitive laws, strict enforcements, and increased control, surveillance and incarceration of people of color, and subsequently all groups outside hegemonic norms.[3] Many tough-on-crime policies focus on non-violent offenders, and in fact in many cases create crime by identifying several previously non-criminal behaviors as crimes. Most notably, behaviors associated with drug addiction (Alexander, 2010), homelessness and poverty (Ben-Moshe, 2017), and most recently immigration (Escobar, 2016) are criminalized and hyperpoliced. Policing using broken windows tactics result in police and state violence in marginalized communities, particularly against the most vulnerable members of the community (Ritchie, 2017). Ultimately, tough-on-crime politics ensure the mass incarceration of people of color and those farthest from hegemonic norms, particularly women of color (Richie, 2012), who, due to their positions at the nexus of racism and sexism, are impacted in devastating ways.

Literature on mass incarceration and its collateral consequences is the area of carceral state studies that has the greatest breadth of research and is most familiar to those outside of this area of study. The reconstruction of how we think about crime is important to carceral state scholars who are interested in highlighting the conditions for which prison became the solution to problems (Gilmore, 2020) and how public support is gained during these shifts. The role of neoliberal politic, which describes a set of political choices to minimize state responsibility and maximize private investment, cannot be understated as it illustrates what carceral state scholars identify as organized abandonment (Gilmore, 2007). A set of policies and ideologies that abandoned those farthest from hegemonic norms during times of crisis. Neoliberal public discourse gained public support for domestic wars on poverty, crime, drugs, and immigration, which reconstructed our political, social, and economic landscape in ways that lent itself to the buildup of a Carceral State (Alexander, 2010; Gottschalk, 2016). Using public media outlets, the state successfully redefined crime and convinced everyday Americans that crime and drugs were *public enemy number one*, using racially coded language[4] to identify the perpetrators (Alexander, 2010; Cammett, 2016). By redefining and socially constructing the "crime problem," mass incarceration and the subsequent establishment of the Carceral State has maintained itself for decades and is considered a necessary solution to several perceived "crime problems." The reconstruction of the crime problem, and how to solve it, finds support from existing structurally racist, sexist, capitalist, heteronormative, ableist ideologies that make this oppressive system easily adaptable to mainstream society, and targets those farthest from hegemonic norms (Richie, 2012). This is exacerbated by the "criminal" label. Miller and Stuart (2017) have identified this as *carceral citizenship*—"a distinct form of political citizenship for people that have been convicted of a crime" (p. 533). Moving beyond concepts of second-class citizenship, Miller and Stuart (2017) highlight that people with carceral citizenship follow specific laws, adhere to specific rules, and have access to some resources that people who have not been convicted of a crime do not have access to; thus those with carceral citizenship live in a unique "legal reality" (p. 533). Scholars also bring to our attention the ways that other vilified labels can get "added-on" to the criminal label, through gang injunctions (Durán, 2009) and sex offenders registries (Meiners, 2009), which serve to further surveil and punish people that fall into these constructed categories.

The racialized social construction of crime and criminality is rooted in history. Carceral state studies is interested in connecting mass incarceration to history as a modern form of racialized punishment.

3 | TARGETS OF THE CARCERAL STATE

Carceral state studies amplify that disproportionately, people of color, especially Black people, are targets of the Carceral State. Of great importance to carceral state studies is the incorporation of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1990) in our work. In other words, consideration of the ways race in conjunction with other social identities, like gender, sexuality, class, ability and perceived documentation status, and/or religion, impact people's lives in a Carceral State. The most groundbreaking work includes a racialized analysis of the ways the Carceral State affects not just men of color but also women of color (Haley, 2016), LGBTQ people (Mogul, Ritchie, & Whitlock, 2011), trans and gender nonconforming (GNC) people (Stanley & Smith, 2011), immigrants (Escobar, 2016), people with disabilities (Chapman, Carey, & Ben-Moshe, 2014), young people (Meiners, 2016), people of lower economic classes (Wacquant, 2009), and increasingly Muslim people, or people assumed to be Muslim (Jiwani, 2011).

The criminalization of Native, Black, and Brown people has been documented as a way to dehumanize and punish people of color since the inception of the United States (some examples include: Davis, 2000; Haley, 2016; Ross, 1998). The idea that Black, Chinese, Mexican, and Native peoples, and later all non-white people, are inherently criminal has permanently placed people of color at the fringes of acceptability. In a Carceral State, prison is the accepted solution to the "crime problem" that has been attached to the bodies of people of color, particularly as a form of anti-black racism in America (Davis, 2003).

