households “infested with roaches, covered in cat shit, and unfit to live in” (p. 76), boys who supply moms with crack, and moms who purchase guns for their sons to shoot others, and young men who blame the system for their personal failings. The use of diametrically opposed categories is a fallacy long recognized in urban ethnography. Ulf Hannerz addressed this dilemma in his classic study: “The simple dichotomy seems often to emerge from social science writing, about poor black people or the lower classes . . . perhaps because the observers have simply accepted the moral taxonomy of the natives as an acceptable way of ordering descriptions of the community, or because a similar dichotomy fits the outsider’s moral precepts or his concern for social problems” (*Soulside: Inquiries into Ghetto Culture and Community* [University of Chicago Press, 2004], p. 39).

*On the Run* provides insight to the brutal consequences of excessive policing on a criminally active group in the inner city; it also gives a fatalistic, sensationalist narrative of a pathological fugitive culture borne out of hyperpolicing and a violent and disorganized social order in which young black men self-implode. This account fails to provide a systematic analysis or etic conceptualization of the process of hyperpolicing in black urban life, and instead, in its detailed field note accounts of criminality, is positioned to reify stereotypes like those of the ghetto and its non compos mentis residents.


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The rapid growth of mass incarceration in the United States, a phenomenon characterized by its concentration among already marginalized individuals, means that a historically unprecedented number of individuals experience incarceration. Corresponding with rising incarceration rates over the past four decades is the rapidly expanding number of individuals who are not incarcerated but instead experience some other form of contact with criminal justice institutions. In *Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control*, Amy E. Lerman and Vesla Weaver draw on both qualitative and quantitative research to rigorously document how all types of contact with criminal justice institutions, ranging from police surveillance to incarceration, have transformed citizenship and democracy in America. Their intriguing and pathbreaking findings complicate our understanding of the carceral state and have broad implications for political inequality.
One important contribution of this book is to document the sheer reach of criminal justice institutions in the United States. Lerman and Weaver introduce the concept of *custodial citizens*, defined as individuals who have contact with criminal justice institutions through policing, surveillance, arrests, convictions, and incarcerations. Therefore, the reach of the criminal justice system goes beyond the currently or formerly incarcerated. Lerman and Weaver document that the vast majority of custodial citizens have never been convicted of a crime and, among those that have, the vast majority of them are convicted for minor and nonviolent offenses. There has been, therefore, a decoupling of the relationship between criminal behavior and contact with the criminal justice system; increasing numbers of individuals are considered custodial citizens but have not committed crimes or been convicted of crimes. The authors document the vast indignities that custodial citizens are exposed to by a criminal justice system that has relatively little accountability.

Another important contribution of the book is to document the political consequences of custodial citizenship. Theoretically, custodial interactions provide an opportunity for individuals to learn about American politics and democracy. For many custodial citizens, encounters with criminal justice institutions involve direct, often involuntary, participation with the government and the total institution of the criminal justice system, which can facilitate political learning. Lerman and Weaver employ an extensive amount of data—in-depth qualitative interviews (from more than 80 individuals) and six large-scale data sets (National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979, National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997, Black Youth Project, and African American Men Survey)—to examine these wide-ranging political consequences of custodial citizenship. They come to a number of interesting conclusions. For example, primarily through their analysis of interview data, they highlight two main strategies that individuals, especially those in marginalized social groups, employ in their daily lives: (1) the code of prohibitions, strategies that individuals use to avoid interactions with criminal justice institutions (e.g., avoiding wearing certain clothes), and (2) the rules of the game, strategies that individuals employ once they become custodial citizens (e.g., learning that one’s demographic and socioeconomic background shapes life chances).

In their related examination of the political consequences of custodial citizenship, Lerman and Weaver show how different types of encounters with the criminal system—ranging from being questioned by the police to being incarcerated for more than one year—are associated with aspects of American democracy (including political participation, civic engagement, government responsiveness, and trust in the government). These are perhaps the most provocative of their findings. By and large, the authors find
that custodial citizenship—net of race, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics that might overlap with custodial citizenship status—is positively associated with alienation from the political system in the United States. Custodial citizens, compared to their counterparts, are less likely to vote or engage in other forms of political activism, are more likely to believe than the government is not responsive to their needs, and are more likely to exhibit distrust in the government. By and large, this alienation exists among all types of custodial citizens, not just the incarcerated.

This well-written and thoughtfully researched book is a welcome addition to the rapidly growing social science literature on the collateral consequences of mass incarceration in the United States. It is important, though, that this book is not just about the collateral consequences of mass incarceration. Instead, it is a theoretically motivated book about criminal justice institutions more broadly and about how these criminal justice institutions shape and constrain politics and democracy in the United States, which is a refreshing complement to a much more narrow literature on mass incarceration. Another strength of this book is the authors’ careful presentation and nuanced synthesis of a massive amount of data. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data is carefully motivated and thoughtfully woven throughout the chapters. The quantitative analyses are especially impressive because the authors pay necessary attention to issues of causality (though more specifics about their measures and analyses would have been helpful, at least for readers who care about these details). They take into account that custodial citizens have overlapping characteristics with other individuals who are systemically disadvantaged in American society (racial minorities, the economically marginalized).

In sum, this book contributes to the relatively scant body of literature documenting the political consequences of policing, arresting, convicting, and incarcerating a large number of mostly poor and minority men and will be of great interest to scholars of punishment, democracy, and inequality. Criminal justice institutions play an important role in the lives of many individuals, especially already marginalized poor and minority individuals, and can shape individuals’ views and conceptualizations of democracy and, consequentially, contribute to the widening of political inequality in the United States.