Is Marriage for White People?

HOW THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MARRIAGE DECLINE AFFECTS EVERYONE

Ralph Richard Banks
wonders, "Maybe marriage is not meant for me. I know some older
women who have never been married. I hope I'm not one of them, but
maybe I am."

Expectations of marriage have shifted throughout society in ways
that make its promise more difficult to attain. But to understand why
black women, even the most successful among them, remain unmar-
rried, we need to consider the specific barriers they encounter in the rela-
tionship market.

The Man Shortage

The heightened expectations that Americans bring to the mar-
riage market are not the only things that have spurred the African
American marriage decline. The relative number and characteristics of
buyers and sellers also matter. Just as the meaning of marriage has
changed in the past half century, so, too, has the supply of potential
partners shifted. Black women confront a tighter relationship market
than any other group of women because there are too few black men for
them to marry.

There are three major contributors to the man shortage. First, black
men's incarceration constricts the market for poor and working-class
black women. Second, interracial marriage depletes the pool of men for
middle-class, college-educated black women. Third, the economic pros-
pects for many men have worsened while those for women have
improved. This economic repositioning is most apparent among African
Americans, but it extends throughout our society.
Incarceration

The most talked-about aspect of the numbers problem is the unprecedented rate at which black men are incarcerated. For black women, the boom in the prison population has both decimated the ranks of potential spouses and taken men from their families—brothers, cousins, nephews. Black women know all too well the magnitude of the incarceration problem among black men. As a public school teacher I interviewed in Chicago said, “I had jury duty once and my girlfriend said, ‘Go down there and meet a lawyer.’ Another friend said, ‘Nah, you got to be careful who you meet. Just because he’s in a suit doesn’t mean he’s a lawyer. He might be the one who needs the lawyer.’” They laughed, but they all knew it was true. Too true.

Since the mid-1980s, the United States has become the world leader in incarceration, imprisoning more people (both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the population) than any other country and than at any other time in U.S. history. Over the past several decades, the U.S. inmate population has increased fivefold, from less than 150 to more than 700 inmates for every 100,000 residents. Only South Africa during apartheid and the former Soviet Union have incarcerated comparable percentages of their population; our incarceration rate dwarfs those of every Western democracy. According to sociologist Bruce Western, the United States’ incarceration rate is seven times the average among European nations. The rise of mass incarceration stems primarily from the enactment of draconian sentencing schemes and the establishment of the war on drugs in the 1980s. Punitive policies gained support from both Republicans such as Ronald Reagan and Democrats such as Bill Clinton, whose 1994 crime bill spurred prison construction and enacted harsh sentencing policies.

Black men have borne the brunt of the rise in mass incarceration. More black men are in prison now than at any time in our nation’s history. More than two million people in the United States are in jail or prison, and 40 percent of them, more than 840,000, are African Americans. At any given time, one in ten black men in their early thirties is incarcerated, and for men in their early twenties, the incarceration rate is closer to one in eight. Some researchers have estimated that more than a quarter of all black men will spend some time in prison. Black men are eight times as likely as white men to be incarcerated.

The risk of imprisonment for African Americans depends very much on their socioeconomic status. The young black men who end up in jail are not, by and large, people who otherwise would have been working as a loan officer at a bank or managing the local Ford dealership. The occupants of our nation’s jails and prisons are drawn overwhelmingly from poor urban areas. Among this group, the likelihood that a black man will spend time in prison is extraordinarily high. Bruce Western has calculated that among “black male dropouts born since the mid-1960s, 60 to 70 percent go to prison.” Our nation’s prisons have become the destination for so many of the black boys who drop out of high school that researchers and activists have coined the term “school-to-prison pipeline.” In some urban areas, three out of four black boys drop out of high school. While more than half of black dropouts end up in jail, fewer than one in ten college-educated black men will spend time in prison. For whites, incarceration is also concentrated among the most disadvantaged, though the rates at each educational level are much lower than for blacks.

Not surprisingly, incarceration strains existing relationships. When men are imprisoned, marriages tend to dissolve and nonmarital
relationships tend to unravel. Resentments simmer. Women left on the outside develop other relationships. But the gravest cost of incarceration may fall on the children of prisoners. Incarcerated men are often fathers but rarely husbands. They are less likely than nonincarcerated men to be married, but no less likely to have children.