Davis (2003) has had a tremendous influence on Carceral State studies, specifically in compelling us to consider the relationship between modern day prisons and chattel slavery, and thus making the case for a push toward the abolition of prisons. The development of the penitentiary *as a form of punishment* illustrates stark similarities to slavery, including the subordination of people, the removal of their human rights, isolation, forced dependence for basic human needs, and especially in the south, forced labor for wages lower than that of free people (Davis, 2003). Haley (2013, 2016) adds to this account the ways in which criminality was both racialized and gendered on the bodies of Black women that were deemed inferior, both as women and humans, in the convict leasing system, which simultaneously affirmed the stable identity of the white woman. When we consider the history of abolition and reform in terms of racialized punishment, we are brought to the realization that any attempt at reform or service does not lead to liberation (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2000; Rodriguez, 2006). Gilmore (2000) illustrates the nuances of the connection between slavery and the prison and how relentless the Carceral State is at completely abandoning anti-Black punishment, in the United States especially. A historical exploration of the abolition of slavery, lynching, and legal segregation also considered "radical" at the time, leads Davis (2003) to argue that history tells us that we can in fact make the case to argue against racist forms of punishment. And thus, if we can make the case that prisons are the modern form of racist punishment, especially anti-Black punishment, then it would be natural to argue against their existence (Davis, 2003). This critique of punishment, the penitentiary as a form of anti-Black punishment and an extension of slavery, naturally lends itself to carceral state studies and it can be argued as one of the core aspects of this subfield.

The connections between historic and modern forms of state sanctioned anti-Black punishment cannot be understated. Inspired by this work, other scholars have made connections between the legacies of punishment of non-Black people of color and how this impacts their current experience in a Carceral State. Several scholars have made the connections between histories of genocide and land removal and modern-day forms of confinement, in reservations and prisons (Estes, 2018; Ogden, 2005; Smith, 2015). Ross (1998, 2016) offers a history of the criminalization of Indigenous peoples and highlights that at its core, state sanctioned Indigenous punishment is about the confinement of Native peoples, both historically and currently. Similar to Smith's (2006) claim that Native people "must always be disappearing" (p. 2), Ross (2016) states that from genocide, to boarding schools, to reservations, to imprisonment, in a Carceral State, Native people find themselves punished and confined.

Increasingly, scholars are starting to shed light on the unique relationship between Latinx[5] people and punishment in a Carceral State (some examples include: Cacho, 2012; Flores, Camacho, & Santos, 2017; Lopez-Aguado,2018; Maldonado, 2019). Escobar (2016) provides great insight for carceral state scholars in her

intersectional analysis of the captivity of Latinx/a immigrant women. Escobar (2016) argues that we must understand the criminality ascribed to the bodies of Latinx/a migrant women in terms of Black criminality, particularly how it is applied to Black women. Escobar (2016) articulates the ways that the technologies of punishment that target Latinx migrants stems from a history of anti-Black punishment (Also see Loyd, 2011). There are three important and unique points Escobar (2009, 2016) makes for carceral state studies. The first is the connection between technologies and policies used in domestic wars against Black communities in America and the war on immigration that targets Latinx people. According to Escobar (2009, 2016), the existence of immigrant detention, as an institution of punishment and social order, the excessive surveillance and policing of Latinx people and communities, and the shift to harsh criminal sanctions for immigration offenses are rooted in the normalization and acceptance of similar punitive technologies for Black people and communities. Second, Escobar (2009, 2016) sheds political light on how the domestic war on drugs served as a prefix to the militarization of the U.S.- Mexico border and would later radically shift immigration policy. In need of a scapegoat, the U.S. government blamed Mexicans as the drug smugglers that infiltrated inner cities with drugs, which fueled the militarization of the border and impacted Latinx people on both sides (Escobar, 2009, 2016). In addition, the economic repercussions of domestic war against Black people resulted in the amnesty of 3 million Mexican people in America, which maintained a cheap labor supply while minimizing the United States role in illegal migration to feed its labor needs (Escobar, 2009, 2016). Lastly, Escobar (2009, 2016) draws attention to the neoliberalist, criminalized narrative painted on Latinx/a women and mothers as *both* criminal and state dependent and how this narrative derives from familiar stories painted on Black and Native women and mothers.

