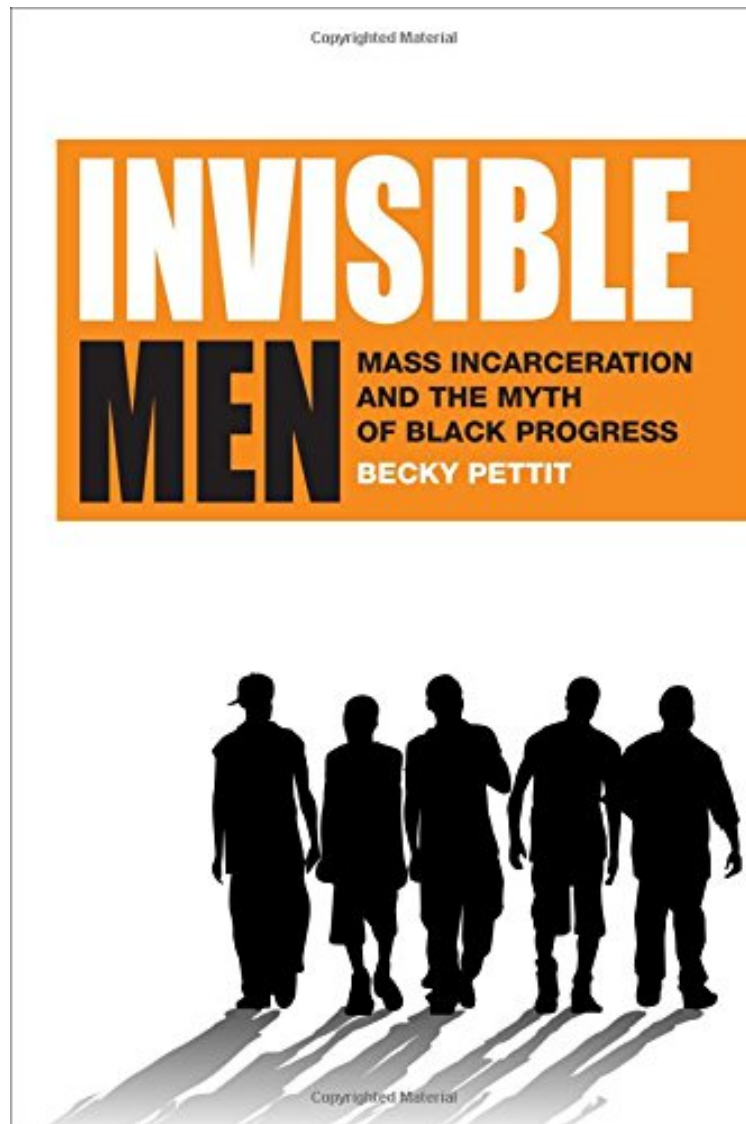


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## Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress

*Becky Pettit*

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**Becky Pettit : Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Invisible Men: Mass Incarceration and the Myth of Black Progress By Ronald C Smith This is an excellent and thoughtful approach to viewing what is really going on in America with incarceration of Black males and the ramifications of the practice. Professor Pettit, amply demonstrates through careful examination of incarceration patterns, coupled with census counting practices and community impacts

of incarceration of young black males that there are not only flaws in America's "justice" system, but there are serious flaws in how the household community counts of the census, omit gross numbers of inmates because they are not counted. She demonstrates the this miscount or omission, gives false numbers and percentages of, for instance, high school dropouts. If the census counted inmates, they would discover the high school dropout rate is 40%! This represents a gross undercounting of black high school dropouts and demonstrates there is not a narrowing of the gap between black and white high school drops. There are many other social and political effects of the undercounting of inmates that professor Pettit discovers and the book should be read by all people interested in eliminating discrimination in America.