The marriage prospects for these men, even after they're released from prison, are bleak. Ex-felons are not appealing as potential spouses. For men, income is one of the strongest predictors of marriage. A man's appeal as a spouse, and perhaps his readiness to assume the role of husband, typically increases as his earnings rise. Yet formerly incarcerated men do not fare well economically. While the same personal characteristics that landed them in jail depress their wages once they get out, some portion of their economic disadvantage also stems from the fact that they've been incarcerated. At a time when competition for jobs is especially intense, the mark of a prison record relegates an ex-con to the end of the hiring line. In fact, some employers in urban areas with large numbers of formerly incarcerated black men may discriminate against any black man who applies for a low-skill, entry-level position. Compounding the problem, young men who have spent a number of years in the penitentiary have been socialized within that environment, and as a result are unlikely to have developed the sort of social skills that many jobs now demand—and that help romantic relationships thrive.

Apart from all this, there's another reason that incarceration diminishes men's marriage rates: stigma. Although incarceration is widespread in poor urban areas, a woman who marries a formerly incarcerated man still assumes the burden of his prison past. Ethnographic research suggests that poor women may be especially unwilling to share this stigma, since they also tend to view marriage as a means of gaining a certain middle-class respectability.

Statistical analyses further support the hypothesis that increased incarceration rates among men have undermined marriage rates for women. In one recent study, University of Chicago professor Kerwin Kofé Charles and National Taiwan University professor Ming Ching Luoh gathered data about the incarceration rates in different metropolitan areas across time. They found that the higher the incarceration rates of black men, the lower the marriage rates of black women. According to these researchers, more incarceration for men means less marriage for women. As one might expect, the marriage decline was most apparent among less-educated women.

The Interracial Marriage Gap

While incarceration decimates the ranks of potential partners for poor and working-class black women, interracial marriage severely diminishes the pool of black men available to college-educated black women.

Black men are between two and three times as likely as black women to marry someone of a different race. Estimates are that more than one out of five black men marry interracially, whereas fewer than one out of ten black women do. Consider the implications of this sex asymmetry for the African American relationship market. Imagine, for example, a population with one hundred black men and one hundred black women. If the men marry outside of their racial group ("outmarry") at three times the rate of the women, then if ten women outmarry, thirty men will do so, leaving ninety women but only seventy men. Suppose that forty African American couples then marry one another. Now only
thirty men and fifty women remain—an appealing ratio for the men, but not for the women.

For decades, the gap in the interracial marriage rates of black men and black women has been a source of tension. Some black women take it personally. "Black men dating White women," according to a 1993 article in *Ebony*, can “cause most single Black women to see red.”^91^ A 1998 *Essence* readers poll revealed that almost two-thirds of black women felt upset when black men married or dated white women.^92^ They felt unappreciated, inadequate, unwanted. As one twenty-nine-year-old black woman in Los Angeles says in another *Ebony* article, “[E]very time I turn around and I see a fine Brother dating outside his race, I just feel disgusted. I feel like, what’s wrong with us? Why do you choose her over me?”^93^ Another *Ebony* reader responded: “Black men I encounter are either dating or married to white women; they aren’t interested in the sisters.”^94^

The imbalance hits professional black women especially hard, because the black men they might regard as the most desirable—college graduates with good jobs—are also the most likely to marry interracially.^95^ Consequently, the African American gender gap in interracial marriage is widest among the black middle class. Moreover, some black women think that successful black men often wed white women who don’t have much going for them. Sociologists explain such relationships as a “status exchange” in which the man benefits from the woman’s whiteness, and the woman gains from the man’s educational and professional accomplishments.^96^ The suspicion is that well-educated, high-earning black men are so enamored of the idea of having a white spouse that they often marry white women who are less educated and of lower status in every way except for race. Empirical support for the “status exchange” theory remains mixed,^97^ but the idea that successful black men will accept low-status white women remains an article of faith for many black women.

That belief is reflected in a joke recounted by the late writer Bebe Moore Campbell in the early 1990s: “Two wealthy black businessmen are strolling down the street and one says to the other, ‘Man, let’s try to get a date with the next white woman we see.’ His friend agrees and soon they notice two white women approaching them. One is young and pretty; the other is over seventy, not very attractive, and has difficulty walking. One of the men says quickly, ‘I want the old one.’ His amazed companion asks, ‘Why in the world do you prefer her?’ His friend responds, ‘Because she’s been white longer.’”^98^

Campbell says that “for many African-American women, the thought of black men, particularly those who are successful, dating or marrying white women is like being passed over for the prom by the boy of their dreams, causing them pain, rage, and an overwhelming sense of betrayal and personal rejection.”^99^

This same sentiment has been reflected in the movie version of Terry McMillan’s best-selling *Waiting to Exhale*, in which a black woman seizes on the race of her husband’s girlfriend. “I give you eleven fuckin’ years of my life, and you’re leaving me for a white woman?”

