Value, Visibility and the Demand for Justice

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This article begins with issues of mourning and commemoration that arose in the context of the killings in the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. It then relates them with questions regarding the worth and visibility of Black life. It then connects the political present with the political economy of race and the experience of state violence as these have structured urban America. The article ends by discussing issues posed by the social facts of caste atrocity and Black killings. It probes the relationship between dehumanising violence, political subjectivity and social justice.

The entry of a Black president in the White House is often used to commemorate the arrival of a “post-racial” society in the United States (US). However, the highly publicised killings of African-Americans by police, followed by the murder of nine people during Bible study at the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal (EAME) Church in Charleston, South Carolina earlier this summer underscores racial exclusion and state-sanctioned violence as a persistent, everyday reality for much of Black America.

To be sure racialising processes are specific to American society. They are structured by longer-term histories of mass incarceration, economic exclusion, and spatial segregation that enable the devaluation of Black life. Yet this “epidemic” of African-American killings offers an occasion to think broadly (and comparatively) about structures of sanctioned brutality and human devaluation that cut across both race and caste-divided societies. Indeed, global attention to racial violence comes at a time when Dalit killings are on the rise in India, and as the atrocity of caste continues to be euphemised, individuated and “managed” by the state.¹

Does the conjoint logic of exclusion and spectacularisation that has historically structured the lives of African-Americans bear any resemblance to the political life of caste in India today? Might we speculate that racial injustice in the US, though it is distinct from the peculiar character of caste, also shares something with it, namely, that the repetitive structure of violence against African-Americans, or Dalits is not merely instrumental, but also symbolically overdetermined and purposive in character?

Though primarily concerned with Black killings in the US and the demand for racial justice,
my reflections end by considering their uncanny resemblance to caste atrocity, an issue about which I have written extensively in the past, and which raises broader questions about the relationship between democracy and inequality, freedom and violence in two rather distinctive postcolonial societies (Rao 2009, 2011).

This study begins with issues of mourning and commemoration that arose in the context of the killings in the EAME Church. It relates them with questions regarding the worth and visibility of Black life that has been raised in the broader struggle against police violence by the Black Lives Matter campaign. It connects the political present with the political economy of race and the experience of state violence as these have structured urban America and ends by discussing issues posed by the social fact of caste atrocity and Black killings: questions about the relationship between dehumanising violence, political subjectivity and social justice. The idea is to use the spectacular re-entry of “race” onto the American public sphere as the occasion for broader reflection on the place of historical violence in the constitution of social life.

**Killing and Dying**

From Ferguson and Staten Island to Baltimore, patterns of police brutality have become unmistakable and undeniable: Michael Brown, killed on the streets of Ferguson, St Louis after being shot six times, twice in the head; Walter Scott, shot in the back in Charleston, South Carolina; 12-year-old Tamir Rice, shot in a park in Cleveland, Ohio, while playing with a toy gun; Eric Garner, choked to death after being stopped for selling cigarettes in Staten Island; Freddie Gray, dead from spinal injuries suffered in police custody in Baltimore; and most recently, the suicide of Sandra Bland, in police custody after she was arrested for failing to signal a lane change in Waller County, Texas.

The brutal killings of three men and six women by 21-year-old White supremacist, Dylann Storm Roof, on 17 June at the historic EAME Church add to this already long list. It is true that the Charleston killings were not an act of police violence like the others, but the work of an individual perpetrator, whose actions implicate a long Southern history of White supremacy. However, it would be too simple to regionalise the EAME killings in this manner. Rather, when viewed together in a sequence, the taking of African–American lives suggests continuities across a state that kills its African–American subjects with impunity and White supremacy: it exposes the roots of legislated prejudice in mythologies of Black bestiality and race contamination.

The EAME Church was no stranger to violence. The church had been burned to the ground as early as 1822, after it was discovered that ex-slave Denmark Vesey had planned a slave rebellion. Like other Black churches, which became special targets of racial violence in the Civil Rights era, the EAME Church was attacked because it was a generative space from which demands for Black rights and self-respect have historically originated. Michael Eric Dyson, a sociologist and ordained minister writes,
The black sanctuary breathes in black humanity while the pulpit exhales unapologetic black love (Eric Dyson 2015).

