Pollution, Prisons, and the Power of Women: Does Women's Leadership in Government Decrease Emissions Caused by the Prison Industrial Complex?

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Pollution, Prisons, and the Power of Women: Does Women’s Leadership in Government Decrease Emissions Caused by the Prison Industrial Complex?

Presented By: Chanel Ison
Research Question:

Does the independent effect of mass incarceration emissions decrease when more women are represented in legislative bodies (i.e. as legislators and governors)?
Pollution caused by large corporations is the primary reason for environmental degradation and the prison industrial complex is no exception. The purpose of this study is to contextualize the carceral system and its relationship to climate change from a critical ecofeminist perspective. Critical ecofeminism contends that the patriarchal nature of capitalism forces women to generate forms of resistance against essentialist systems--which attributes to their broader understanding of environmental degradation and the oppression of marginalized identities. Using the Fact Sheet Archive on Women in State Legislatures (1997-2016) which reports the percentage of women-identified legislators and governors in the US, this study will explore whether or not the independent effect of mass incarceration emissions decreases when more women are represented in legislative bodies. This work is meant to contribute to growing bodies of knowledge concerning critical environment justice studies, racial capitalism, and other intersectional frameworks.
“Correctional Program”

“Bringing Jobs Home, Investing in America”
- Paid less than a dollar per hour ($0.23-$1.15 an hour)
- Build furniture, answer customer service calls
- Incentivizes mass incarceration

Working hours increase, increase emissions

Income inequality increases emissions globally
Methods

- Quantitative Analysis
- Data from the Fact Sheet Archive on Women in State Legislatures (1997-2016)
  - State by state

Critical Ecofeminism

- Critical of essentialist systems (i.e. capitalism and patriarchy)
- More inclusive of marginalized groups than first waves of ecofeminism


“Citing your sources is a feminist practice.”
-Dr. Derrais Carter


Where is this going?

- Run fixed-effect panel regression models with robust standard errors

“What do we make of the flowering vine that uses as its trellis the walls of a prison?”

-Jackie Wang, Carceral Capitalism
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