4 | NEOLIBERALISM AND DIVESTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Analysis of neoliberal politics and the divestment of social welfare, social service, and basic human needs is another theme in carceral state studies. Literature on the prison-industrial-complex and the cost of punishment is not explored in detail here,[6] but, what comes along with this is the divestment in social welfare and the cementing of this bootstraps ideology that punishes people that cannot "self-help," who are always the poor and people farthest from hegemonic norms.

Neoliberalism points to the minimizing of state responsibility and funding of social welfare services and the promotion of free-market capitalism and the private investment in public services, including healthcare, infrastructure, education, and prisons (Gottschalk, 2016). The mainstreaming of individual responsibility is enforced at the same time the free market promoted the globalization of jobs for cheap labor, which left working class people, especially Black people, unemployed with no state-sponsored safety net. Wacquant (2009) insinuates that the successes of the Civil Rights Movement informed neoliberal politics, which resulted in deindustrialization—the removal of industry jobs, which disproportionately affected Black men. Under neoliberalism, the state has no responsibility to replace these jobs or ensure the wellbeing of people that were newly unemployed. The resulting insecurities felt by those most affected by neoliberalism and the reconstruction of the U.S. labor market were addressed by tough-on-crime politics that forced conformity to the new structure of the job market (Wacquant, 2009).

Neoliberal politics and social divestment have had exceptionally devastating effects on poor people, especially Black women and other women of color. Essential to neoliberal politics is the discourse that criminalizes poor families of color and targets those "responsible" for reproduction, mothers of color (Cammett, 2016; Escobar, 2016, Roberts, 2011[7]). Another group disproportionally impacted by neoliberal politics are people that have mental or physical disabilities and people that are homeless, sometimes both. Ben-Moshe (2017) offers carceral state studies an intersectional understanding of how neoliberal politics devastates poor people and alongside mass incarceration developed a system of mass homelessness. Given that both prisons and homelessness devastate people emotionally and mentally, and in fact, create disability, prisons have become a hub for people that need mental health services, as well as other types of services (Ben-Moshe, 2017; Ware, Ruzsa, & Dias, 2014). This issue is exacerbated when we

consider how behaviors frequently found in people that are homeless, poor and/or people with disabilities are turned into criminal behaviors (Ben-Moshe, 2017).

Ultimately, the reconstruction of crime through get-tough politics, structural racism, and neoliberalism allow the elite class to maintain power and control over society by strategically, and inconspicuously, advancing off the disenfranchisement of those farthest from hegemonic norms, while keeping them in a permanent marginalized position (Richie, 2012). Connecting these political shifts to the larger agenda by those in power is essential to a critical conceptual analysis of the Carceral State. It was not several well-meaning "bad decisions," but rather an intentional system to keep power among a small group of people and maintain hegemonic values that are supported by a majority white population (Richie, 2012). To expand on this, Rodriguez (2006) utilizes the term *prison regime* to emphasize that the prison is not a static institution, but rather, part of a larger system of state power and human dominance, which finds its basis in white supremacy. The term *regime* speaks to the expansion of carcerality and the prison, both literal and metaphorical, into the global realm and the ways that state violence, punishment and prison are components of the creation and power of state making (Rodriguez, 2006).

Within carceral state studies there is a critical body of literature that makes unique contributions that consider the ways the Carceral State has impacted the economic landscape of the United States, or perhaps how the economic landscape led to the buildup of the prison-industrial-complex. Gilmore (2007) offers a comprehensive exploration of prison building as a response to several surplus crises in the state of California. Prison became a solution to the states surplus in people and "surplus in rural land,"[8] alongside mass unemployment–postdeindustrialization–and changes in industrial capitalism (Gilmore, 2007). Gilmore (2007) state's "putting half the population into prisons so the other half can make money watching them" (p. 228) was part of a geographical solution to socio-economic problems in the state of California that resulted in one of the biggest prison building projects in history. Of course, this did not come without resistance. Rodriguez (2006) identifies this uprising as "domestic political insurrection" (p. 16), which resulted in the simultaneous creation and targeting of radical intellectuals by the Carceral State, in the name of "law-and-order."