He responds defiantly, “Would it be better if she were black?”

Without missing a beat, she says, “No, it’d be better if you were.”

Similarly, in Spike Lee’s *Jungle Fever*, when Wesley Snipes’s character, Flipper, falls for the white office assistant, his wife seems as upset about his paramour’s race as about her husband’s infidelity. “White?” she exclaims. “Are you on crack or something?”

The movie suggests that he might as well be. Flipper’s transgression
simultaneously betrays his wife, leaves his daughter without a father, and embodies the failure of black men to play their rightful role in the black family. His family’s brightly lit home—with Spelman and Morehouse memorabilia on display—was a haven from the rough, litter-strewn Harlem streets through which Flipper walked his daughter to school. His family was an oasis of black middle-class stability until he strayed, causing all they had built to crumble. Lee accentuates this theme of destruction by coupling Flipper’s sexual transgression with another, more obvious sort. Flipper’s brother Gator is a crackhead, who is beyond redemption. He begs people for money, smokes it up, then returns for more. When Gator’s mother refuses a request, Gator dances for her—a series of slick moves that only highlight his own pitifulness—and eventually gets what he wants. His father, a stern and religious man, is less forgiving and when Gator’s desperation borders on violence, his father shoots him dead.

What’s striking here is the parallel that Lee constructs between addiction to crack cocaine and an ill-advised interracial affair. In this framing, the black family is destroyed not only by the scourge of drugs, but also by the willingness of black men to have sex with white women. Flipper and Gator have failed the family equally if in different ways—one lured by cocaine, the other by a white woman—weakening a community they instead should have helped to strengthen.

*Jungle Fever* may have captured the tenor of the times in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but opposition to interracial marriage among black women seems to have become more muted over the years. The anger of the early 1990s has softened into the disappointment of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

In 2010, the black singer and actress Jill Scott—known both for her tender love songs and her wild natural hair—expressed her dismay in *Essence* magazine upon discovering that her “handsome, African-American, intelligent and seemingly wealthy” new friend was “happily married to a White woman.” The realization made her “spirit wince” as her body felt an “inner pinch, like a mosquito under a summer dress.”

Similarly, some of the women interviewed for this book were troubled by black men who partnered with nonblack women. As one woman explains: “If I see a black man with a white woman, there’s a part of me that feels sadness and a part of me that feels anger. I may not want that black man, but I probably know some black woman who does.” Another woman had for years adamantly opposed interracial marriage but more recently has tried to become more accepting, especially as friends enter interracial relationships. “I don’t roll my eyes when I see an interracial couple now,” she says, sounding proud of herself. “Maybe they do love each other,” I think. I try not to judge.”

It is tempting to fixate on the increasing rate of interracial marriage among black men—more than ten times as many African American men were intermarried in 2000 as in 1960. But the increased rate of interracial marriage for black men is only part of the story. What’s important is the gap between the rates of interracial marriage for black men and for black women. Not only do black women outmarry less frequently than black men, they outmarry less than any other minority group. Moreover, the rate of interracial marriage among black women has increased more slowly than that of any other minority group. Asian Americans and Latinos, men and women alike, are three or more times as likely as black women to marry outside their group. What is striking, then, is that as black men join other groups in a racially
integrated relationship market, black women remain romantically segregated. Later in the book I unravel the multifaceted causes of that puzzling phenomenon.

The Success Gap

The third reason that black women confront a shortage of men is that black men lag behind them both educationally and professionally. Black girls outperform their male counterparts as early as elementary school. By high school the boys’ failures become glaring. Consider these simple facts: Nationwide, fewer than half of all black boys graduate from high school, a figure that sinks to 25 percent in the state of New York, one of the most populous in the nation.

The result is that black women vastly outnumber black men in college, where there are more than 1,400,000 black women, but fewer than 900,000 black men. Not only do more black women enter college, they outperform the men once they get there. Nationwide, black women have surpassed their male counterparts even in typically male-dominated and often lucrative fields such as computer science. Each year, black women earn twice as many bachelor’s degrees as black men. At historically black colleges—renowned for their success with African Americans—fewer than a third of black male students graduate within six years.

