

Chapter 1--Race, Crime, and Justice: Definitions and Context

Race and Crime: Geographies of Injustice
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Learning outcomes

- Explain what mass incarceration is and how it impacts race in the United States today.
- Summarize the connection between racialized mass incarceration and strides toward racial justice in United States.
- Define terms key to understanding race, crime and justice in the United States.
- Demonstrate how race and crime are socially constructed.

Key term: mass incarceration

- a rate of imprisonment that is markedly above the historical and comparative norm” for a given society
- imprisonment “ceases to be the incarceration of individual offenders and becomes the systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population.”

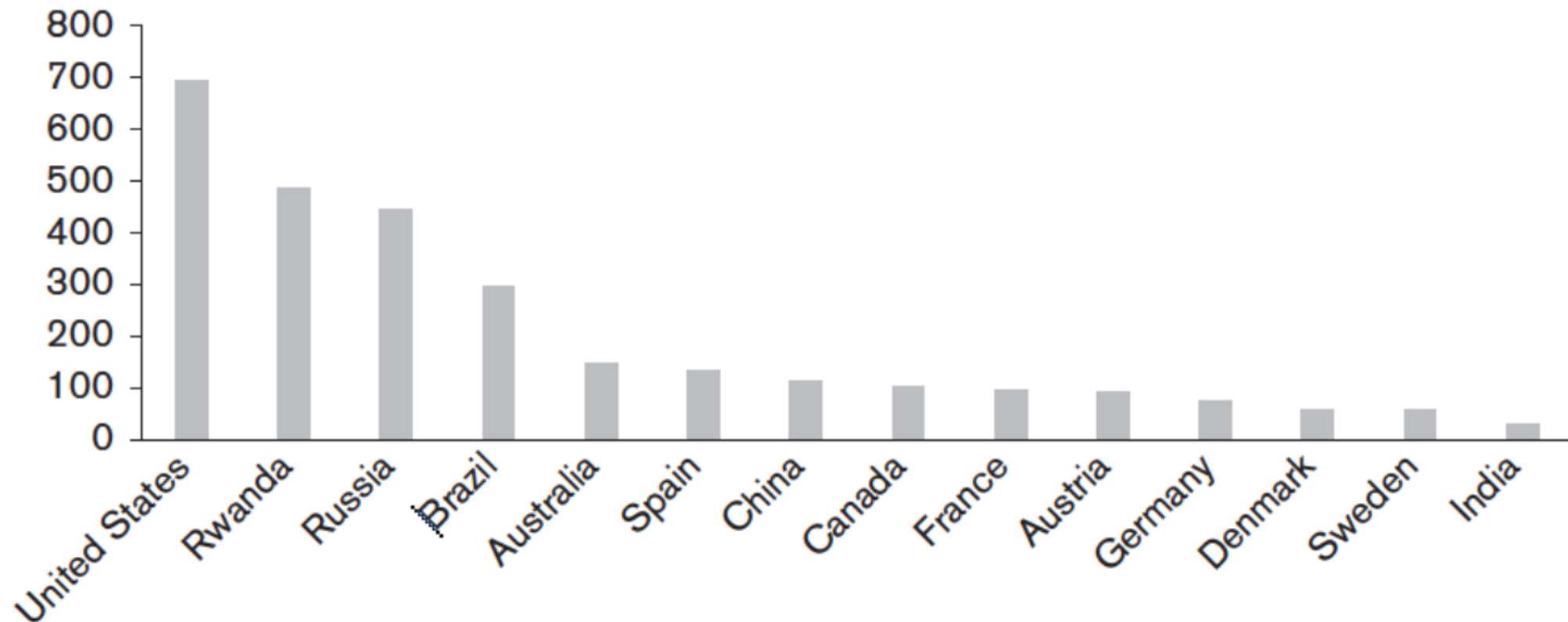


Figure 1.1 International rates of imprisonment, per 100,000 residents. Source: Data from Sentencing Project, *Trends in U.S. Corrections*, 2015.