Eric Dyson is drawing our attention to the fact that Black churches like EAME have traditionally functioned as spaces of social healing and the development of Black self-regard, where the necessary work of humanising the self can take place as a prelude to social action and political protest. The dissonance between the Black church as a place of Black love, and its transformation into a battlefield for the protection of White womanhood—Roof is supposed to have said that he had to kill the members of the Bible study group because Black men were raping White women—is especially poignant in this regard and points to the anxieties over sexual intimacy that continue to structure the racial imagination.

There is something fundamentally theological in the structure of White supremacy in its belief in eschatology of racial cleansing, and genocidal violence. Indeed, Roof’s actions remind us that racism is effective precisely because it functions as a political theology, as a recurrent mythic structure that is unchanging even as historical time, otherwise seems to move forward. However, the killings at the EAME also reflect the instability of a Christian theology torn between visions of vengeance and apocalypse, on the one hand, and images of the wretched and forgotten, who will inherit the “Kingdom to Come,” on the other. And this is where the prophetic function of the Black church provides shelter and hope in a racially alienating society. While the EAME welcomed a stranger, Roof, and offered him hospitality as an extension of Christian teaching, Roof’s own response drew upon a theology of vengeance and racial apocalypse: he responded to Black love in the language of punishment and retribution.

In a powerful comment on the events—powerful because it is rare in mainstream media—Comedy Central’s Jon Stewart noted that icons of White supremacy—from the Confederate flag that flies atop South Carolina’s state house, to the roads named for the (defeated) Southern heroes of the civil war—had a persistent presence in everyday life, “and yet the white guy feels his country is being taken away from him.” Thus, White supremacist violence, which could be accessible to political engagement, is condemned to recur, and no lessons will be learnt, Stewart implied. Since then, long-standing demands to remove the Confederate flag from state property in several Southern states have been met. President Barack Obama’s moving eulogy for the slain Reverend Clementa Pinckney began with a call for the nation to acknowledge the inexcusable persistence of racial inequality and ended with his singing Amazing Grace, the Christian hymn written by the English poet and clergyman John Newton in 1779 that went on to become the spiritual armamentation of the American Civil Rights movement.

Yet images of Black vulnerability haunt the body politic. The poet Claudia Rankine describes this anxious everyday as an “ambient feeling that at any given moment, a Black person is
being killed in the street or in his home by the armed hatred of a fellow American” (Rankine 2015). She describes a present haunted by memories of devastated Black lives and a psyche structured by waiting and witnessing where one either mourns untimely death, or anticipates further violent death. Unlike the retributive imagination of the White supremacist, memorialising lost lives exerts a force upon the living, and requires that we bear witness to a history that implicates everyone, and spares no one.  

**Black Lives Matter**

Black Lives Matter, the movement founded by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi counters Black despair through an insistent demand. Their demand, the insistence that Black Lives Matter, exacerbates the logic of radical democracy to challenge White supremacy. To do so, the Black Lives Matter campaign shuttles between condemning the devaluation of Black life and demanding remediation. Political devaluation and excessive visibilisation—what inaugurates the death of African-Americans at the hands of the police—is also, and ironically, the logic behind the claim for subaltern rights. This requires that the conditions of dispossession—that is, “you are black, and therefore do not possess the right to humanity”—is both reproduced, and challenged in demanding racial inclusion.

The political philosopher Judith Butler asks

> what happens when the universal is wielded, precisely, by those who signify its contamination, by those socially excluded and marginalised? Is it possible that conventional and exclusionary norms of universality can, through perverse reiterations, produce unconventional formulations of universality that expose the limited and exclusionary features of the former...at the same time, that they mobilise a new set of demands? (2000: 40-41).

This demand for a share in the universal is activated when the worth of Black life is stressed to counter its illegitimacy as a form of life and its invisibility as human suffering.

The relationship between worth and visibility is particularly charged in American history. If slavery was predicated on the slave’s objectification (as property) and supported by violent strategies of dehumanisation, anti-slavery visualised the humanity of the enslaved, by inciting White empathy. For example, Josiah Wedgwood’s 1787 medallion, an applied relief of a kneeling slave with the inscription, “Am I not a man and a brother?” was modelled after the seal for the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade founded in that year by Abolitionist Thomas Clarkson.  