In postgraduate education black women outnumber black men more than two to one. In 2008, there were 125,000 African American women enrolled in graduate school, but only 58,000 African American men. The African American gender gap is also substantial in traditionally prestigious professions such as law and medicine. According to data compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics, black women received 751 medical degrees and 1,893 law degrees in 2008, while black men received only 396 medical degrees and 1,109 law degrees.

This gender gap has developed over the past forty years. In 1970, roughly equal percentages of black men and women had graduated from college. By 1990, black women had moved ahead. Now, the gender gap in college completion among African Americans is wider than ever. Multiple explanations for this development have been offered, with none gaining a consensus. What is clear, though, is that the educational attainment of young black men continues to lag behind that of black women.

The Value of a Degree

Black women are receiving the overwhelming majority of college degrees among African Americans at the same time that those degrees have become more valuable. The earnings gap between the educational haves and have-nots has grown wider over the last few decades due to an evolving labor market. As jobs have been automated or outsourced overseas, opportunities for the least-educated workers have diminished dramatically. And among less-educated workers, men have suffered more than women. David Autor, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has documented this phenomenon in eye-opening detail.

According to Autor, the decline in jobs for less-educated workers has been uneven across industries. Jobs in the industrial sector, including manufacturing steel and building cars, have declined precipitously, and the remaining jobs pay far less than they did before
deindustrialization. Well-paying and secure factory jobs are now less plentiful because this work moved overseas to cheaper labor markets, leaving fewer jobs for men with less education. The job opportunities remaining for less-educated workers tend to be female-dominated service positions that cannot easily be outsourced\textsuperscript{115} such as home health care aides, child care providers, and food service workers.

These changes are reflected in the statistical data concerning earnings and employment. According to Autor's analysis, black male high school dropouts are nearly 25 percent less likely to have a job now than they were in 1979\textsuperscript{116} Even those who are employed earn substantially less than their counterparts did three decades ago. Although the labor market has become less favorable for less-educated workers generally, black women have fared better than other groups, in part because their earnings thirty or forty years ago were so low. Black women workers without a high school diploma actually earn slightly more now (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than their counterparts did three decades ago.

The divergent earnings trajectories of black men and women is pronounced among high school graduates. According to Autor's analysis, black men with only a high school diploma are 14 percent less likely to be employed today than their counterparts were thirty years ago, and those who are employed earn about 12 percent less, on average, than their counterparts did three decades ago. In contrast, over that same period, the earnings of black female high school graduates have risen.

These changes in the labor market are not temporary. The recent recession may have exacerbated the effects of deindustrialization, but it did not cause this shift. Most of those industrial jobs that have disappeared are not coming back. Their demise reflects the restructuring of our economy in response to advancing technology and the global labor market that technology has made possible.

While social scientists have thoroughly documented the transformation of the labor market through statistical analyses of earnings and employment rates, I see the shift reflected in the lives of my own family. My sister and her husband each graduated from high school in the late 1970s. Both have been in the labor market consistently since then, my sister as a hotel housekeeper, her husband as an industrial worker. Her work is neither glamorous nor high-paying, but it's consistent. Someone has to clean those rooms. Her husband's work, however, is a different story. He's been laid off more than once and has bounced down the economic ladder with each new job, rung by rung. In fact, as I write these words, he's unemployed. When he is working, he makes more than his wife. But the trajectory of their employment opportunities is clear: Hers are, if not improving, at least steady; his are slowly but surely declining.

The shifting labor market has affected my other family members as well. A favorite cousin joined Republic Steel within days of his high school graduation in the early 1970s. The work was arduous. He labored in front of a blast furnace and came home every day grimy, sweaty, and exhausted. But the job paid well. With overtime he earned more than friends who had gone to college. My cousin thought he'd one day retire from Republic Steel, just as his father had done after more than forty years on the assembly line at Ford. But over time my cousin began to want out. The problem wasn't his back pain and stiff neck—that he could manage—but the increasing precariousness of the steel industry. Wave after wave of layoffs swept the plant. My cousin, a progressive man,
made the sort of decision that few men do: Rather than lose his job along with his buddies from the plant, he left a dying industry for a growing one. Now, my 6'4", 220-pound cousin is a nurse, and his economic future is secure.

As the job market for less-educated workers has weakened, the market for highly educated workers has grown stronger. While high school dropouts earn about 16 percent less than their counterparts thirty years ago did, college graduates over that same period have experienced earnings gains of between 10 percent and 37 percent. Wages have fallen at the bottom of the job ladder, and they have risen at the top, widening the wage gap between less- and more-educated workers. College graduates have long earned more than high school graduates, but the earnings gap has been growing for the past thirty years. Now, according to Autor’s estimates, college graduates earn nearly double the wages of high school graduates. The gap between high school dropouts and college graduates is greater still.

