

abolition geography and the problem of innocence

Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence: A Comprehensive Guide

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Summary: This guide explores the crucial intersection of abolition geography and the complex issue of innocence. It examines how geographical analysis reveals the disproportionate impact of the carceral state on specific communities, challenging the presumed innocence of those outside the prison system. The guide outlines best practices for conducting research within this framework, including ethical considerations, data collection strategies, and community engagement. It also addresses common pitfalls, such as centering the experiences of incarcerated individuals while neglecting the broader systemic issues, and oversimplifying the concept of innocence. Ultimately, the guide advocates for a geographically informed abolitionist approach that prioritizes restorative justice and community wellbeing.

Keywords: Abolition geography, problem of innocence, carceral geography, mass incarceration, spatial justice, restorative justice, transformative justice, prison abolition, community engagement, ethical research, data collection, marginalized communities, systemic racism.

Introduction: Mapping Innocence and the Carceral State

The concept of "innocence" is often presented as a binary: either one is innocent or guilty. However, the reality of the carceral state reveals a far more nuanced picture. Abolition geography challenges this binary by analyzing the spatial distribution of policing, incarceration, and surveillance, demonstrating how certain communities are disproportionately targeted and subjected to the injustices of the criminal justice system. This disproportionality inherently questions the very notion of widespread innocence outside the prison walls. This guide aims to equip researchers and activists with the tools and ethical considerations needed to navigate the complexities of "abolition geography

and the problem of innocence."

I. Understanding Abolition Geography

Abolition geography moves beyond simply mapping prisons and police stations. It examines the broader spatial and social processes that contribute to mass incarceration, including:

Historical analysis of land dispossession and racial segregation: Understanding how past injustices have shaped present-day inequalities is crucial to understanding the spatial patterns of incarceration.

Mapping policing practices and surveillance technologies: This includes analyzing stop-and-frisk data, redlining patterns, and the deployment of predictive policing algorithms.

Analyzing the spatial impact of incarceration on families and communities: This includes examining the effects of mass incarceration on housing, employment, and social networks.

Identifying and promoting community-based alternatives to policing and incarceration: This involves mapping existing resources and identifying opportunities for creating new alternatives.

II. The Problem of Innocence: Deconstructing the Binary

The assumption of innocence often masks the pervasive injustices experienced by marginalized communities. Abolition geography challenges this assumption by:

Highlighting the over-policing and criminalization of marginalized communities: This acknowledges that these communities experience higher rates of incarceration not necessarily because of higher rates of crime, but due to systemic racism and bias within the criminal justice system.

Examining the impacts of collateral consequences: The consequences of incarceration extend far beyond the individual, affecting families, neighborhoods, and entire communities. This impact challenges the idea that those outside the prison walls are untouched by the carceral state.

Recognizing the lived experiences of those impacted by the system: Abolition geography prioritizes the voices and perspectives of those directly impacted by the system, including formerly incarcerated individuals, families, and community members.

III. Best Practices in Researching Abolition Geography and the Problem of Innocence

Conducting research within this framework requires careful attention to ethical considerations and methodological rigor:

Community-based participatory research (CBPR): Collaborating with impacted communities from the outset is crucial, ensuring research is relevant and contributes to community empowerment.

Data collection methods that prioritize participant safety and anonymity: This includes using anonymization techniques and obtaining informed consent.

Critical reflexivity: Researchers must acknowledge their own biases and positionality and how these might shape their research.

Transparency and accountability: Research findings should be shared with the communities involved and used to inform advocacy and policy change.

IV. Common Pitfalls

Several pitfalls can undermine the effectiveness of research on abolition geography and the problem of innocence:

Focusing solely on incarcerated individuals: Neglecting the broader social and spatial context risks perpetuating a victim-blaming narrative.

Oversimplifying the concept of innocence: The binary of innocent/guilty fails to acknowledge the complexities of systemic racism and bias.

Ignoring the role of power and inequality: Research must address the power dynamics that shape the distribution of policing and incarceration.

Failing to engage with abolitionist frameworks: The research should actively contribute to abolitionist movements and strategies.

Conclusion

Abolition geography and the problem of innocence are inextricably linked. By challenging the simplistic notion of innocence and analyzing the spatial dimensions of the carceral state, we can develop more effective strategies for achieving transformative justice. This requires community-based research that centers the lived experiences of marginalized communities, addresses systemic inequalities, and promotes alternatives to policing and incarceration. Only then can we hope to create a truly just and equitable society.