Wedgwood sent medallions to Benjamin Franklin in Pennsylvania in February 1788, and they were an immediate success Clarkson (1839) wrote:
The design was also used in printed form on plates, enamel boxes for patches, as well as on tea caddies and for tokens. The irony of anti-slavery’s commodification of suffering in the interest of proclaiming slave humanity should not be lost on us: it reprises the logic of property that justified the enslavement of human beings, though now in the interest of inciting liberal empathy and White guilt (Ellison 1996).

Other, more insurgent practices also prevailed. These were organised around a radical reconceptualisation of Black personhood. Sojourner Truth’s audacious question, “Ain’t I A Woman,” is relevant: it connected the inequities of race with the exclusionary logic of gender at a time when White suffragists elided their relationship to race privilege. Or take the powerful example of the “coloured man” and his constitution. In 1863, a neo-literate ex-slave from New Orleans commented on the brutal and enduring contradictions of slavery and the hypocrisy of its abolition. He did so through a dialogue with the founding documents, the American Constitution (especially, its preamble), and Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation. The coloured man, as he referred to himself, painstakingly reproduced the text of the constitution in his uncertain hand as though the act of writing was a way of claiming the constitution for himself, as his right. In the margin of selections from the constitution and the emancipation proclamation he inserted commentary contrasting the emancipatory potential of the texts, against evidence of Whites’ denial of rights to newly freed Black citizens. He challenged those parts of the text where his appearance was marked by its simultaneous devaluation, that is, the 3/5 clause of the constitution. Instead, he channelled the radical democratic aspirations of the preamble to argue: “We [are] the people” (Hager 2013).

In contrast, W E B Du Bois’s 1935 magnum opus, Black Reconstruction aligns the origins of modern racial capitalism with slavery’s legislated emancipation. Indeed, Du Bois argued, counter-intuitively, that the “Negro problem” originated with the legal freedoms announced by the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments. Haunted by its past, American democracy could only ever make an appearance as abolition-democracy: it was a name that marked the intimacy between a specific history (American slavery) and a universal idea (democracy). In bringing the terms into proximity with each other, Du Bois also produced a pithy reflection on the grounding contradictions of American democracy, its historical entanglement with enslavement and unfreedom.

The experience of enslavement was foundational for the politics and aesthetics of Black radicalism. In a foreword to a collection of essays by that name, the writer Alain Locke argued that the “New Negro” was a product of the New World: since slavery rendered return impossible, the Negro was cut off from her past and lived in a present that was both hurtful and demeaning (Locke 1925). A long and complex history of Black radicalism—activism, cultural production and philosophical reflection including by Locke, among scores of others—challenged this annihilation of African-Americans from the archive.
of American history in a number of ways that included: aesthetic experiment; demands for political separation and armed violence; a commitment to Afro-Asian unity and Marxist internationalism; the struggle for civil and human rights (Martin Luther King); and social assimilation.

**Defacements**

The modern world’s pre-eminent revolutionary society is haunted by the afterlife of that “peculiar institution,” plantation slavery, including Jim Crow, organised lynching campaigns, the war on poverty, Reagan’s war on drugs, and beyond. Each of these sociopolitical transformations has depended on racial logic, while simultaneously reconstituting “race.”

Let me turn now to a brief exploration of the political economy of race via the prism of social exclusion and spatial segregation. These are conjoint factors that have shaped the landscape of urban America, enabled the extensive policing of American cities and justified the mass incarceration of African-American men. They are the enabling, though often invisible, context of ongoing social exclusion that makes an appearance episodically through spectacles of state violence, or vigilantism.

Urban housing is perhaps the best site for exploring the paradox of abstract inclusion and concrete exclusion. Indeed, Black housing shows up the problem of Black capitalisation more generally (Coates 2014). The sociologist Loic Wacquant locates the plantation, the project/ghetto and the prison as sites for aggregating Black bodies, which are then subject to distinctive routines of discipline and dehumanisation. In his accounting, the American ghetto/project is a key intermediary destination in racialising processes (Wacquant 2002).