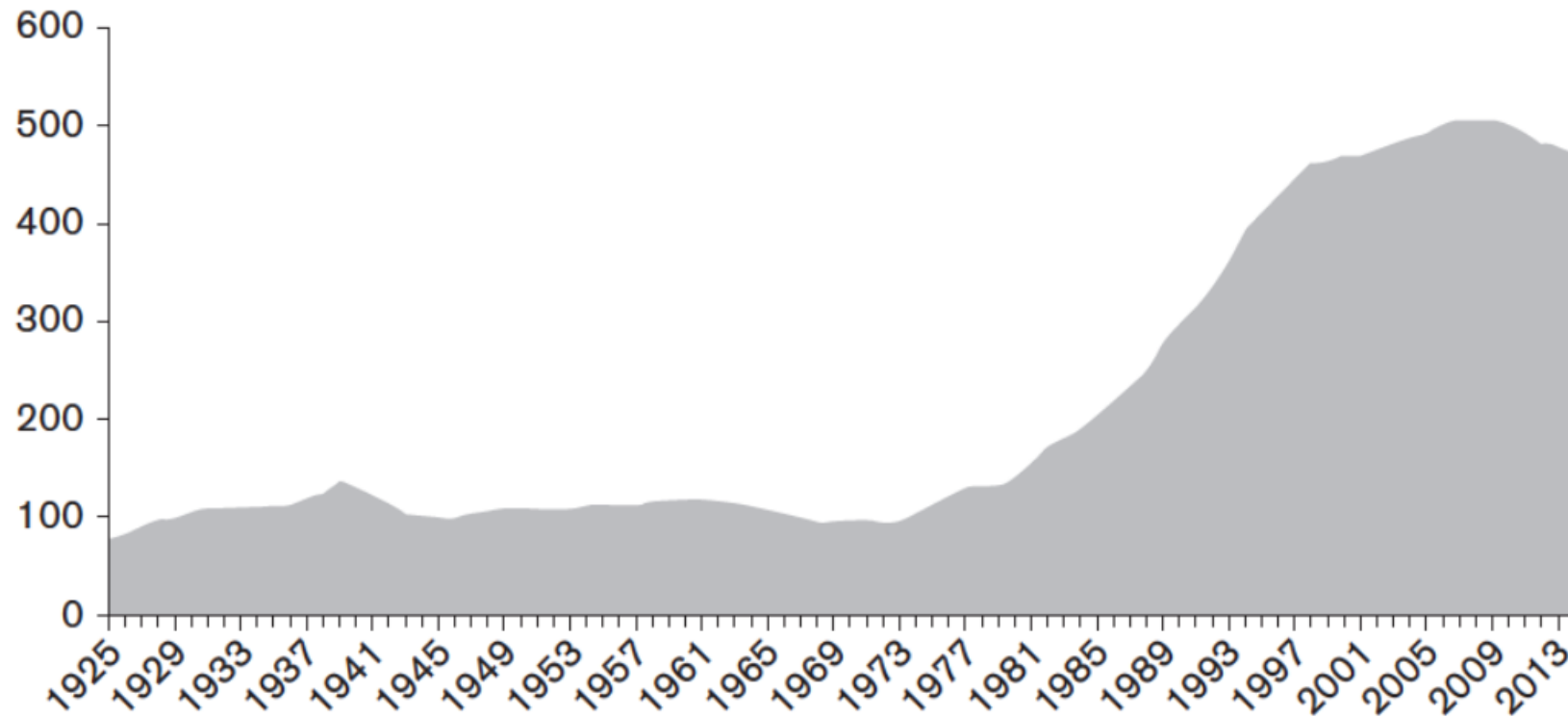


Figure 1.2 State and federal imprisonment rate (excluding jails) in the United States per 100,000, 1925–2014. Sources: E. Ann Carson and Daniela Golinelli, *Prisoners in 2012: Trends in Admissions and Releases, 1991–2012*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, December 2013 [revised September 2014]); Danielle Kaebler, Lauren Glaze, Anastasios Tsoutis, and Todd Minton, *Correction Populations in the United States, 2014*, Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, December 2015 [revised January 2016]), www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus14.pdf; Margaret Warner Cahalan and Lee Anne Parsons, *Historical Corrections Statistics in the United States, 1850–1984*, NCJ-102529 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 1986), www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/hcsus5084.pdf.

