Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race (2025), 1–21
doi:10.1017/S1742058X25100039

ARTICLE

Claiming Citizenship: The Political Labor of Black Women's Resistance

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Abstract

In what ways, if any, do justice-involved Black women make political demands? How do they understand their role and rights as citizens? Previous work has focused on identifying forms of political behavior, both formal and deviant (i.e., resistance, subversive acts), and the degree to which different groups participate in these behaviors. Few studies have focused on the sensemaking and ideologies likely motivating the behavior of justice-involved Black women both within and outside the formal political realm (e.g., elections). Drawing on the responses of Black women residents of an urban prison reentry facility, this article illustrates how this group engages in what we describe as "political claimsmaking," a type of deviant discourse in which participants negotiate the power dynamics informing their social reality to make political demands. Further, we argue that while this political claimsmaking acts as a form of resistance and assertion of citizenship, it is simultaneously a form of inequitable political labor. Understanding Black women's political claims, and the labor involved in making them, has serious implications for imagining more liberatory futures in which the benefits associated with citizenship are more freely accessed.

Keywords: Race; Gender; Punishment; Criminal Justice Contact; Black Women; Citizenship; Political Labor; Discourse Analysis

Introduction

More than twenty years ago, political scientist Cathy Cohen (2004) warned about an obsessive focus in American politics on political acts (e.g., voting, protests) conducted in "clearly defined political spaces." In her view, this narrow conception of participation left little room for investigating politics in the areas where it is most lived. More specifically, she described studies of Black politics as focusing so narrowly on "the actions of leaders, usually male leaders, and well-established political organizations that they have ignored the everyday contests over space, dress, and autonomy that may pervade the lives of average Black people" (p. 31). Cohen contended that "lost in this analysis are the agency and actions of those under surveillance, those being policed, those engaged in disrespectable behavior…Black men and women who are currently or have been incarcerated" (2004, pp. 32–33). Consequently, the political lives of those most marginalized—for

example, justice-involved Black women, referring to those who have had some contact with the carceral system, writ large—remained underexplored.

Drawing on interview data with Black women who are or were once residents of an urban prison reentry facility, this paper illustrates how the women engage in what we describe as political claimsmaking, a type of deviant[1] discourse in which individuals negotiate the power dynamics informing their social reality to make political demands. The use of the term *claimsmaking* implies an intentional, or at least conscious, decision by these women to describe a set of experiences with the state confrontationally. In doing so, they put forth counternarratives about who they are, what they are entitled to, and what citizenship entails that challenge mainstream messaging. To do so, the women leverage the language commonly associated with the trope of "deserving citizen" while reimagining the bounds of citizenship itself, in ways that better recognize and respect human dignity.

Yet, we also suggest that claimsmaking is a form of uncompensated political labor that likely contributes to the mental load associated with resistance among some justice-involved Black women. While the majority of those in our sample include people recently released from prison, the term recognizes that individuals may have been impacted by the broader carceral system through surveillance technologies, police stops and arrests, and engagement with carceral practices such as sanctions and child removal through the welfare system. These interactions might have similar effects and impacts on political sensemaking as imprisonment. Thus, the term facilitates a more inclusive understanding of exposure to the carceral apparatus. By focusing on *political labor*, we are challenging conventional understandings of political participation as a voluntary or elective act, reframing it instead as necessary and often compulsory work. Black women routinely undertake political labor to safeguard and potentially improve their conditions as well as those of their communities (Nuamah, forthcoming). This framework is central to the present analysis, as it highlights the recurrent and frequently un- or undercompensated forms of labor that justice-involved Black women must perform—labor that is essential to being recognized and treated as full citizens and that is not similarly demanded of others. Together, claimsmaking is a concept that captures the often hidden, or rather invisible, forms of political labor that Black women engage in routinely as a mechanism of asserting their citizenship and sustaining or improving material conditions for themselves and their communities.

The sections that follow provide a theoretical framework for understanding Black women's citizenship claims before explaining the notion of claimsmaking and its relationship to political labor in more detail. We then delve into the ways claims are discursively structured across our interview data. Altogether, this study provides an understanding of how our small-n sample of justice-involved Black women make claims to the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship, despite the myriad ways citizenship is denied to them.

The Political Labor of Black Women

Scholarship on Black women's resistance to economic, social, and political subordination highlights the collective actions they have historically assumed, ranging from overt to covert, from public to fugitive (Haley 2016). As argued above, these varied modes of resistance ultimately constitute what can be understood as *political labor*: the necessary and often unacknowledged political work undertaken to sustain and improve the material conditions of Black women and their communities (Nuamah, forthcoming).

In the early twentieth century, for instance, Black women working as Southern domestic laborers refused to live in the homes of their White employers. They initiated collective work stoppages to protest treatment through both direct and indirect means (e.g., feigning illness), made strategic attempts to negotiate the terms of their employment, and—when all

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039 Published online by Cambridge University Press

else failed—removed themselves from the Southern workforce altogether by migrating north (Haley 2013). Also captured in the literature are the everyday subversive acts of young Black women in the Jim Crow South, such as sitting in White sections of streetcars and theaters, and yelling insults at police when forced to relocate in a public space or at White shop owners who refuse to serve them (Hartman 2019).

Countering their subordination has required Black women to put forth their own sensemaking of who they are, an intellectual project that has been consistently diminished by the suppression of Black women's ideas, interests, and thoughts (Collins 1990). For example, Patricia Hill Collins' *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) opens with the 1831 plea of Maria W. Stewart to discard the negative societal images of Black womanhood in favor of self-definitions of independence and self-reliance. Similarly, Sojourner Truth's 1851"Ar'n't I a Woman" address acted as a retort to one-dimensional conceptions of womanhood that conjured images of White ladies who led leisurely lives (Harris-Lacewell 2001). In Sarah Haley's (2013) study of Black women sentenced to work on chain gangs in the early twentieth century, she finds similar evidence of resistance, including a pregnant woman whose petition to state authorities focused on a rebuke of them treating her "like a man" and not providing adequate medical care, rather than focusing on a defense of or apology for her criminalized actions. Such discursive action is political because it combats the logic supporting the state subjugation of Black women rather than showing any deference to it.