FAQs:

1. What is the difference between abolition geography and traditional geographical studies of crime? Abolition geography goes beyond simply mapping crime rates; it critically examines the systemic forces that create and sustain mass incarceration, focusing on the role of power, race, and inequality.
1. How can I get involved in abolition geography research? Look for community-based organizations involved in related work. You can also seek out mentorship from researchers in the field.
1. What are some ethical considerations when conducting research on incarcerated populations? Prioritizing informed consent, anonymity, and community collaboration is crucial. Avoid potentially exploitative research practices.

1. How does abolition geography relate to restorative justice? Abolition geography helps identify the spatial aspects of restorative justice initiatives and inform their implementation.
1. What role does data visualization play in abolition geography? Maps and other visual representations are crucial for demonstrating spatial inequalities and raising awareness.
1. How can abolition geography contribute to policy change? Research findings can inform advocacy efforts, providing evidence for policy reforms aimed at dismantling the carceral state.
1. What are some examples of community-based alternatives to incarceration? Community-based restorative justice programs, mental health services, and job training initiatives are examples.
1. How does abolition geography address the problem of recidivism? By understanding the spatial and social factors contributing to recidivism, we can develop more effective community-based reintegration programs.
1. What is the relationship between abolition geography and critical race theory? Critical race theory provides a framework for understanding how race and racism shape the spatial distribution of incarceration.

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escapes one-dimensional conceptions of what liberation demands, who demands liberation, or what indeed is to be abolished. Drawing on the lessons of grassroots organizing and internationalist imaginaries, Abolition Geography undoes the identification of abolition with mere decarceration, and reminds us that freedom is not a mere principle but a place. Edited with an introduction by Brenna Bhandar and Alberto Toscano.

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abolition geography and the problem of innocence: A Different Trek David K. Seitz, 2023-07 A different kind of Star Trek television series debuted in 1993. Deep Space Nine was set not on a starship but a space station near a postcolonial planet still reeling from a genocidal occupation. The crew was led by a reluctant Black American commander and an extraterrestrial first officer who had until recently been an anticolonial revolutionary. DS9 extended Star Trek's tradition of critical social commentary but did so by transgressing many of Star Trek's previous taboos, including religion, money, eugenics, and interpersonal conflict. DS9 imagined a twenty-fourth century that was less a glitzy utopia than a critical mirror of contemporary U.S. racism, capitalism, imperialism, and heteropatriarchy. Thirty years after its premiere, DS9 is beloved by critics and fans but remains marginalized in scholarly studies of science fiction. Drawing on cultural geography, Black studies, and feminist and queer studies, A Different "Trek" is the first scholarly monograph dedicated to a critical interpretation of DS9's allegorical world-building. If DS9 has been vindicated aesthetically, this book argues that its prophetic, place-based critiques of 1990s U.S. politics, which deepened the foundations of many of our current crises, have been vindicated politically, to a degree most scholars and even many fans have yet to fully appreciate.

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abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Digital Racial Yasmin Ibrahim, 2023-02-13 This book examines the intimate relationship between race and technologies and how digital platforms reabsorb racism as an internal arrangement within its modes of technical and affective architecture. Premising the idea that technologies supplant and mirror the 'logic' of racialization as mimetic instruments of social control and violence, the book interrogates the present arrangement of platform capital, and its modes of re-abstraction of race into its fibres and terrains of re-territorialization of the human spheres of social, economic and political life. If capitalism

