

## ***How The War On Drugs Was Used As A Tool for Social Control***

**Abstract:** This project responds to Michelle Alexander's *the New Jim Crow* and explains how mass incarceration from felony arrests due to drug related crimes directly affects African Americans and Hispanics in comparison to that of White Americans, and as a result—their overall participation in the electoral system. According to public census data for election years, 1988, 1992 and 1996, out of 48,754,000 African Americans and Hispanics who were registered to vote, only 39,751,000 actually voted the elections. I argue that historically, the war on drugs contributed to the boom of disenfranchised voters, especially, African Americans and Hispanics in the late twentieth-century. For historical purposes I will draw on public census data for African Americans, Hispanics and White Americans to offer a chart of voter and registration in 1988, 1992 and 1996. In addition, I will also draw on public census data for African Americans and Hispanics to offer a chart of the top five states and the total number of ineligible voters with felonies in these states in concert with an overall chart of those who voted and were registered to vote in the early twenty-first century. In 2008, 2012, and 2016, Georgia had a total of 945,501 people ineligible to vote due to felonies. My analysis places special emphasis on voting and registration in the election years of 2008, 2012 and 2016 along with the amount felony charges for drug related crimes that were spurred by the war on drugs. According to Michelle Alexander, Sociologists have frequently observed that governments use punishment primarily as a tool of social control in which the punishment is often unrelated to actual crime patterns.<sup>1</sup> My project concludes that African Americans and Hispanics felony arrests have grown since the inception of the war on drugs to that of their white counterparts, and as a result both races have legally been barred from voting whether they are on probation, parole or actively incarcerated in prison.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press, 2020, 8.