Though the literature on Black political behavior often takes for granted the motivations and justification for Black women's political participation, it is suggestive. Through it, we can infer that Black women's desire to ensure the ability to improve, or at least sustain, their conditions is a significant motivator (Woodly 2022). This motive, however, requires a belief that they, and their communities, are fundamentally deserving of improved conditions to their livelihoods. This is especially notable in a context where these marginalized groups have been explicitly described as undeserving throughout history (e.g., Schneider and Ingram, 1993).

How do marginalized individuals respond to subjugation? Political theorist Nick Bromell (2013) argues that the very emotional reaction of indignation commonly elicited by subjugation is itself political, in that it is evidence of an underlying personal political theory or ideological worldview that prescribes how one ought to be treated and with which inalienable rights. Indignation indicates that such rights have been trespassed (Bromell 2013). It conveys an innate intuition with which an individual emotionally rejects subjugation, signaling a recognition that one's innate dignity as a human being is being denied. This relationship between dehumanization, essentially, and the withholding of citizenship goes hand in hand (Bromell 2013; Fanon 1961; Hernández 2017). As Bromell (2013) argues, "The presumption of having dignity is the basis on which citizenship is conferred and confirmed, while dignity's denial (or claimed absence) is the justification by which citizenship is withheld" (p. 288). It is this awareness of being dehumanized, we argue, that generates the sensemaking and personal political theories of many in our sample. More specifically, through these personal theories, which honor the participants' innate sense of universal dignity, these Black women craft an understanding of their role as citizens and the rights they deserve. This includes rights predicated upon how they should be societally perceived, not as less deserving of citizenship but as equally or even more deserving.

The Precariousness of Citizenship for Black Women

"Citizenship" has been deeply contested across the axes of race, gender, and class since the beginning of U.S. history. Substantively, citizenship was reserved for property-owning (or potentially property-owning) White men at the exclusion of all other groups (Glenn

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2004). Archival research has shown how Black women consistently resisted such subjugation throughout U.S. history, behaving in ways that advanced their own political and social interests (see, e.g., Haley 2013, 2016; Hartman 2019). For example, when the right to vote was legally extended to Black men, Black women showed up at the voting polls, too, making sure their male kin voted in ways consistent with their communities' interests (Glenn 2004). Black women helped to facilitate the expansion of the right to vote for close to two hundred years before they were formally granted citizenship and were able to vote themselves (Jones 2020). Black women's two-hundred-year-long struggle to vote made it clear that, while citizenship rights are often equated with enfranchisement, voting is just one of their dimensions; equally important are the various ways in which citizens are equitably included in the social, political, and civic activities of the state.

T. H. Marshall's framework (as cited in Glenn 2004) helps us to understand that citizenship is comprised of multiple types: political citizenship, civil citizenship, and social citizenship. Whereas political citizenship provides individuals with the right to vote and to be a member of a body vested with political authority, civil citizenship guarantees certain freedoms and liberties (e.g., free speech, right to own property). Social citizenship, on the other hand, includes a wide range of associated rights, like those enabling economic welfare and ensuring access to a social safety net as well as those that afford individuals the ability to "live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society" (p. 19). Without social citizenship, formal civil and political rights cannot be reliably exercised. Evelyn Nakano Glenn (2004) frames this as the distinction between formal citizenship, when citizenship is granted through legally prescribed rights codified in laws and policies, and substantive citizenship, when individuals can *actually* exercise their rights. Justice-involved Black women, as a group, experience compounded marginalization that further limits their access to substantive citizenship, beyond any formal restrictions they might experience as a product of their criminal record.

Indeed, an emerging thread of research has examined how carceral legal apparatuses of the United States cast those they entrap into reduced forms of citizenship. This includes *custodial citizenship* (Lerman and Weaver, 2014), inclusive of individuals who have heightened contact with the criminal justice system through either surveillance or direct contact, and *carceral citizenship* (Miller and Stuart, 2017), the form of citizenship bestowed on those with criminal records. Research regarding both forms highlights the collateral consequences of justice system contact, including increased exposure to law enforcement surveillance, disparate access to social benefits like welfare aid, intermittent disenfranchisement, and a slew of consequences impacting social and civic citizenship (e.g., the ability to secure a bank loan). For justice-involved Black women, these collateral consequences compound the dual burden Black women already navigate given their race and gender (Haley 2013; Harris-Lacewell 2001). Ample research has illustrated how Black women are over-policed but under-protected across institutions that privilege Whiteness and maleness (e.g., welfare system, justice system; see Cammett 2016; Richie 2012; Ritchie 2017). As such, justice-involved Black women especially "are reminded daily of their distance from the promise of full citizenship" (Cohen 2004, p. 29), which presumably affects their political behavior.

Asserting Citizenship Through Claimsmaking

Prior scholarship has suggested that individuals who have had involuntary contact with the criminal legal system disengage from traditional political participation, such as voting (e.g., Bell 2017; Lerman and Weaver, 2014). More recent research challenges this assertion, finding that proximal contact with justice-involved individuals may facilitate higher participation in political actions, ranging from working on a campaign to attending protests,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039 Published online by Cambridge University Press

due to an increased perception of systemic injustice (Walker 2020; Weaver et al., 2019). It is important to note, however, that existing work is not specific to justice-involved Black women. Rather, it reflects aggregate research capturing the political behavior of both those with direct justice system exposure as well as those with proximal contact to custodial citizens.