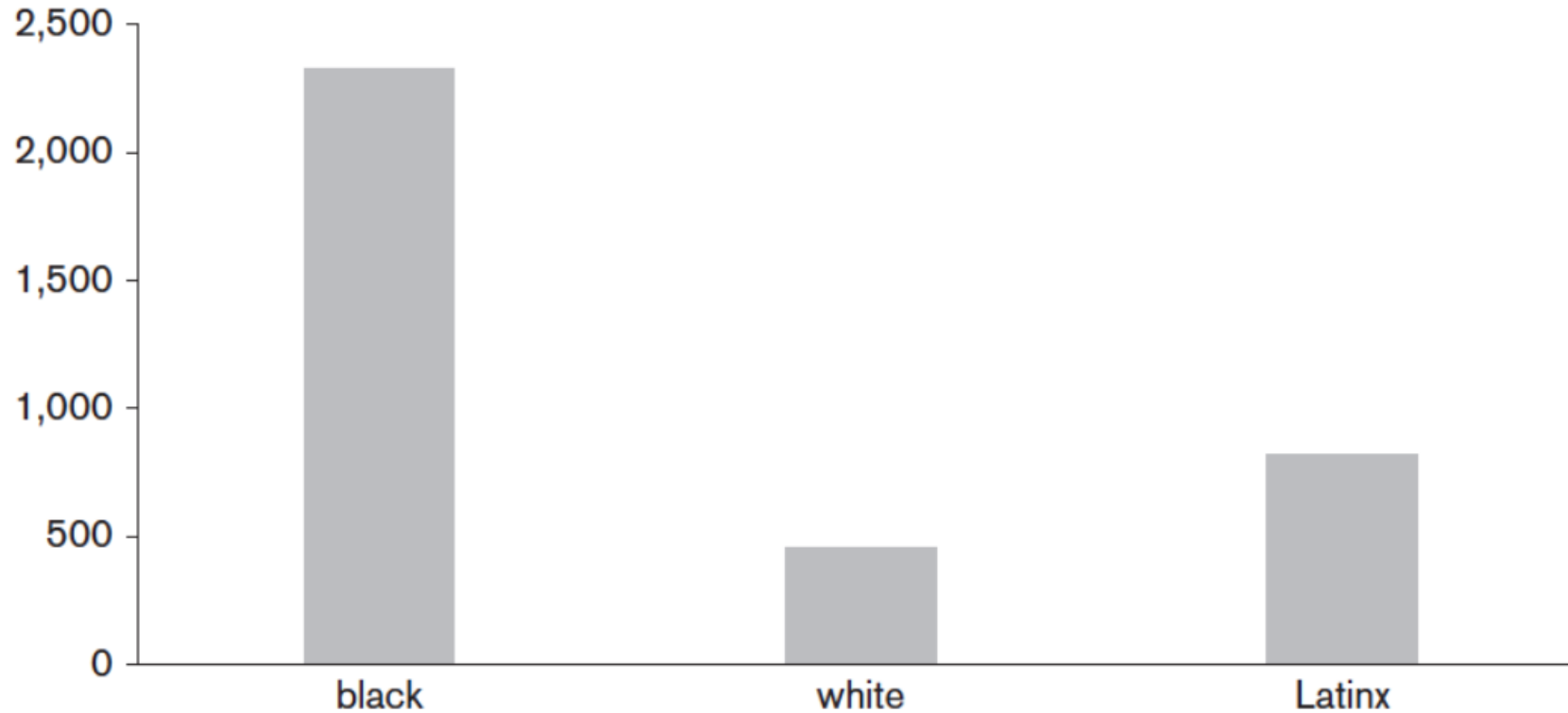


Figure 1.3 Rates of incarceration (including prison and jails) by race and ethnicity, per 100,000.
Source: E. Ann Carson, 2018. *Prisoners in 2016*, US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, table 6. www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p16.pdf.