While black women overall still earn less than black men, the female-male earnings gap is narrower among African Americans than any other racial group. Black women earn almost 95 percent of what black men earn, up from 75 percent thirty years ago. As impressive as that progress may seem, that 95 percent figure undoubtedly understates the earning power of black women relative to black men. Such statistics don’t take into account the large number of black men who, for one reason or another, have dropped out of the labor market. Moreover, black women already occupy a majority of the professional and managerial jobs among African Americans. Fifty years ago, women occupied less than a quarter of the professional and management jobs held by blacks. Today they fill roughly 60 percent of such jobs. Furthermore, during the past three decades, the earnings of black female college graduates have increased more than four times as much as the earnings of their black male counterparts.

These developments led sociologist Orlando Patterson to conclude in the late 1990s that African American women are now “poised to assume leadership in almost all areas of the Afro-American community and to outperform Afro-American men at middle- and upper-class levels of the wider society and economy.” His assessment reflects a social fact now too well established to be denied: Where black men fail, black women succeed. Advanced education brings higher wages, and black women are twice as likely as black men to receive that education. As today’s young adults move into their peak earning years, black women will outearn black men.

The educational and economic gulf between black men and women signifies the fracturing of black America. The fortunes of African Americans are polarizing. Some have taken advantage of the opportunities opened by the advances of the civil rights era, while others have fallen victim to deindustrialization and mass incarceration. Black America has bifurcated into two communities: one moving ahead, one lagging behind. The divide between these two groups is not only economic; it is cultural and social as well. The depth of that divide is apparent in the views of African Americans themselves. A national poll conducted in 2007 found that more than six in ten African Americans believed the values of the poor and the middle class had diverged during the previous decade. Nearly four in ten African Americans thought that they should no longer be viewed as members of a single race.

If black America is splintering into two Americas, one prosperous and one poor, then it is also the case that one is disproportionately
female, the other disproportionately male. Two dynamics are operating at once: the widening of the class divide and the development of a gender divide. This recognition allows us to reconcile the fact of unprecedented incarceration rates for young black men with the fact that more than twice as many African American young adults are in school as in prison.

The success gap between black men and women provides some context for understanding the growth of incarceration, as discussed earlier in the chapter. A big part of the reason that so many black men are incarcerated is that black men are disproportionately likely to be poorly educated and, in turn, to lack viable employment opportunities in the mainstream economy. The growth of incarceration is parasitic upon black men's educational and economic failures.

The success gap also helps us to make sense of the irritation that some black women feel about interracial marriage by black men. There are many fewer high-achieving black men than women. Recall that two black women graduate college for every one man. Yet a large percentage of that small group of high-achieving men marry outside the race. Many black women thus experience interracial marriage by black men as a loss they can ill afford.

White Follows Black

The success gap between men and women is not confined to African Americans: The same trend is reshaping gender relations throughout society. In the 1970s, women were a third or less of college graduates. Now, more women than men graduate from college, and more women than men enroll in graduate school. Adults between the ages of thirty and forty-four are the first group in U.S. history comprised of more female than male college graduates.

The same labor market shifts that have diminished the economic prospects of black men and boosted those of black women also affect other groups. While men still earn more than women, the degree by which the gap has narrowed over the past few decades is striking. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, women's earnings grew 44 percent between 1970 and 2007, compared to a meager 6 percent for men. Among workers with postgraduate degrees, wage growth has also been greater for women. The shrinking economic gap between genders is also apparent in employment rates. Over the past few decades, at every level of education, the likelihood of employment for men has remained flat or even declined, while it has risen for women.

The erosion of the earnings advantage that men enjoyed for so long has been exacerbated by the recent recession. It struck men particularly hard. According to one estimate, men accounted for nearly 75 percent of the jobs lost during that period. So while men generally still earn substantially more than women, the gap is narrowing. And although the recession is temporary, it accentuates a long-term trend.

Marriage and the Success Gap

The economic decline of men diminishes their appeal in the eyes of women. It has long been the case that a man's value in the marriage market depends on his income potential. Although the view that a husband's role is to support the family is less universal now than decades ago, it is still widely held. A 2010 poll by the Pew Research Center finds that more than two-thirds of Americans think that a man who is about
to marry should be able to support his family, while only a third think 
the same about a woman.