The current work focuses specifically on justice-involved Black women. It heeds Cohen's call and extends the understanding of political behavior further to include the sensemaking strategies that the justice-involved Black women in our sample employ in their everyday negotiation of both formal and substantive citizenship. We refer to such strategies as *claimsmaking*. Claimsmaking is defined as the contesting of meaning by an individual or a group (Miller 1993, p. 354). As argued by legal scholar Leisy Abrego, "Claimsmaking requires an awareness of the existence of possible rights" (2011, p. 340; see also Polletta 2000). Typically, claimsmaking is understood in the form of a specific *ask*, as in a negotiation. It is typically based on the interaction between the subjugated agent and a dominant organization (Sauer et al., 2021), for example, between a worker and their boss negotiating a pay raise (see, e.g., Luekemann and Abendroth, 2018).

And yet, existing research also finds that those with less power (i.e., the worker) are unlikely to make claims (Miller 1993). This finding, however, might be the product of how claimsmaking is measured and perceived: Is it only those sentiments that are heard and responded to that qualify as a claim? Does it need to be formally submitted, as in a grievance process, to count as a claim? Like Cohen's call to look for political behavior outside of formal processes, social psychological theorists describe the importance of understanding claims that are "not always readable at a glance" (Miller 1993, p. 370). Instead, they encourage us to understand the ways that they may exist in "less visible forms" (p. 371; see also Best 1987). Further, some research argues that *any* form of talk can be understood as claimsmaking, and that it is only power and dominance that affect whose claims are heard. In other words, it is less about what is a claim and what is not a claim, but rather the style of a claim and whose claims are recognized versus discredited (Miller 1993).

In this paper, we agree with these assertions, acknowledging that any talk can be claimsmaking and that claims may be made in ways that are less visible. Yet, we also extend these theories by describing claimsmaking as a discrete tool that is consciously used by groups that may not always have the option or opportunity to exercise more familiar modes of resistance (e.g., protesting, boycotting, verbal confrontation). Indeed, Carsten Sauer and colleagues (2021) describe how claimsmaking exists within the constraints of a pre-negotiated hierarchy that claimants are aware of. Accordingly, we argue that, in many cases, justice-involved Black women understand their positionality in the existing power hierarchy and thus use claimsmaking to reassert their inherent dignity and entitlement to citizenship.

From this perspective, the process of claimsmaking first requires recognition (verbalized or not) of the subjugated messaging received in a dominant context, followed by an active construction of a counternarrative. Associated with those counternarratives are demands about how justice-involved Black women should be perceived and treated, and why, which together we regard as a *claim*. These claims may lead to a physical political act (e.g., voting) or be limited to a discursive verbal utterance (e.g., a statement of deservingness), both of which we regard as political labor. In this paper, we focus on the discursive verbal utterances, arguing that claimsmaking functions both as a sensemaking strategy and as a political act in its own right.

Most importantly, we contend that the act of engaging in claimsmaking demands disproportionate political labor from many of the justice-involved Black women in our sample, labor that is not equally required of others. Moreover, this labor does not necessarily elicit an equitable or meaningful response from those in positions of power.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039 Published online by Cambridge University Press

As such, Black women, particularly those with carceral experiences, may find themselves repeatedly engaged in the work of constructing counternarratives without corresponding compensation or, more critically, without any substantive transformation in how they are socially or politically construed. In some cases, claimsmaking might even yield additional negative consequences. Despite this, many continue to undertake this labor, likely driven by an internal imperative to assert their innate dignity and deservingness to citizenship.

Methodology

For this investigation, we conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with justice-involved Black women about their interactions with government agencies, their political participation, and their views on citizenship to understand how participants navigated state control. We then analyzed participants' interview responses by conducting inductive and deductive thematic coding to first identify themes that emerged as participants talked about their experiences and perceptions of their interactions with the state. We then analyzed the emergent themes using discourse analysis (described below) to understand how participants negotiated perceived power relations within their responses. Ultimately, our analysis narrowed to instances of deviance in which participants resisted (rhetorically) subordinate civic treatment, inductively identifying the strategy of claimsmaking that the women engaged in to demand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Research Site

Participants were recruited through a sign-up sheet and flyers circulated at a residential prison reentry organization. The organization, located in a Midwestern urban setting, supports women transitioning back into the community following incarceration in jail or prison.[2] It houses women whose placement was either voluntary or mandated by the court. Upon admission, residents were required to adhere to house rules, including a structured daily schedule, curfew, and the completion of specific program requirements. The reentry home provided a comprehensive set of services, including physical and mental health counseling, educational opportunities through alternative learning programs and writing workshops, job training and career development support, and complimentary food and transportation.

Participants

Participants provided their email information on sign-up sheets posted at the residential facility or via email following flyer circulation. The organization's administration then provided this contact information to the research team. After initial contact was made, the research team confirmed that the women were current or former residents of the reentry center, over eighteen years of age, and English speaking. The women were informed that participation was completely voluntary with no consequences for not participating, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Per university institutional review board requirements, the interviewers collected verbal consent at the beginning of each interview. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym and received compensation for their participation.

The current study draws from interview data with ten participants. All participants identified as women and as Black and ranged in age from early thirties to early seventies. Of the ten participants, all but one had experienced incarceration. The non-incarcerated participant had resided at the center to treat drug addiction. Of the nine who had

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experienced incarceration, time spent incarcerated ranged from about one year cumulatively to twenty-three and a half years consecutively.