Housing scarcity became a significant issue in the Northern cities in the aftermath of African-Americans’ mass migration from the South to the North. About 1.5 million migrated between 1910 and 1930 and another 3 million followed suit between 1940 and 1960. At the time, practices of red lining and racial covenanting were instituted to protect the right to (White) property ownership. These were important financial-juridical instruments that precluded African-Americans from accumulating private property, that is, the single-family home, by excluding them from credit markets. Exclusion from mortgage financing, and the imposition of a cess for Black homeowners in the form of an inflated and unsustainable monthly payment that was supposed to lead towards eventual home ownership, instead, led to home foreclosures (Coates 2014).

Meanwhile, the African-American working poor and the underclass was largely concentrated in the ghetto, a symbol of urban outcasting and a social consequence of the structured exclusion of African-Americans from the housing market. However, by the 1960s, the ghetto was on its way to becoming functionally obsolete and unviable. Landlords decided to burn their buildings and take the insurance money as profit.
explanations blamed the insurance companies—since their non-renewals of policies might have encouraged the landlords—or the residents themselves. The arsons slowed significantly in the later part of the decade, but the after-effects were still felt into the early 1990s. The usual strategy was driving out tenants by cutting off the heat or water, making sure the fire insurance was paid up, and calling in a “torch.” An article in *Time* from 1977 noted that there had been over 7,000 fires in New York City’s South Bronx, that Chicago’s Humboldt Park area had some 400 charred, abandoned buildings and that in Detroit, 10,000 houses stood vacant, victims of fire.

Urban riots were a form of counter-defacement starting with the wave of clashes, looting and burning that rocked hundreds of American cities, including the Watts uprising of 1965 and the riots of rage and grief that accompanied the assassination of Martin Luther King in summer 1968. The Kerner Commission Report of 1968 documented perduring structures of what the sociologists Douglass Massey and Nancy Denton have termed “American apartheid” in their classic study of urban segregation. Lyndon B Johnson instituted his “War on Poverty” programme in response. Of course, this was soon followed by the altogether more pernicious War on Drugs launched by Ronald Reagan, which inaugurated the age of mass incarceration of African–American men.

The recent killings come on the heels of this history of spatial engineering and social divestment that characterises the social life of contemporary American cities. A prehistory of the political present, it is a necessary context for understanding the combined effects of rising inequality, urban gentrification and the predations of policing and mass incarceration on African–American society. It also reminds us that the logic of structured exclusion and spectacles of violence are two sides of the same coin; that the exclusionary regime of racial property and intimate violation of the Black body are mutually entailed.

**Visibility and Radical Politics**

African–American activists have crafted an ethical response to the persistence of violence by combining a politics of witnessing and political commemoration, with a call to revive histories of Black radicalism. Central to these strategies is the effort to challenge the negation of Black personhood, and the ongoing production of Black vulnerability.

Historically, the devaluation of Black life has been accompanied by the excess of its representation: images of the violated Black body—the slave market, advertisements for the sale of slaves, to lynching postcards, photographs of murdered activists and bombed churches and over sexualised representations of African–American women—have been central to making race real/present through its excessive visualisation. This image economy, or photopolitics has neither remained stable nor gone unchallenged. Technologies of mass production and a counter-public sphere enabled the circulation of images of oppression and exploitation, as much as they fed a pornographic White gaze. For instance, the National
Association for the Advancement of Colored People’s (NAACP) anti-lynching campaigns were visual as much as they were political. Or else, recall the outraged response to the murder of 14-year-old Emmet Till on 18 August 1955, the Chicago teenager who was killed in Money, Mississippi because he was accused of propositioning the female proprietor of a grocery store. Till’s brutal murder was a transformative moment in anti-racist politics. In this case, Till’s mother decision to exhibit his brutalised body also made it available to a global public that mobilised against American racism and not merely its most immediate victims.

My aim is not to merely affirm the politics of visibility as a strategy of witnessing and counter-mobilisation, but to locate it within a broader spectrum of demands for structural transformation that includes calls to militant action against racial inequality (and the representation of Black poverty as the product of African-American waywardness). Though it might appear unduly pessimistic, demands for political justice must confront the reality of what passes for American society with its economies of structured scarcity, inflicted indebtedness, and the production of poverty.