reframed and consolidated racialization through its re-territorialization and primitive accumulation producing continuities from colonization and imperialism, platformization and digital capital redrafts and redistributes its racial logic in new modes of reassembling social and economic life through data, machine learning, algorithms, software designs and in tandem its automaticity. In learning, refining, and accelerating its enterprise through the mimetic violence of producing difference, racism in the digital age calibrates intimately with power, Western rationality and the ubiquity of technologies within the everyday. If the non-hominization of alterity relied on discoveries of science and its conflation with truth and White supremacy, the sustained production and oppression of the 'inferior other' co-opted automaticity and technologies, reiterating our fascination with and our understanding of human progress as pegged to machines, as entities working in excess of human cognition and comprehension, connecting and responding to its ambient intelligence despite its material absence. The book underpins the configuration of power and White supremacy through its co-enterprise with technologies seeks to provide an alternative and decolonial approach to technology studies particularly new media and digital technological advancements, leveraging on the notion of the digital age as an era of acceleration of difference, experimentation and the production of alterity through overt and covert modes of surveillance, image recognition software, and algorithms which work in complicity with racial capital.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: The Gratifications of Whiteness Ella Myers, 2022-09-14 The first book-length study of W. E. B. Du Bois's conceptualization of American whiteness. W. E. B. Du Bois famously argued that whiteness in the US in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries functioned as a public and psychological wage, offering valuable social standing to even the poorest of whites. Such compensation, dependent on the devaluation of Black existence, helped secure the US capitalist regime and prevent interracial class solidarity. This book argues that Du Bois's influential account of compensatory whiteness is crucially important, but also incomplete. For Du Bois, whiteness was never one thing, but many. Focusing on Du Bois's middle-period work (about 1920-1940), Ella Myers uncovers an overlooked, complex analysis that theorizes whiteness as a source of varied gratifications. These gratifications include not only the status rewards of racial capitalism, but also the enjoyment of gratuitous Black suffering and the conviction that the planet belongs to those marked as white. The book shows that Du Bois's analysis, developed in response to the pressing political problems of his own day, also offers insight into 21st century struggles for racial justice. Myers argues that it is important to recognize the extent to which anti-Blackness continues to underwrite plural -and deeply disturbing-forms of white gratification here and now. Doing so helps explain the tenacity of America's unequal racial order and also reveals why creative, multifaceted strategies of resistance are necessary to end it.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Tip of the Spear Orisanmi Burton, 2023-10-31 A radical reinterpretation of Attica, the revolutionary 1970s uprising that galvanized abolitionist movements and transformed prisons. Tip of the Spear boldly and compellingly argues that prisons are a domain of hidden warfare within US borders. With this book, Orisanmi Burton explores what he terms the Long Attica Revolt, a criminalized tradition of Black radicalism that propelled rebellions in New York prisons during the 1970s. The reaction to this revolt illuminates what Burton calls prison pacification: the coordinated tactics of violence, isolation, sexual terror, propaganda, reform, and white supremacist science and technology that state actors use to eliminate Black resistance within and beyond prison walls. Burton goes beyond the state records that other histories have relied on for the story of Attica and expands that archive, drawing on oral history and applying Black radical theory in ways that center the intellectual and political goals of the incarcerated people who led the struggle. Packed with little-known insights from the prison movement, the Black Panther Party, and the Black Liberation Army, Tip of the Spear promises to transform our understanding of prisons—not only as sites of race war and class war, of counterinsurgency and genocide, but also as sources of defiant Black life, revolutionary consciousness, and abolitionist possibility.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Re-Activating Critical Thinking in

the Midst of Necropolitical Realities Marina Gržinić, Jovita Pristovšek, 2022-03-09 This volume takes as its starting point the question of whether there is a pluriversal generation, a younger group of scholars who do not necessarily collaborate or know each other, but who are currently forming a radical structure that is viral in thought production and reflective on the current global recalibration of social relations, brought about by the necropolitical and necrocapitalist governmentality emerging worldwide. The 23 articles assembled in this volume transcend geographical boundaries, conceive of the world as a single entity, and develop strategies for radical change. They are presented in five subchapters with two lines of demarcation, one for entry, invention, and potentiality, and the other for a grim threshold.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Marking Time Nicole R. Fleetwood, 2020-04-28 A powerful document of the inner lives and creative visions of men and women rendered invisible by America's prison system. More than two million people are currently behind bars in the United States. Incarceration not only separates the imprisoned from their families and communities; it also exposes them to shocking levels of deprivation and abuse and subjects them to the arbitrary cruelties of the criminal justice system. Yet, as Nicole Fleetwood reveals, America's prisons are filled with art. Despite the isolation and degradation they experience, the incarcerated are driven to assert their humanity in the face of a system that dehumanizes them. Based on interviews with currently and formerly incarcerated artists, prison visits, and the author's own family experiences with the penal system, *Marking Time* shows how the imprisoned turn ordinary objects into elaborate works of art. Working with meager supplies and in the harshest conditions—including solitary confinement—these artists find ways to resist the brutality and depravity that prisons engender. The impact of their art, Fleetwood observes, can be felt far beyond prison walls. Their bold works, many of which are being published for the first time in this volume, have opened new possibilities in American art. As the movement to transform the country's criminal justice system grows, art provides the imprisoned with a political voice. Their works testify to the economic and racial injustices that underpin American punishment and offer a new vision of freedom for the twenty-first century.

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Volumes on. The book illustrates the way in which capital's development to this day is as much as a story of the continuity of capital's inner dynamics as it is a story of ongoing transformation of capital's surface-forms. Best develops, through Marx's critique, an analysis of money, credit, crisis, and the derivatives of profit-interest and ground-rent, that takes the reader from their emergence as capitalist forms to their current expressions. Neither a back-to-basics nor newfangled reconstruction, *The Automatic Fetish* eschews novelty to show why, once again, Marx deserves to be read carefully.