Data

The ten interviews were analyzed for the current study. Interviews were conducted in Fall 2020 by a research assistant and the first author. They were semi-structured and lasted one to two hours. The interview protocol for program residents (see Appendix A) focused on the women's experiences with law enforcement, carceral institutions, and reentry, as well as their perspectives on voting, citizenship, and "the system." The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service and then verified by the research team.

Analytical Approach

We analyzed the interview data using qualitative thematic coding methods and discourse analysis. Qualitative thematic coding involved both a grounded coding scheme, motivated by the existing literature (Appendix B), and inductive coding derived from participant responses. Discourse analysis is a mode of scientific inquiry attentive to how individuals articulate—through disruption or reinforcement—prevailing power relations. Articulation can include both verbal utterances and social behaviors (Hopf 2004). As an interview-based study, we analyzed the verbal utterances participants used to describe their interactions with the state and to make sense of prevailing power relations. This methodological approach allowed us to identify rhetorical patterns participants use to describe, challenge, and/or justify the messaging they received from the state, as well as society in general, about their place as citizens.

Since discourse analysis tries to uncover the ways in which social reality is produced, thus making it inherently political (Hardy et al., 2004), we use this method to determine how participants make sense of their treatment by the state and, in turn, develop political beliefs about citizenship. In particular, we interrogated the rhetorical emotional reactions (e.g., expressions of anger, indignation, or accommodation of state treatment) underlying the political claims made by individual participants. Through an iterative, deductive coding process, our focus narrowed to instances of deviance, in which participants negotiated the hegemonic power relations while resisting subjugation.

Coding Process

To begin the analysis, the transcripts were coded using first-round coding techniques (Miles et al., 2014). A mix of descriptive coding, in vivo coding, and process coding helped account for the content of each interview, including topics explored and participants' experiences and perceptions. This indexed data (see Deterding and Waters, 2021) were organized into a cross-case data-display matrix, as suggested by Matthew Miles and colleagues (2014), allowing for an initial assessment of emerging patterns that helped us understand the data's "story."

Next, a deductive coding scheme was developed using concepts drawn from the relevant literature (see Appendix B for coding scheme). Using Dedoose software to manage the volume of textual data, we created multiple subcategories that were modified throughout the coding process. Memos regarding coding decisions, concepts, and emerging themes were recorded throughout (see Miles et al., 2014). Within-category and cross-category data displays summarized emerging findings, highlighting primarily the relationship between the participants' interactions with various government agencies (e.g., police,

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prison, public housing, child welfare) and what the participants reported thinking, feeling, and believing. As the coding scheme developed, broad themes emerged, including subordinate civic treatment, resistance to subordinate treatment, counternarrative of subordinate messaging, personal positive attributes, assertion of dignity, and claim to rights and/or citizenship.

We clustered similar responses for discourse analysis, focusing on how the participants described civic interactions and how they contextualized their role and place within these interactions. Here, we focused on instances of resistance and political deviance, our findings of which we explore below. This narrowing allowed us to recognize the political labor being performed by the women across several broad categories, namely bearing witness and calling out injustice; defending and securing basic rights; and combatting stigma. Lastly, we also explored deviations from the primary pattern observed.

Findings

Claimsmaking Paradigm

We identified a recurrent discursive strategy that a majority of the women employed to negotiate their relationship to the state. Broadly, we found that most women disclosed experiencing subordinate treatment. These experiences motivated some participants to employ a discursive resistance strategy in which women made claims that asserted their rights, either to be perceived as more deserving of treatment befitting full citizenship or of the benefits and responsibilities of full citizenship itself. These claims were often associated with acts of deviance. The final data display (Figure 1) conceptualizes the dominant elements of the entire claimsmaking paradigm as: (a) experiencing subordinate civic treatment, (b) providing a challenge to or rejection of this treatment, (c) crafting a counternarrative, (d) referring to their inherent dignity, and (e) asserting their right to privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. Through these claims, participants made political demands and reimagined more inclusive boundaries of what citizenship in the United States should be.

Below we provide an overview of the subordinate civic treatment the women in our sample describe (Figure 1, part A). Then, we define the pattern of discursive resistance identified (Figure 1, parts B–E), which is motivated by the subordinate civic treatment most of the women describe experiencing. We provide an example from the data to illustrate the resistance strategy used by many of the women in our sample, followed by several other examples of this strategy as used in the interviews, highlighting how claimsmaking, often taking the shape of deviance, is a form of political labor. Last, we explore alternative explanations to describe deviations from the dominant themes we identified.

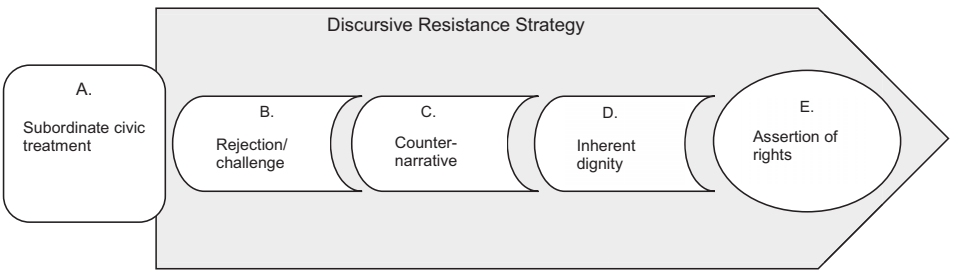

Figure 1. Claimsmaking Paradigm.

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Part A: Subordinate civic treatment. Given the canon of scholarly work capturing the disparate and punitive treatment poor people of color are subject to, it is no surprise that the myriad forms of subjugated treatment the women in our group experienced emerged as a major theme in interviews (Figure 1, part A). Seven of the ten women described at least some civic treatment they experienced as undesirable and unfair.[3] Importantly, the negative treatment that many of the women experienced resulted in the impaired citizenship referred to as "custodial" or "carceral" citizenship." As mentioned above, custodial citizenship refers to the increased police surveillance individuals living in marginalized areas are subject to, regardless of criminal conviction but corresponding to their race, ethnicity, and class (Lerman and Weaver, 2014). Carceral citizenship is conferred on those who have had formal punitive contact with the criminal legal system, resulting in a criminal record (Miller and Stuart, 2017).

