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## Review of *The New Black: What Has Changed – and What Has Not – with Race in America*. Kenneth W. Mack & Charles Guy-Uriel (Eds.). Reviewed by Johnnie Hamilton-Mason.

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Kenneth W. Mack & Charles Guy-Uriel (Eds.), *The New Black: What Has Changed – and What Has Not – with Race in America*. The New Press (2013). \$21.95 (paperback).

*The New Black* is a collection of 11 thought-provoking essays and an introduction, which juxtapose the accomplishments of the civil rights movement with the unraveling of legal and policy remedies. The essays examine the deep divide in the American soul and psyche as the nation confronts its oldest social problem in a new century. The term “New Black” is used throughout the collection as a symbol of contemporary U.S. race relations.

*The New Black* is useful for anyone who wants to learn about the context of continuing racial/economic discrimination, and the continual exclusion of “Blacks” from a range of spheres, including housing and education. The New Black describes how systemic racism and oppression is recalibrated, while underscoring the need to challenge individual and collective discrimination with new strategies.

In “Political Race and the New Black” (chapter 1), Guinier and Torres respond to a question posed by a gay Cuban at a Critical Race conference: “What is the work we want race to do ... other than to serve as a site of grievance?” (2013, p. 18). They propose an analytic shift from traditional civil rights for African Americans to “political race” by identifying potential political coalitions of those disadvantaged by current structural dynamics. Thus, “political race” is a metaphor for the collective mobilization of people around race, class, gender, and geography. Accordingly, “race becomes a political space for organized resistance around a more transformative vision of the good society ... political race is a metaphor that captures the ideas of race as a site of emotional connection and political engagement” (p. 20). This chapter compels readers to action, since the concept of political race links coalitions of economically and socially disenfranchised groups and deepens knowledge about how differences are co-opted to support systems of intersectional oppression.

In “Déjà vu All Over Again” (Chapter 2), Lee analyzes Barack Obama’s ascendancy to the presidency as a window into racial politics and discourse in the new millennium. Lee focuses on how media prejudice shaped calculations about

American voting behavior and perceptions about the election, despite successful strategic coalitions formed to elect the first African American President that did not fit with their narrative. In particular, Lee contends that the media's focus on independent voters ignored the varied racial and ethnic voters who contributed to President Obama's victory. Challenging the assumption that independents were primarily Whites who transcended their racial groups' interest by voting for President Obama, Lee describes increasing number of Latinos, Asians, and immigrants who do not identify with either the Republican or Democratic Party.

In chapter 8, Bell discusses the "tolerance–violence paradox." "The Puzzles of Racial Extremism in a "Postracial" World" calls attention to the fact that, while many eras in American history have moments of racial progress occurring in the midst of violence, in this particular moment, violent expression of racism (including racism directed at President Obama, the increase in extremist and other bias-motivated and anti-integration violence directed at ordinary people) alongside racial progress seem to defy logic. One explanation for contemporary racial extremism in this post civil rights era might be attributed to aversive racism theory:

Conflicting views, such as those suggesting equal treatment for all regardless of race and racial bias may coexist within a particular individual. Because such views are contradictory, aversive racists subconsciously suppress their negative views and will not discriminate unless they can ascribe nonracial reasons. (p. 141)

Although I found the book captivating and engaging, at times I struggled to understand the book's main thesis. Race has been a critical factor in the economic, social and political structures of American society from its pre-colonial beginnings to the present, and *The New Black* successfully documents the contemporary exemplars of racism. While racism stresses differences among individuals or groups, it is not differences themselves that lead to subordination and systemic oppression, but the interpretation of differences in policy and law enforcement. However, because many authors are lawyers, the level of critical analysis is dense and left me pondering the central goal of the book: How would my new awareness of

paradox and contradictions reshape my future commitment and actions?

Fortunately, institutions, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate within an organization's own walls. While *The New Black* fails to explicitly identify actions needed to dismantle racism, the analysis laid out in the book should facilitate a commitment to and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the reader's reach and, ultimately, in larger society.

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Jeffrey Ian Ross (Ed.), *The Globalization of Supermax Prisons*. Rutgers University Press (2013). \$28.95 (paperback), \$72.00 (hardcover).

This book is a fascinating comparative examination of the worldwide proliferation of supermax prisons. It appraises the historical, political, and cultural justifications in each country, including the role of terrorism and increases in crime. Each chapter compares the make-up of that country's supermax population, entrance criteria, conditions of confinement, policies and actual practices, and amenability to public scrutiny. There are myriad journal articles and several books that examine supermax prisons in America or other countries. However, this book fills a scholarly void as a cross-national analysis of the implementation of these controversial facilities and an exploration of policy diffusion and the impact of globalization on correctional policy.

The book begins with Loïc Wacquant's introductory summary of the historical events and consequences of the punitive turn in the American criminal justice system between 1960 and 2000. Ross discusses the importance of examining supermax prisons from a global perspective, studying the patterns of development, implementation, and the extent of cross-pollination. He then summarizes the history of American supermax prisons, their general conditions of confinement and entrance criteria, and the critiques of them. Finally, he ends the book along with Rothe's two chapters on the supermax-like