Where Gilmore (2007) explores how prison building became a solution to economic concerns, Wang (2018) considers how carcerality informs later forms of capitalism and how racial capitalism and carcerality work alongside one another. Arguing that the Carceral State works in tandem with global capitalism, Wang (2018) sees a reconstruction of racial capitalism that finds its roots in the exploitability and disposability of people of color. Through tactics of predatory loans and parasitic governance, namely, in terms of carceral fines and fees, we see existing forms of racial capitalism evolve in a Carceral State, and we see new opportunities to build capital, for example, for-profit surveillance technologies that criminalize communities of color (Wang, 2018).

5 | CARCERAL EXPANSION

Where carceral state studies really depart from explorations and explanations of mass incarceration is in the literature that considers how carceral logic, control, surveillance, and punishment infiltrates a variety of state agencies and institutions outside of the criminal legal system. Contemporary scholars and activists highlight how "non-punitive" institutions embody the prison and its logics. Foucault (1977) theoretically poses this idea when he describes a carceral archipelago—the development of a series of punitive institutions that function beyond criminal law—as a carceral network that extends beyond prison and normalizes and legitimizes the Carceral State. Fast-forwarding several decades later, we can see the actuality of this carceral archipelago and how it has transported prison logic and practice into everyday social institutions all over the United States, and increasingly on a global scale. Meiners (2015) defines the Carceral State as:

> multiple intersecting state agencies and institutions—includingnot-for-profits doing the work of the
> state—that have punishing functions and effectively regulate poor communities, including child and

family services, welfare/workfare agencies, public education, immigration, and health and human ser-
vices (p. 122).

One of the most researched pathways from a state institution into the criminal legal system is literature on the
school-to-prison pipeline,[9] which largely impacts public schools located in low-income communities of color. Meiners
(2015) uses language of the Carceral State to emphasize that the current connection between education and the
punishment of youth of color, although always present, is now embedded in the logic of the Carceral State. In this
way, we can see schools mimic the criminal legal system by adopting mandatory punishments (zero tolerance) for a
wide range of behaviors (mostly noncriminal and nonviolent behaviors), increased use of suspension and expulsion
and police officer presence in schools (Hirschfield, 2008). This section will explore literature that emphasizes the
ways that state agencies and institutions, particularly agencies of service and care, intersect with the criminal legal
system in a Carceral State.

Carceral expansion is most apparent in state agencies responsible for oversight that come into direct contact
with poor people, people of color, and those farthest from hegemonic norms, and increasingly immigrant people.
An obligation to participate in carceral control, surveillance and at times punishment, has been forced upon state
agencies at the command of the Carceral State. This has created direct pipelines from state agencies to the prison
system. Beckett and Murakawa (2012) identify this as the *Shadow of the Carceral State*, where they highlight path-
ways from civil and administrative state agencies into the criminal legal system, as well as, the ways in which civil
and administrative state agencies "mimic traditional punishment" (p. 222). Some examples of the covert ways the
Carceral State reconstructs the function of civil and administrate state agencies are: parole revocation, the incar-
ceration of debtors, incarceration of juvenile status offenders, civil sex offender legislation and alleged immigration
law violations, including the detainment of people that are in "limbo" in the immigration system—like people seek-
ing asylum (Beckett & Murakawa, 2012). Of significant importance is Beckett and Murakawa's (2012) amplification
of how these non-criminal behaviors can result in incarceration *through* administrative or civil pathways, not crimi-
nal, as is the case for people who are incarcerated because of a parole violation (administrative) or because of
inability to pay a legal debt (civil). The complexities of these hybrid pathways into incarceration is most apparent in
the immigration system; this is evident by the growth of crimmigration studies that research the inter-
section between immigration law and procedure with the criminal legal system (Hernández, 2013; Urbina &
Peña, 2019). Although not explored in great detail here, what is significant for carceral state studies is the ways
that carceral logic—"[a] commonsense notion of society... to maintain safety and order through unquestioned
social control [and punishment]" (Annamma, 2016)—is legitimized to the extent that it becomes the response to
arising social "problems" and turns these social concerns, like immigration, into criminal problems that require a
criminal response.