Many women recounted experiences indicative of custodial citizenship. Kim, a current resident of the reentry program who spent twenty-three years in prison after being arrested when she was nineteen years old, explains the ever-present police exposure she was subjected to as a teenager before she was ever formally incarcerated:

> Before I was incarcerated, it was like the law enforcement from the neighborhood I was in was all bad. They would just bother you and you would be walking on the street. They would just bother you. Even if they just knew that you knew certain people. You were just a product of your environment.

Despite being used to this treatment, Kim's statement indicates that she is fully cognizant of the abnormal degree of surveillance her community was under. She cites being "bother [ed]" for walking down the street, a cue that her rights (e.g., to move freely through public space) were lesser than the rights of those living elsewhere. Consistent with the literature regarding race–class subjugation of poor Black communities (see Soss and Weaver, 2017), Kim attributes this to being "a product of [her] environment" and knowing "certain people" who were targeted by law enforcement. Not only does this prime her to expect poor treatment from law enforcement (as she goes on to describe), it also communicates to her that she is viewed by law enforcement as less than her non-subjugated counterparts.

Indeed, Kim's negative treatment continued once formally arrested. She explains:

> I've had firsthand experience [with police], and when I got arrested, I was basically tortured. My arm was twisted. I was called out my name. I was treated unfairly and unjust in the police station. That prepped me as to how it might be inside the walls.

Kim explicitly labels her treatment as unfair and unjust. She notes being "called out my name," an idiom referring to being identified by derogatory and demeaning epithets. The experience of being routinely targeted by the police, physically harassed, and disrespectfully adressed portrays civic life as a custodial citizen. The treatment is a product of being poor and Black as well as living in a neighborhood that is economically and politically oppressed, and where law enforcement is deployed to control and incapacitate certain groups. She goes on to describe the harassment from the police during pretrial incarceration as preparing her for prison, indicating a continuum of state control at the hands of street-level bureaucrats and capturing how punitive confinement often extends beyond the prison walls.

The second mode of subjugation, carceral citizenship (Miller and Stuart, 2017), is the status conferred to all but one woman in our sample. A key feature of carceral citizenship is that it uses criminal records to formally identify for third parties (e.g., landlords, banks,

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employers) those individuals who are part of a distinct political citizenry, making "criminals" identifiable through a process Reuben Jonathan Miller and Forrest Stuart (2017) dub "translation." Such individuals are subject to a myriad of alternate rules and restrictions throughout both public and private domains.

Sharmaine, a current resident of the reentry program who was released from prison six months before she was interviewed, makes explicit the impact of translation: "I will always be this number that I've been given and there's no way out of it. I think I'll be treated for the rest of my life as a criminal even though I've did my time." Sharmaine describes carceral citizenship beleaguering her attempts to secure employment ("[M]y problem every time I get out is the barrier. 'You don't have a high school diploma. You're a felon. When's the last time you had a job?'"); find housing ("[T]hey don't give section eight to people with class X on their back"); and create a new community for herself ("As soon as you say, 'Yeah I've been to the penitentiary,' they cringe up and you can see it."). These barriers are due, in part, to the multiple regulatory laws, policies, and administrative constraints placed on carceral citizens—often referred to as incarceration's "collateral consequences" (Chesney-Lind and Mauer, 2003)—as well as to the cultural stigma that "others" people with criminal records. As Sharmaine explains, "You can't convince nobody that's never been to the penitentiary that you're not a bad person." Importantly, Sharmaine is focused foremost on the impact her status as a carceral citizen has on her access to *social* citizenship, which in turn impacts her access to civic and political citizenship (Glenn 2004). The stigma she endures for having been to prison creates a dividing line that many participants described struggling to navigate. Even participants whose carceral citizen status did not prevent them from securing reliable housing and gainful employment intimated an awareness and/or fear of being "othered," illustrating the ways in which hampered social citizenship can alienate justice-involved Black women.

Parts B–E: Discursive resistance strategy. The literature on the political sensemaking of justice-involved individuals suggests several potential responses to subordinate treatment, including interiorization of the inferior status (see Agnew 1992; Fanon 1961) or political withdrawal (Bell 2017). While we saw evidence for these responses in some of the interviews (discussed below), the dominant response the women conveyed was rejection of this messaging and challenging/resisting their designated status. Again, seven of the ten women employed the resistance strategy we identified, the same seven who described instances of subordinate civic treatment.

Continuing with Kim's excerpt from above, the subordinate civic treatment (Figure 1, part A) that she described experiencing motivates her to discursively resist the messaging such treatment conveys. Kim clearly rejects the implicit messaging that she is deserving of the police harassment she experiences when she labels it as "[unfair]" and "unjust" (Figure 1, part B). However, she goes on to elaborate: "It was hard being an eighteen, nineteen-year-old teenager and being treated [poorly], like you know, just because you have a badge. That's not right to treat somebody like that. It was very corrupt then." In navigating the prevailing power relations in place, she acknowledges the authority wielded by police because they "have a badge," yet unequivocally reframes their behavior as corrupt. In this way, Kim's response constructs a counternarrative (Figure 1, part C) about how the police should act, placing the onus of error on their corrupt misbehavior rather than her innate inferiority or deservingness. Importantly, she rejects such treatment based on being "somebody," a human being, thus articulating her inherent sense of dignity (Figure 1, part D).