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abolition geography and the problem of innocence: *Race, Nature, and the Environment* Katie Meehan, 2024-11-01 What might it mean to “unsettle” our disciplinary understanding of race, nature, and the environment? This book assembles diverse voices and approaches in geographic thinking on race and racialization during an era of climate crisis, toxic legacies, state violence, mass extinctions, carceral logics, and racial injustices that shape—and are shaped by—the (re)production of nature. The volume advances new critical scholarship on race and racialization in Anglo-American geography; reflects on its uneven diffusion and unmet challenges; and notes the unstoppable force of insurgent thinking, abolition geography, critical race theory, Black and Indigenous geographies, scholar activism, and environmental justice praxis in taking hold and transforming the discipline. Together, the authors work across the vibrant fields of political ecology and human-environment geography; grapple with timely questions of land, water, territory, and place-making; render visible the spatial and socioecological reproduction of power and violence by capital and the state; and make space for the enduring politics of struggle on multiple registers—body, home, classroom, park, city, community, region, and world. *Race, Nature, and the Environment* will interest students, academics, and researchers in Geography who are keen to learn about disciplinary approaches and debates in relation to race, racialization, environmental justice, and the politics of nature in a world marked by white supremacy. The chapters in this book were originally published as a special issue of the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*.

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ferocity, she argues that defeats of radical struggles, weakening of labor, and shifting patterns of capital investment have been key conditions for prison growth. The results—a vast and expensive prison system, a huge number of incarcerated young people of color, and the increase in punitive justice such as the three strikes law—pose profound and troubling questions for the future of California, the United States, and the world. *Golden Gulag* provides a rich context for this complex dilemma, and at the same time challenges many cherished assumptions about who benefits and who suffers from the state's commitment to prison expansion.

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abolition geography and the problem of innocence: From the Ashes Sarah Jaffe, 2024-09-10 From a social critic and journalist, a poignant book that encourages publicly grieving what we've lost in order to move towards a hopeful future. Our era is one of significant and substantial loss, of unraveling hopes and expectations, of dreams curtailed, of aspirations desiccated. At the same time, we are denied the means of mourning the futures that are being so brutally curtailed. At such a moment, taking the time to grieve is a radical act. Through in-depth reporting intertwined with memoir, Sarah Jaffe shows how public memorialization has become more than a refusal or a protest: it is a path to imagining a better world. When we are able to mourn the lives, the homes, and the worlds we have lost, we are better prepared to fight for a transformed future.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Carceral Capitalism Jackie Wang, 2018-02-23 Essays on the contemporary continuum of incarceration: the biopolitics of juvenile delinquency, predatory policing, the political economy of fees and fines, and algorithmic policing. What we see happening in Ferguson and other cities around the country is not the creation of livable spaces, but the creation of living hells. When people are trapped in a cycle of debt it also can affect their subjectivity and how they temporally inhabit the world by making it difficult for them to imagine and plan for the future. What psychic toll does this have on residents? How does it feel to be routinely dehumanized and exploited by the police? —from *Carceral Capitalism* In this collection of essays in *Semiotext(e)*'s Intervention series, Jackie Wang examines the contemporary incarceration techniques that have emerged since the 1990s. The essays illustrate various aspects of the carceral continuum, including the biopolitics of juvenile delinquency, predatory policing, the political economy of fees and fines, cybernetic governance, and algorithmic policing. Included in this volume is Wang's influential critique of liberal anti-racist politics, "Against Innocence," as well as essays on RoboCop, techno-policing, and the aesthetic problem of making invisible forms of power legible. Wang shows that the new racial capitalism begins with parasitic governance and predatory lending that extends credit only to dispossess later. Predatory lending has a decidedly spatial character and exists in many forms, including subprime mortgage loans, student loans for sham for-profit colleges, car loans, rent-to-own scams, payday loans, and bail bond loans. Parasitic governance, Wang argues, operates through five primary techniques: financial states of exception, automation, extraction and looting, confinement, and gratuitous violence. While these techniques of governance often involve physical confinement and the state-sanctioned execution of black Americans, new carceral modes have blurred the distinction between the inside and outside of prison. As technologies of control are perfected, carcerality tends to bleed into society.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Practicing New Worlds Andrea Ritchie, 2023-10-24 An exploration of how emergent strategies can help us meet this moment, survive what is to come, and shape safer and more just futures. *Practicing New Worlds* explores how