6 | CARCERAL HUMANISM

Within literature on carceral expansion is a dearth of scholarship that highlights the ways in which the service indus-
try[10] is co-opted by the Carceral State, sometimes unintentionally by well-intentioned people and organizations.
There are several recent works that amplify the ways in which social service efforts to rehabilitate and reform actu-
ally "strengthen carceral logics and the pathologizing of those incarcerated" (p. 7), those who are "at-risk" of incarcer-
ation, and those who are entering back into the community (O'Brien, Kim, Beck, & Bhuyan, 2020). Examples of these
efforts include attempts to create more efficient prisons for vulnerable people and the creation of alternatives to, or
diversions from, incarceration. This includes the benevolent discourse around alternatives to dentention for immi-
grant women and families (Gómez Cervantes, Menjívar, & Staples, 2017). Often, these reform efforts are "offloaded
onto community-based actors and organizations" (Miller, 2014, p. 327), many being nonprofit organizations run by
college-educated whites that preserve social inequality and negate community efforts led by people of color

(INCITE, 2007). This has negative impacts on families of color who are criminalized and stigmatized by the mostly white professionals working for both the courts and social services (Lopez, 2017). This process has been called *carceral humanism*—"a discursive strategy of rebranding or repackaging carceral control under the caring provision of social services" (Heiner & Tyson, 2017, p. 4).

Heiner and Tyson (2017) describe carceral humanism in the context of gender responsive services[11] that work alongside the criminal legal system to "better" respond and provide service to system-involved women and girls. However, in working alongside the criminal legal system, these services often create a binary between people that deserve these services and people who do not, or as Heiner and Tyson (2017) argue, gender responsive services contribute to the expansion of the Carceral State that acts as a "neoliberal gatekeeper of social services" (p. 3) and make arrest and confinement necessary to receive "wraparound rehabilitative and reentry services" (p. 3). In addition, providing service to "at-risk" people requires hyper surveillance of the communities where these supposed at-risk people are, and often overwhelms social services that could otherwise be of great benefit to people in vulnerable circumstances (Richie & Martensen, 2020).

Carceral humanism is especially present in efforts to address the illegal sex trade industry (Anasti, 2020; Dewey & St. Germain, 2017; Musto, 2016). These studies consider how gender responsive programming that relies on a carceral logic has blurred the lines between punishment systems and social service programs. It is interesting to note that this research highlights our modern day criminal legal system's outdated understanding of women's "criminality" as a perversion of women's true nature (Dewey & St. Germain, 2017; McCorkel, 2013). The idea of punitive help and rehabilitative services is alarmingly illustrated in McCorkel's (2013) study of a privately-run drug rehabilitation program inside a women's prison designed to *help* women overcome drug addiction. Described as "coercive therapy" (p. xi) this program utilizes confrontational tactics to cure the women's "diseased selves," which often leaves them broken and worse off than before their involvement with the treatment program (McCorkel, 2013). The idea that women are diseased and inherently flawed makes them susceptible to the "external management and control" of the state (McCorkel, 2013, p. 12). Although not explained in great detail here, other areas of study that focus on carceral humanism include youth services—especially in conjunction with family services (Mountz, 2020), re-entry services (Welsh and Levya, 2020), immigration services (Bergen & Abji, 2020), and domestic violence and sexual assault services (Richie, 2012; Whalley & Hackett, 2017)

One final area of carceral expansion that must be explored is the influence of mainstream social movements on incarceration rates and strengthening of the Carceral State. Many mainstream social movements adopt a carceral logic that aims to use the criminal legal system to advance their efforts (Gottschalk, 2006; Heiner & Tyson, 2017; Lamble, 2013; Richie, 2012). The impact that this has had on grassroots efforts access to resources and acceptance as legitimate movements for social change cannot be understated. The victims' rights movement (Gottschalk, 2006), the anti-violence movement (Richie, 2012), and the queer rights movement (Lamble, 2013) have all pushed for active participation by the criminal legal system to keep a small group of people safe, while leaving many people more vulnerable to both interpersonal violence and state violence (Gottschalk, 2006; Heiner & Tyson, 2017; Lamble, 2013; Richie, 2012; Whalley & Hackett, 2017). In fact, the idea of intersectionality stems from the ways that the women rights movement and the civil rights movement strategically left Black women, and other women of color, outside of their understanding of who can be a victim of violence (Crenshaw, 1990). Although these efforts were and are, well-intentioned, carceral state scholars and grass-roots activists have very explicitly highlighted the ways in which these efforts have in fact funneled people of color into the criminal legal system. One example is the way that hate crime legislation targets people of color for prison, while at the same time, queer and trans people of color are left outside of the protections of this type of legislation, and are often times incarcerated for defending themselves against such attacks (Stanley & Smith, 2011). When these progressive movements embed themselves in the social fabric of our nation, we are both free to ignore the suffering of those unprotected and celebrate the incarceration of those we have come to believe are inherently dangerous, bad people (Dolovich, 2011).