Ultimately, Kim's discursive strategy of rejecting and reframing her treatment by the police conveys her sensemaking that access to full rights associated with citizenship was not conferred because her inherent dignity as a human being, or "somebody," was not fully recognized. Consistent with the prior literature (e.g., Bromell 2013), this awareness of

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being dehumanized by the police during her interactions is directly linked to her sensemaking of having insufficient access to the rights and benefits of full citizenship. This sensemaking is echoed throughout the interviews, as the women consistently disclosed feelings associated with not being fully recognized as citizens with inherent human dignity.

While those who would present a counterargument might question Kim's culpability in eliciting police attention for the criminal behavior she was ultimately convicted of or question whether the arm-twisting or name-calling was a legitimate response given the unknown circumstances, the important distinction is that Kim is making a claim to better treatment regardless of any criminal wrongdoing. She does not argue that it isn't right to treat somebody who is innocent of criminal behavior that way nor does she complain that it was unjust that she was arrested. Rather, she asserts a claim to better treatment by law enforcement during her arrest based solely on her humanity. By doing so, we interpret Kim's claim as a political demand that all humans, regardless of their criminal legal status, be entitled to a basic threshold of treatment by law enforcement that confers their dignity as human beings and verifies their rights as citizens. We argue that this sensemaking of what citizenship (vis-a-vis people's inherent dignity) *should* entail reimagines the bounds of citizenship as it currently exists, making Kim's political theory liberatory and her claimsmaking, even within the context of a research interview, a political act.

Furthermore, Kim's response reveals a form of deviance in which participants refuse to accept "outsider status" while simultaneously refusing "to conform" (Cohen 1999, p. 29). Specifically, in discursively negotiating the prevailing power relations, Kim acknowledges that law enforcement officers ("they") hold hegemonic power and that she and those like her in her community ("you") hold inferior social status. This awareness ascribes meaning to her social reality as she navigates it (see Hopf 2004), motivating, in part, the challenge she administers in rejecting the subordinate civic treatment she experiences. This rejection, specifically in light of her ultimate arrest and twenty-three-year-long incarceration, is an act of deviance. Despite her participation in illegal behavior, Kim asserts a right to dignified treatment at the hands of the police. Others who interiorize their subjugated status might accept any negative treatment as their own fault since they broke social rules, making any legal or extralegal consequences deserved. Paraphrasing one outlying participant, "Anything bad that happened to me happened because of my choices." Kim, on the other hand, claims entitlement to break social rules and refuse conformity, *but* still be treated as a citizen (Figure 1, part E).

Claimsmaking as Labor

Together, participants' claims reimagine the boundaries of citizenship to entail what it should or could be. We view this reimagining, articulated through claimsmaking, as political labor. It requires specific cognitive effort to reject negative treatment, construct a counternarrative, and demand that one's dignity and entitlements are recognized. Yet, these women also imagine and articulate a more inclusive concept of citizenship for all and make political demands on behalf of others as well, requiring additional labor from them. Below, we analyze several other examples of claimsmaking (using the paradigm in Figure 1) to illustrate specific kinds of political labor being rhetorically performed within our discursive resistance framework.

Bearing witness and calling out injustice. We return to our interview with Sharmaine as a prime example of the labor involved in resisting subjugation and making claims. Sharmaine had cycled in and out of prison across the previous decade, primarily for selling drugs. The incident she recounts below led to her most recent incarceration, for which she spent three years in prison:

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> My last bid, the police came and told me to go and buy them some drugs. I go buy it for them not knowing they're police and three months later they come and arrest me talking about I gave them a delivery when they paid me to go get the drugs. I got locked up and noticed there were a bunch of more people like me that did the same thing, but nobody is fighting for that. How can a police officer dress like a civilian and make it like they're dope sick? We as dope fiends know how that feels to be sick, so yeah, we're going to help them because they want to buy some too. Yeah, we're going to do it. How can we get charged for a delivery selling them some drugs when they're the motherfuckers who gave it to us to buy it for them and then lock us up three months later talking about we sold it to them?

Sharmaine's resistance entails all the elements of the claimsmaking paradigm previously detailed. Motivated by the subordinate civic treatment of being tricked into buying drugs and then arrested for it (Figure 1, part A), she resists with an incredulity that implicitly makes clear that she, like Kim, views the police as unethical and unfair. In challenging the legitimacy of their duplicitous tactics to get her to buy drugs, she rejects the idea that she acted wrongly and deserved to spend three years in prison (Figure 1, part B). She provides a counternarrative (Figure 1, part C): Rather than acting criminally, she was acting out of empathy, helping someone who was dope sick. Through this characterization, we can surmise that she deviantly questions the criminalization of drug use as well as the utility and fairness of incarcerating people for buying drugs under these conditions. She asserts her deservingness of better treatment, as someone who, like all good citizens, helps and supports those in need (Figure 1, parts D and E). By doing so, Sharmaine is inviting her audience to view "dope fiends" neither as criminals nor as individuals whose suffering from withdrawal should be ignored or condemned. Instead, she humanizes drug users as people who, imbued with inherent dignity, need and deserve care. This articulation lays claim to not only her own inherent dignity (again, Figure 1, part D) but the inherent dignity of people who use drugs and experience drug addiction, more generally. We view this articulation as political labor, requiring cognitive vigilance to defend those who have been subjugated, bear witness to their suffering, and articulate the alternative treatment they should be entitled to.

Importantly, Sharmaine also admonishes the establishment of advocates who have ignored the duplicitous police behavior she so clearly identified and condemned. She argues that though tons of people "like [her]" have been locked up through similar means, "nobody is fighting for that." This, too, is political labor. It serves as a call to action for allied advocates, with Sharmaine asserting not only the violation of her rights leading to superfluous incarceration but making a demand that this violation of rights is a serious issue that should inspire organized action. These claims are a form of labor often overlooked when the study of political engagement only explores formal means of participation.