There is a gaping chasm between a genuinely enraged and insurgent African-American politics and what comes out of the formal political and institutional process where laws against hate speech and socio-economic discrimination offer only a modicum of accountability and a militarised, security state responds to even the hint of anti-state violence with extraordinary force. The Black Lives Matter has stepped into this conjuncture, and engaged in a politics of interruption, or public insurgency, in the interest of demanding a broader restructuring of the disappearing “social” through resource redistribution and the acknowledgement of inherited privilege.

Caste and Comparison

It is ironic that a surfeit of law, including exceptional legislation targeting Dalit vulnerability, has produced similar failures of justice in the Indian context. The hopeless record of active miscarriage of justice is too well known to bear repetition. However, I want to underscore atrocity legislation’s acknowledgement of antagonism within the space of the social. This is significant because it highlights a question regarding the very applicability of the term society in the absence of a shared ethics until the process of nation-building, a point made by B R Ambedkar when he warned of the divide between political democracy and social inequality. Indeed, the fiction that the social is thoroughly porous to law and governance has led to a hyperpolicitisation whose outcomes are often the opposite of what reform intended. The case of atrocity legislation is a poignant illustration of this point.

The term for describing anti-Dalit violence, *jaatiya atyachaar*, gained traction as a category in law with the passage of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Fifth Report of the Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (April 1982, March 1983) noted that “atrocity” was an everyday
description and not a legal term: it did not carry the capacity to designate offences against a particular class, or group of people. However, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the term “atrocity” was assumed to define offences perpetrated on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, justiciable under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Where the victims of crime are members of Scheduled Castes and the offenders do not belong to Scheduled Castes, caste consideration are really the root cause of crime, even though caste consciousness may not be the vivid and immediate motive for the Crime (Awasthi 1994: 159).

As “untouchability” has been defined and redefined through its proximity to the juridical category of atrocity, the practice of untouchability too has moved from contexts of everyday life into the realm of performance and spectacle. In contrast to policies of affirmative action that seek to bring caste subjects within a normative framework of socio-economic relations, atrocity legislation is an exceptional legal measure that underscores their vulnerability.

Laws to protect vulnerable subjects have produced something like a force field around them: legislation is the site of intensive debate, it has catalysed the development of an elaborate bureaucratic edifice (from fast track special courts, to statistical record-keeping including by the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR), and most important, it has been instrumental in transforming social relations of caste in unexpected ways. As vulnerable subjects, Dalits are excessively visible in bureaucratic discourse, though that visibility is a product of state identification. The state’s regard invites social attention: it is worth noting that caste sociality, social relations between caste Hindus and Dalits, have come under intense regulation because they are perceived to carry the potential for violence.

Let us backtrack for a moment, since broader transformations of caste are important for understanding the specificity, and the significance of caste violence. There is little doubt that democratisation through caste has effected a slow assault on the inequities of the status quo. Caste Hindu responses are interesting in this regard—they either exhibit historical amnesia with regard to the daily violence of caste, or explain away caste inequality as a function of “merit” and the “market.” Caste violence has developed a politically explosive character in response, and it is particularly efficacious when it combines assaults on property (which is after all an index of social mobility and capacity for accumulation), with symbologies of ritual degradation and humiliation. The brutality of caste violence re-enacts the experience of humilion, and recalls body memories of violation. Many have remarked on the image of the two young women that were strung from the tree in Badaun (2014), or the dismembering of already violated female bodies in Khairlanji (2006): as forms of symbolic excess they return the violence of caste to a time outside secular
history much as Dylann Roof appeared to do when he assumed the theological force of White supremacy.

We do not yet possess a publicly acknowledged archive of indignation, by which I mean the perceptual registration of the social and psychic assaults that structure Dalit life. Thus, the publicisation of atrocity as violence, rather than coerced consent, has been crucial for an insurgent Dalit movement seeking political recognition, though this is certainly not the sole aim of the movement. Ironically, in the American context the sense that slavery is “over” and racial discrimination ended has enabled the acknowledgement of past horrors, including visibilised suffering. No doubt these ways of seeing go back to travel writing, scientific discourses (including anthropology) and antislavery. Most of all, they index an emerging conception of “human” and of human rights predicated on the extension of Christian conceptions (for example, compassion, the pedagogy of pain and suffering) to notions of liberal humanism (Asad 1998).