7 | CONCLUSION

The term Carceral State is increasingly used and applied to studies within and outside of Criminology. Like any emerging perspective for understanding the criminal legal system, there is no one definition of Carceral State; carceral state studies is constantly evolving and at times contradicting itself. In fact, the complexities and power of the Carceral State demand that our scholarship be just as complex and anticipate change in a Carceral State.

In February 2019, The Center for the Study of Women (CSW) at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) held a conference entitled *Feminists Confronting the Carceral State*.[12] A common theme at the conference was the need for anti-carceral feminist research, or abolition feminism, and theory to be at the forefront of feminist scholarship (Wolf, 2019). While there is a growing criticism of mass incarceration in the United States, carceral state scholars are still attuned to responses that may in fact strengthen the Carceral State (e.g., reform and rehabilitation). Therefore, criminologists and social justice scholars have a social responsibility to put the aforementioned literature at the forefront of the work we do, before we become complacent in a new punitive system of social order and control. As scholars and activists, we must ensure that we evaluate proposed reforms and efforts to decarcerate.

This review does not seek to be exhaustive or restrictive; but rather, it is an attempt to build a comprehensive understanding of the meaning of Carceral State and to encourage scholars to do important, critical work. Based on the literature this review explores, the Carceral State can currently be considered a state that values a carceral logic, which identifies a variety of social problems—like homelessness, poverty, racism, homophobia and immigration—as criminal problems that require a criminal solution. Scholars of carceral state studies understand the historical roots of racialized punishment and recognize that mass incarceration is not an issue of mass crime, but rather a "solution" to a variety of economic, political, and social problems, and access to services and reform that could arguably address some of these structural issues are co-opted by the Carceral State and in fact only serve to empower and extend its reach. As such, carceral state scholars must argue for radical change for true liberation without the support of the Carceral State. After all, "Prisons are not feminist,[13] and service is not liberation" (Richie & Martensen, 2020).

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ENDNOTES

[1]I have made the political choice to capitalize Carceral State the same way, nation states, and states/territories within the United States are capitalized. A conceptual analysis of the Carceral State illustrates the way in which carcerality is inherently embedded in the fabric of our nation, and thus, I find it fitting to capitalize Carceral State.

[2]Richie (2012) provides the most comprehensive description of prison nation in chapter four of *Arrested Justice*.

[3]Carceral State has targeted not just people of color, but poor people, young people, disabled people, queer people, trans and gender non-conforming people, women, undocumented people, and Muslim people, using this term is a political choice to be inclusive of all of these groups. Using the term outside of hegemonic norms is used to be inclusive of all these groups of people.

[4]Terms such as *welfare queen*, backed by one example of a Black woman that was involved in welfare fraud, and the *strapping young buck* buying T-bone steak with food stamps with inherent racial undertones, identified Black people as both undeserving and criminal (Cammett, 2016; López, 2015).

[5]The usage of Latinx as a gender-neutral pan-ethnic term is used to describe a variety of people from diverse backgrounds. This paper does not assume that Latinx people identify as Latinx. Using this term is a political choice made by the author to identify a diverse group of people that the state has identified as Hispanic, and do so in a gender inclusive way.

[6]Although this literature also influences carceral state studies.

[7]Dorothy Roberts has had a tremendous influence on carceral state studies in terms of the relationship between prison and child welfare. See references.

[8]The quotations indicate a concern with the colonial understanding of land as surplus.

[9]School-to-prison pipeline literature is abundant and not discussed in detail here as it does not always contribute to literature on the Carceral State, see Mallett (2016) for a school-to-prison pipeline literature review.

[10]In forth coming work, I have identified this as *carceral services*, also see Richie & Martensen, 2020.

[11]which stems from gender responsive justice (GRJ) a feminist response to state violence against system-involved women and girls that only built up the Carceral State and simultaneously interfered progress of grassroots efforts working against gender violence, both interpersonal and state (Gottschalk, 2006; Kim, 2015; Richie, 2012).

[12]Where I served as an attendee and presenter.

[13]*Prisons are not Feminist* as a proclamation is graciously gifted to us all by the legendary Mariame Kaba.

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