Defending and securing basic rights. Harmony, a former resident of the reentry center, detailed how carceral citizenship impeded her access to employment and, in turn, ability to pay rent. Despite this, she conveyed an unwillingness to sacrifice a basic right to privacy, choosing instead to sacrifice her job and income. Harmony's decision is suggestive of a type of political labor in which she incurs additional consequences to protect her rights:

> [W]hen I went in for my probation judge, she took the movement. … I tried to find ways to get around. I tried to get my job to send me a schedule so I could send it to the sheriff. They were like, "We don't know what type of schedule this is." So I gave up and I lost my job. I didn't want to tell my job I'm on house arrest. I didn't feel like I needed to reveal that. I asked for a schedule: "I need it for this." I tried to send it to the

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> sheriff people, and they gave me a hard time. I'm like, I'm at a standstill. Now I'm jammed up. Now… I can't provide to give this man his two hundred dollars a month anymore that I was just giving him for renting a room.

We understand the probationary constraints placed on Harmony as a carceral citizen as subordinate civic treatment (Figure 1, part A), because it communicates that she deserves to follow a specific set of formal and informal rules due to her carceral status. Harmony described her negotiation of this social reality: Though she is willing to perform all the additional labor required in securing permission to work from the sheriff's office, she sets a firm boundary in conceding her right to privacy, refusing to disclose to her employer her carceral status though it means losing her job (Figure 1, part B). While she acknowledges that she is "jammed up" due to the decision, she is unwilling to make this concession to her perceived rights.

Cohen (2004) explains how "the most marginal individuals in Black communities, with an eye on the state and other regulatory systems, act with the limited agency available to them to secure small levels of autonomy in their lives" (p. 30). Harmony prioritizes this small level of autonomy over her employment, offering the deviant counternarrative that employment is less important than her right to privacy at her workplace (Figure 1, part C). In particular, this account shifts blame for not having a job and not being able to afford rent from Harmony to the state, implicitly contending that it is not her lack of work ethic, commitment, or employability that causes her to be unemployed. Rather, it's the fault of the inflexible and poorly adept probation system. In doing so, she is asserting a claim to dignified treatment: Just because she is on probation doesn't mean the state can take away some of her most basic entitlements (Figure 1, part D). In other words, there are limits to what the state can require of her. Though some analyses might construe this shift as evidence of low agency, we interpret her statement as indicative of high agency. The discursive text illustrates that she is reclaiming her rights, emaciated as they are, even at the sacrifice of her employment. She chooses to endure the consequences that follow rather than surrender a right to privacy. Guided by a personal political theory that dignity is not rooted in one's carceral status or employment status, Harmony is making a political demand that it is the probation system and employer that need to change, not people like her (Figure 1, part E).

Combatting stigma. Christine was released from prison several years ago and had trouble finding stable housing, given the barriers preventing her from receiving Section 8 benefits as a carceral citizen (Figure 1, part A). In response to a follow-up question asking if there was anything else she'd like the research team to understand, Christine answered:

> Understand that I'm a woman … and we all make mistakes. You can't keep that halo over my head or keep that X on my back. When I look at you in my face, you no better than me, you just ain't been to the prison. Maybe you need to go in the penitentiary to stay six months, see if you can adjust. Get you a bed, go ask the warden, can you stay there and do a research on women, and you will find it's very tough. People there, just got shifted in the storm, that's it. They're still human. They walk, talk, and breathe air, just like people.

Christine rejects the subordinate messaging that being imprisoned makes her any better or worse than anyone else, neither deserving a "halo" or a permanent "X on [her] back" (Figure 1, part B). She argues that all people "make mistakes" and that some get "shifted in the storm," but they are all still human beings who "walk, talk, and breathe air" (Figure 1, part C). Through this counternarrative, she argues that those who have not been to prison

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(like the interviewer) are no better than she is, and that, in fact, she's demonstrated her value by being able to make it through prison. She goes further by implying that, rather than her carceral status defining her negatively, it should be regarded as a positive attribute and a sign of her strength (again, Figure 1, part C). She makes this argument based on the fundamental basis of incarcerated individuals' humanity, saying "They're still human" (Figure 1, part D). We interpret this as a claim to better social treatment based on her inherent value as well as a broader political demand for the public to humanize those in prison and recognize the strength it takes to navigate prison (Figure 1, part E). Christine's claim is an example of the political labor required to combat prejudice and stigma as well as expand the definition of citizenship and its criteria.

Additional Discursive Strategies and Limitations

While the majority of the women in our sample participated in claimsmaking, there was a minority of participants (n = 3) who adopted discursive responses that aligned more with state characterizations of them as deserving of mistreatment. These women emphasized their agency and blamed themselves for their involvement in the criminal justice system and any resulting consequences. As such, they seemed to discursively legitimize their poor treatment, even when acknowledging they did not have equal rights. LeAnne, in response to being asked if she felt she had the same rights as others, responded with a resolute "no," but qualified, "If I had've applied myself a different way in life, I think I would've been treated very nice, like the next person that has that education." This is a relatively different response from the women who resisted the state treatment they experienced and crafted claims, perhaps reflecting differing ideological views, different programmatic exposure at the reentry organization or elsewhere, or different personality traits. Parsing out these different factors requires additional study. However, it may be the case that some justice-involved individuals who are recipients of state-based programs may engage in rhetoric akin to the state through learned interactions over time. More specifically, recipients may learn through experience and exposure that accountability rhetoric is expected of them and necessary for reducing future punishment by the state.