Fifty years ago, the fact that a man earned a meager income influ-
enced who he married; today it influences whether he marries. As I dis-
cussed in Chapter 2, people are no longer compelled to marry, and when 
they do marry they expect a lot from the relationship. Poor people, no 
less than middle-class people, seek emotional intimacy and understand-
ing in marriage. They want a nurturing partner with whom they can 
grow as a person. These goals require a degree of economic stability that 
many poor couples never attain. Even poor couples who live together 
and have a child often postpone marriage in the hope that they’ll get the 
stable job and nice apartment that they think should precede it. They 
don’t think that marriage allows a person to become stable; they think a 
person needs to be stable in order to have a good marriage. While 
middle-class people postpone marriage, the poor more often end up for-
going it altogether.

The marriage market plight of low-income men is likely exacerbated 
by the growth in income inequality. The success of those men with 
advanced degrees and high incomes casts a shadow, as it were, over the 
migration prospects of the economically marginal men, diminishing 
even further their likelihood of marital bliss. Women will compare the 
less successful men to their more successful counterparts, and are more 
likely to find lower achievers wanting than they might have a generation 
or more ago.

Low-income black men confront another difficulty: that black 
women in particular value economic security in a husband. Research 
from the 1990s found that black women gave more weight to a husband’s 
economic status than did white women. Research polling data from 
2010 seems to confirm that in evaluating potential mates, economic sta-
bility still matters more for African Americans than for other groups.
This helps to explain why at every income level, black men are substan-
tially less likely than their white counterparts to have married. Black 
men may want their husbands to be economically stable because if a 
black couple encounters economic difficulties, their in-laws are much 
less likely than those of white couples to be able to offer assistance. 
(Black men are concerned about economic stability too; they are more 
likely than other groups of men to think that the ability to earn a living 
is an important consideration in evaluating a prospective wife.) So as 
men become more economically marginal, their chances for a success-
ful marriage diminish.

Just as labor market difficulties undermine a man’s appeal as a 
potential spouse, professional success enhances that of women. It may 
have been the case decades ago—when the husband earned the income 
and the wife cared for the home and the children—that women with 
professional aspirations were disadvantaged in the marriage market. 
But now that is clearly not the case. The breadwinner/homemaker model 
of marriage has been supplanted by a new norm. In most families, both 
spouses work for pay, so a woman’s advanced education now stands to 
benefit both her and her husband. Moreover, men whose own income 
has declined may view prosperous women as especially desirable. Thus, 
motherhood rates remain high for college-educated women, even as they 
decline for the poor.

However, for black women the situation is different. They confront a 
shortage of successful black men. Some professional black women marry 
black male peers. But most professional black women either remain 
unmarried or marry a less-educated man. That so many college-educated
black women marry working-class men depletes the pool of men for less-educated women.

If the fortunes of white men and women diverge as they have among blacks, then in the years to come, professional white women may confront the same challenges that professional black women do today. The lives of each group of women will embody the same irony: The potential realization of their hopes for marriage is bolstered by their successes yet undermined by men's failures.

**CHAPTER 4**

**The Market**

Here's an e-mail I received from a friend:

**FIVE RULES FOR MEN TO FOLLOW FOR A HAPPY LIFE:**

1. It's important to have a woman who helps at home, cooks from time to time, cleans up, and has a job.

2. It's important to have a woman who makes you laugh.

3. It's important to have a woman you can trust and who doesn't lie to you.

4. It's important to have a woman who is good in bed and who likes to be with you.

5. And it is very, very important that these four women do not know each other.
The merits and limitations of the Prison Floor as a tool for understanding the incarceration rates in the United States. The reincarceration rates for released prisoners are often high, with many returning to prison within a few years of their release. Factors such as lack of education, job skills, and stable housing contribute to this cycle of incarceration.

To further understand these rates, it's important to consider the changes in incarceration policies over time. The war on drugs and the tough-on-crime approach have significantly increased the number of incarcerated individuals, particularly for non-violent offenses. This has had a disproportionate impact on minorities, with Black and Latinx communities disproportionately represented in the prison population.

The Prison Floor provides a powerful tool for visualizing these data, allowing us to see trends and patterns that might not be as clear in numerical data. By examining the Prison Floor, we can gain a deeper understanding of the issues at play and work towards more equitable and effective solutions.
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149. A 2007 study published in the American Journal of Public Health found
147. "Youth, Sex, and Identity. Sexual Orientation, Sexual Identity, and Sexual
146. "Youth, Sex, and Identity. Sexual Orientation, Sexual Identity, and Sexual
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