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Very important By doug korty This is a very important and well done book that shows how the high rates of incarceration of black men have obscured many measures of social progress. This aspect of our society -- race, crime, incarceration, poverty, etc. is critical to our democracy and the possibility of improving our society. The book should be read by many people. Other books worth reading: Alexander, Michelle, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, The New Press, 2010 Clear, Todd R., *Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse* (Studies in Crime and Public Policy), by Oxford University Press, 2009 Clear, Todd R., *The Punishment Imperative: The Rise and Failure of Mass Incarceration in America*, NYU Press, 2013 Currie, Elliott, *Crime and Punishment in America*, by Elliott Currie, Picador; First Owl Book Edition, 1998 Dattel, Gene, *Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power*, Ivan R. Dee, 2009 Drucker, Ernest, *A Plague of Prisons: The Epidemiology of Mass Incarceration in America*, The New Press, 2011 Hahn, Steven, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005 Klinkner, Philip A., and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America*, University Of Chicago Press, 2002 Kozol, Jonathan, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, Broadway Books; Reprint edition, 2012 Loewen, James W., *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, Touchstone, 2006 Manza, Jeff, *Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy* (Studies in Crime and Public Policy), Oxford University Press, 2006 Massey, Douglas S., *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*, Harvard University Press, 1993 Painter, Nell Irvin, *Creating Black Americans*, Oxford University Press, 2006 Petersilia, Joan, *When Prisoners Come Home: Parole and Prisoner Reentry* (Studies in Crime and Public Policy), Oxford University Press, 2009 Stuntz, William J., *The Collapse of American Criminal Justice*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011 Sugrue, Thomas J., *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*, Random House, 2008 Tonry, Michael H., *Malign Neglect: Race, Crime, and Punishment in America*, Oxford University Press, USA (January 19, 1995) Tonry, Michael H., *Punishing Race: A Continuing American Dilemma* (Studies in Crime and Public Policy), Oxford University Press, 2011 Tonry, Michael H., *Thinking about Crime: Sense and Sensibility in American Penal Culture* (Studies in Crime and Public Policy), Oxford University Press, 2004 Western, Bruce, *Punishment and Inequality in America*, Russell Sage Foundation Publications, 2007 Whitman, James Q., *Harsh Justice: Criminal Punishment and the Widening Divide between America and Europe*, Oxford University Press, USA, 2005 Wilkerson, Isabel, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, Vintage, 2011 Woodward, C. Vann, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, Oxford University Press, 2010

10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read... For White People By Errol Daniels It's very simple... every white person should read this, along with other books such as *The New Jim Crow*. This book is well written and the author's writing style is excellent. She is an expert in her field.

For African American men without a high school diploma, being in prison or jail is more common than being employed—a sobering reality that calls into question post-Civil Rights era social gains. Nearly 70 percent of young black men will be imprisoned at some point in their lives, and poor black men with low levels of education make up a disproportionate share of incarcerated Americans. In *Invisible Men*, sociologist Becky Pettit demonstrates another vexing fact of mass incarceration: most national surveys do not account for prison inmates, a fact that results in a misrepresentation of U.S. political, economic, and social conditions in general and black progress in particular. *Invisible Men* provides an eye-opening examination of how mass incarceration has concealed decades of racial inequality. Pettit marshals a wealth of evidence correlating the explosion in prison growth with the disappearance of millions of black men into the American penal system. She shows that, because prison inmates are not included in most survey data, statistics that seemed to indicate a narrowing black-white racial gap—on educational attainment, work force participation, and earnings—instead fail to capture persistent racial, economic, and social disadvantage among African Americans. Federal statistical agencies, including the U.S. Census Bureau, collect surprisingly little information about the incarcerated, and inmates are not included in household samples in national surveys. As a result, these men are invisible to most mainstream social institutions, lawmakers, and nearly all social science research that isn't directly related to crime or criminal justice. Since merely being counted poses such a challenge, inmates' lives—including their family background, the communities they come from, or what happens to them after incarceration—are even more rarely examined. And since correctional budgets provide primarily for housing and monitoring inmates, with little left over for job training or rehabilitation, a large population of young men are not only

invisible to society while in prison but also ill-equipped to participate upon release. *Invisible Men* provides a vital reality check for social researchers, lawmakers, and anyone who cares about racial equality. The book shows that more than a half century after the first civil rights legislation, the dismal fact of mass incarceration inflicts widespread and enduring damage by undermining the fair allocation of public resources and political representation, by depriving the children of inmates of their parents' economic and emotional participation, and, ultimately, by concealing African American disadvantage from public view.

About the Author BECKY PETTIT is professor of sociology at the University of Washington.