Key term: coloniality

- refers to the processes by which colonial-era mechanisms of power were subsumed and integrated into the social order.
- Coloniality consists of two dominant practices:
 - (1) violent geographical appropriation of resources, places, and people and
 - (2) racial and patriarchal knowledge production.

Key term: sovereign force

- refers to the process by which rulers use instruments of violence—conquest, war, and even the criminal justice system—to rule over others.
- In colonial conquest, sovereign force meant the violent appropriation of people and places for the health, wealth, and continued domination of the sovereign.

Key term: state power

- the use of government intervention, regulation and violence over the everyday governance of society

Key term: knowledge production

- refers to the methods by which truth claims are asserted and the processes by which those claims are bolstered and disseminated.
 - Examples:
 - $2+2=4$; additive properties of math; through math courses, textbooks, etc.
 - Earth is round; scientific observation; through science class, textbooks, etc.
 - Crime is bad; experience, newspaper reports, etc; through political elites, media sources, interactions with others

Key term: Premature death

- the systematic and institutional organization of the early death of many nonwhites, especially black Americans

Key term: social construction

- meaning making by society
- Example: race built through
 - institutional structures: census forms, college applications, etc.
 - ideological struggle: events in Charlottesville, #blacklivesmatter, immigration debates
 - individual proclivities and habits: where one desires to live, one's friends, one's ideas about other races that shape behavior (i.e. crossing street when confronted with group of youth of color)

Table 1.1 How Americans are murdered, 2014

Total murders where weapon is known	Firearms	Knife or other cutting instrument	Other weapons: blunt objects, arson, strangulation, poison, etc.	Personal weapons: hands, fists, etc.
11,961	8,124	1,567	1,610	660

SOURCE: Reiman and Leighton 2017, 92.

Table 1.2 How Americans are *really* murdered, 2014

Total murders where weapon is known	Occupational hazard or disease	Firearms	Knife or other cutting instrument	Other weapons: blunt objects, arson, strangulation, poison, etc	Personal weapons: hands, fists, etc.
166,237	54,276	8,124	13,567	89,610	660

SOURCE: Reiman and Leighton 2017, 93.

Key term: white supremacy

- structural practices by which whiteness as a system of lived advantage and privilege is reproduced and sustained
 - Example:
 - Whites and lack of suspicion

In class exercise

- Individually:
 - Write on the following: When did you first learn that you had a “race”?
- In groups of 3-5 students:
 - Share your responses
 - Consider: What are the similarities and differences amongst group member answers? Any common themes? Any surprises?

In class exercise: Social construction of crime

- Individually:
 - Choose a crime and examine how this crime is defined in 5 different penal codes
 - Consider: What are the similarities and differences in the definition of the crime and the punishment of it?
 - What is the definition of the crime in the penal code? Are there elements that make that particular crime more serious?
 - How does the definition of the crime change between states?
 - How does the punishment of the crime change between states?
- In groups of 3-5 students:
 - Share your responses
 - Consider: What are the similarities and differences amongst group member answers? Any common themes? Any surprises?

In class exercise: Resurgence of white supremacy

- Watch:
 - Violence in Charlottesville, *New York Times*
- Individual writing reflection:
 - Were you surprised by these events? If so, what was surprising? If not, why not?
 - How should society respond to these events?
 - Should white supremacists be allowed to march and protest?
 - Should these actions be considered illegal or even crimes?
- In groups or larger class:
 - Share responses

Discussion: Reasonable racism

- How have Supreme Court cases established 'reasonable racism' in the law?
- Do you think a legal doctrine of reasonable racism is good Supreme Court practice given racial practices amongst society?

Discussion: Reasonable racism

- Can you think of anyways that 'reasonable racism' pervades everyday practice?
- Or put another way, how do you think race and racist ideas shape how people make assumptions about people and spaces?