In the Indian context, where nothing similar to the tradition of the Black church exists, the idea of Hindu liberation rather than, say, Buddhist conversion or a questioning atheism would appear peculiar even though there is a rich tradition of Dalit religion that is associated with non-hegemonic Hindu practices. The association between organised Hinduism and the upper castes remains strong, and the battle between \textit{homo equalis} and \textit{homo hierarchicus} is ongoing. Meanwhile, in the American context, the institution of extraordinary laws regulating racial violence would be unthinkable. The legislation of discrimination, and the conception of equal opportunity often tends to adopt the discourse of market logic, with racial inequality equated with market inefficiency.

Caste and race are not vice versa, but the experience of political democracy (and affirmative action) provides crucial lessons for mitigating each form of structured oppression in its own context. The challenge before radical anticaste and African-American activism today lies in configuring a politics beyond liberal empathy, and the ruse of state protection.

Notes

1 Among the many incidents that have occurred over the last year alone, two killings stand out in particular which were not registered under the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989. (1) On 27 May 2014 two cousins from the Shakya caste (Other Backward Classes) were raped and strung up on a tree in the village of Katra Shahadatganj, Badaun District of Uttar Pradesh. The much-criticised report of the incident released on 27 November 2014 by the Central Investigation Bureau finds no evidence of caste crime and in fact, rules the deaths as suicides. (2) This was followed by the Javkheda incident of 22 October 2014. A family of three was massacred in this village in Ahmednagar District, Maharashtra and their body parts were thrown into a well to prevent easy identification. This is similar to the tactics employed in the infamous Khairlanji massacre in Maharashtra (2006), where the violated bodies of the Bhotmange family were discarded at the edge of the village. For
comprehensive coverage of caste atrocities, including fact finding reports where available see: http://roundtableindia.co.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=122&Itemid=138

2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjzrvRKv6Ks. Demands to remove reminders of the Confederacy such as flags, busts, and statues have since escalated across the South, from Alabama, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina. It appears that South Carolina will remove the Confederate flag from the statehouse. The state legislature has approved discussion of the issue. Retailers such as Walmart, Sear/Kmart, Amazon, and Google Shopping who had been selling Confederate merchandise for years have withdrawn it.

3 Obama earned the moniker “Reverend President” after he delivered the eulogy for Rev Clementa Pinckney on 26 June 2015 and ended with the song “Amazing Grace.” Given his rather careful entry into the race question, this eulogy surely ranks as a bold statement against White racism. Important earlier moments include the statement on the slaying of Trayvon Martin where he noted that if he had a son, he might have suffered a similar fate; Obama’s double-take after the angry response to the arrest of professor Henry Louis Gates Jr in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and the measure response in 2009 to Reverend Wright’s denunciation of him.

4 A special issue of the third newspaper edited by Ambedkar, Janata explicitly calls up images of American slavery with its arresting photograph of a man clad in a loincloth, kneeling to break free of his chains. The inscription reads, Gulamgirichya bedya asha todun taknar (I will break free from these chains of slavery).

5 Constitutional commitments to racial equality and to inclusion of African-Americans as full citizens notwithstanding, American reconstruction produced the Jim Crow laws between 1876 and 1965, which instituted de jure segregation in public facilities. This was the result of the famous Plessy vs Ferguson case of 1896, where the United States Supreme Court articulated the principle of “separate but equal.” This was a form of social apartheid, which tried to balance racism with the principles of liberal equality by arguing that the provision of racially segregated facilities could be interpreted to satisfy the state’s commitment to equal public access to its citizens.


7 In an interview with NPR (16 January 2012) abut her book, The New Jim Crow, Michelle Alexander noted, “Today there are more African-Americans under correctional control—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began. There are millions of African-Americans now cycling in and out of prisons and jails or under correctional control. In major American cities today, more than half of working-age African-American men are either under correctional control or branded felons
and are thus subject to legalised discrimination for the rest of their lives” (Alexander 2012).

8 The recent Supreme Court ruling (25 June 2015) affirming the tenets of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, which requires state and local governments to built subsidised housing in racially integrated areas, suggests the extent to which this is an ongoing issue. See: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/29/opinion/affordable-housing-racial-isol...

9 NAACP was formed in 1916 to mobilise against lynching, supported an Anti-Lynching Bill in Congress in 1918 and the next year published Thirty Years of Lynching in the United States: 1889–1918.

References


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