principles of emergence, adaptation, iteration, resilience, transformation, interdependence, decentralization and fractalization can shape organizing toward a world without the violence of surveillance, police, prisons, jails, or cages of any kind, in which we collectively have everything we need to survive and thrive. Drawing on decades of experience as an abolitionist organizer, policy advocate, and litigator in movements for racial, gender, economic, and environmental justice and the principles articulated by adrienne maree brown in *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*, Ritchie invites us to think beyond traditional legislative and policy change to create more possibilities for survival and resistance in the midst of the ongoing catastrophes of racial capitalism—and the cataclysms to come. Rooted in analysis of current abolitionist practices and interviews with on-the-ground organizers resisting state violence, building networks to support people in need of abortion care, and nurturing organizations and convergences that can grow transformative cities and movements, *Practicing New Worlds* takes readers on a journey of learning, unlearning, experimentation, and imagination to dream the worlds we long for into being.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Futures of Black Radicalism Gaye Theresa Johnson, Alex Lubin, 2017-08-29 Black rebellion has returned, with dramatic protests in scores of cities and campuses, bringing with it a renewed engagement with the history of Black radical movements and thought. Here, key scholarly voices from a wide array of disciplines recalls the powerful tradition of Black radicalism as it developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries while defining new directions for Black radical thought. In a time when activists in Ferguson, Palestine, Baltimore, and Hong Kong immediately make connections between their movements, this book makes clear that new Black radical politics are thoroughly internationalist and redraws the links between Black resistance and anti-capitalism. Featuring the key voices in the new intellectual wave of Black radical thinking, this collection outlines one of the most vibrant areas of thought today. With contributions from Cedric Robinson, Elizabeth Robinson, Steven Osuna, Nikhil Pal Singh, Damien Sojoyner, Franoise Vergs, Fred Moten, Stefano Harney, Jordan T. Camp, Christina Heatherton, George Lipsitz, Greg Burris, Paul Ortiz, Darryl C. Thomas, Avery Gordon, Shana L. Redmond, Kwame M. Phillips, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Angela Davis, and Robin D. G. Kelley.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: The Impact of Global Drug Policy on Women Julia Buxton, Giavana Margo, Lona Burger, 2020-11-19 The ebook edition of this title is Open Access and freely available to read online. Examining the impact of drug criminalisation on a previously overlooked demographic, this book argues that women are disproportionately affected by a flawed policy approach.

abolition geography and the problem of innocence: Algorithmic Reason Claudia Aradau, Professor of International Politics Claudia Aradau, Distinguished University Professor of Artificial Intelligence Tobias Blanke, Tobias Blanke, 2022-05-07 This is an open access title available under the terms of a CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International licence. It is free to read at Oxford Scholarship Online and offered as a free PDF download from OUP and selected open access locations. Are algorithms ruling the world today? Is artificial intelligence making life-and-death decisions? Are social media companies able to manipulate elections? As we are confronted with public and academic anxieties about unprecedented changes, this book offers a different analytical prism through which these transformations can be explored. Claudia Aradau and Tobias Blanke develop conceptual and methodological tools to understand how algorithmic operations shape the government of self and other. They explore the emergence of algorithmic reason through rationalities, materializations, and interventions, and trace how algorithmic rationalities of decomposition, recomposition, and partitioning are materialized in the construction of dangerous others, the power of platforms, and the production of economic value. The book provides a global transdisciplinary perspective on algorithmic operations, drawing on qualitative and digital methods to investigate controversies ranging from mass surveillance and the Cambridge Analytica scandal in the UK to predictive policing in the US, and from the use of facial recognition in China and drone targeting in Pakistan to the regulation of hate speech in Germany.

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Handbook of Intersectionality Studies Kathy Davis, Helma Lutz, 2024-01-31 Intersectionality is one of the most popular theoretical paradigms in gender studies and feminist theory today. Initially developed to explore how gender and race interact in the experiences of US women of colour, it has since been taken up in different disciplines and national contexts, where it is used to investigate a wide range of intersecting social identities and experiences of exclusion and subordination. This volume explores intersectionality studies as a burgeoning international field with a growing body of research, which is increasingly drawn upon in policy, political interventions, and social activism. Bringing together contributors from different disciplines and locations, The Routledge International Handbook of Intersectionality Studies maps the history and travels of intersectionality between continents and countries and takes up debates surrounding the privileged role of race in intersectional analysis, the ways in which intersectional analysis should or should not be carried out, and the political implications of thinking intersectional analysis and thought. Opening up new avenues of enquiry for a future generation of scholars and practitioners, it will appeal to scholars of sociology, gender studies, politics, and cultural studies with interests in feminist thought, social identity, social exclusion, and social inequality.

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