Importantly, however, both groups participated in formal political labor. They voted, volunteered for political campaigns, completed the census, and participated in organizing efforts related to housing, among other things. This formal engagement might be a product of their shared involvement in the residential program. Yet, without attention to the discursive resistance strategies employed and informal political acts completed, these two groups of women might elsewhere be categorized as performing the same type of political labor and to similar degrees. We argue this overlooks the vital form of rhetorical political labor explored in this paper, in which women deviantly resist subjugation, in turn imagining and advocating for a more expansive future for all.

Yet, it is still important to acknowledge the limitations of this study overall. The analysis draws on a relatively small sample of women, all housed within a single facility in one city. This limited scope of the study constrains the extent to which broader generalizations can be made about justice-involved Black women or Black women more generally. The findings are also based on interviews conducted at a specific moment in time, which means the study does not fully engage with the broader institutional or sociopolitical contexts that shaped participants' experiences, nor does it capture how their views may have shifted over time. For example, one might argue that women with shorter stays in the facility could hold less contested views on citizenship than those with longer exposure to its programming. While we believe this is unlikely—given our attribution of

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these claims to the women's sociopolitical histories, their senses of inherent dignity, and their ideological perspectives on prevailing power relations—we cannot fully discount such alternative explanations. We hope that future research by political scientists, criminologists, and sociologists will take up these questions, to further interrogate the dynamics explored here across different contexts and time frames.

Discussion and Conclusion

Throughout this paper, we demonstrate cases in which justice-involved Black women resist subjugated treatment when making sense of their relationship to the state through claimsmaking. Most women in our sample reject the civic and social messaging that conveys diminished citizenship status and assert their claim to equal rights through counterclaims that center their innate human dignity. This requires the women to axiologically reconcile dominant narratives about self-worth, success, and what makes a good citizen with their lived experiences at the hands of the state. In doing so, the women generate potentially radical and liberatory policy perspectives despite having varied ideological worldviews, providing a blueprint for the quality of treatment they feel everyone should have access to. We postulate that this imaginative framework is a product of the unique intersection of the subjugated racial, gender, class, and legal groups our sample belongs to.

Furthermore, this analysis decouples the resistance evident in the women's claimsmaking from research on traditional forms of political participation that is typically used as a proxy for understanding justice-involved individuals' relationship to the state. While justice-involved Black women participate in political processes (e.g., voting, census), the binary nature of this evidence does little to account for the nuanced and heterogeneous forms of political labor many engage in, and says even less about how such women make sense of their relation to the state. In fact, this work tends to ignore the experiences of Black women with carceral experiences altogether. Accordingly, our analysis brings the carceral experiences of Black women to current studies about political and legal withdrawal (e.g., Bell 2017), precedents of political mobilization (Walker 2020), and the consequences of criminal legal system involvement (Lerman and Weaver, 2014). In particular, it leverages the intersectional identities of Black women to understand how belonging to multiple subjugated groups coalesce in claimsmaking about citizenship for a specific group. Further, it highlights how, for many in our sample, the deeply innate human desire to be treated with dignity manifests politically in the form of claimsmaking, necessitating political labor.

Strategies of resistance, acts associated with political participation, and claimsmaking are variable and inconstant. Political labor itself, however, is a conscious and deliberate practice rooted, in this case, in Black women's unique sociopolitical history. We theorize that it is this history that prevents diminished citizenship messaging from being accommodated by many in our sample when describing their relationship to the state. By engaging with Black feminist theory, history, and the contemporary narratives of justice-involved women, we position their claimsmaking as part of a longer lineage of practices used by Black women to assert their dignity and citizenship. Our contribution to this literature helps further document the recurring and high levels of political labor required to do so.

Nonetheless, this work also raises questions around the utility of claimsmaking in the absence of organized political action. This is not to say that non-collective forms of organized resistance are not important. As argued by historian Tera Hunter (1998) while writing about the post-Civil War lives of Black women in Atlanta, "quotidian subsistence tactics and covert resistance were vital to sustaining working class women and their families" (p. 74). Yet, Hunter also recognizes that these strategies "were not enough to procure fair working and living conditions in a city that increasingly proved to be hostile to

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039 Published online by Cambridge University Press

[Black women's] interests" (p. 75). In drawing this distinction, Hunter is acknowledging that resistance through claimsmaking may not be considered explicitly political unless directly connected to a political or policy outcome in a collectively organized way. At the same time, it is important to recognize that such narrow conceptions of resistance may perpetuate the erasure of Black women's resistance efforts. Saidiya Hartman (2016), for example, describes how W. E. B. Du Bois and others often failed to account for Black women's resistance because it didn't come in the form of an organized strike. She argues that while their actions may not have come through this method, the multiple micro-ways that Black women resisted accumulated to a collective action that directly shaped the futures of Black people. Similarly, historian Sarah Haley (2016) provides a significant example of political resistance by a group of four Black women who engaged in arson at the Georgia State Prison Farm in Milledgeville: "Although the women … were not a part of an organized movement, they nevertheless envisioned an emancipatory future and, and in radical black feminist tradition, interrogated normativity and constructed a politics rooted in desire" (p. 202).

The resistance efforts of this group, and others, are described by Haley as "extraordinary," but like Hunter, she, too, concludes that "the arson carried out by the Milledgeville four would not be enough to obliterate gendered racial terror or alter the logics of white supremacist patriarchy generated through Georgia's penal regime" (p. 256). She continues: "that project relies upon a future collectivity mobilized and committed to challenging the afterlife of slavery and fundamental incompleteness of abolition's First Act and envisioning new strategies and possibilities" (p. 257). Both examples make clear the importance of properly accounting for the resistance patterns or actions of Black women or women of color, especially when their engagement may not be in the form of an organized political act. They simultaneously acknowledge the need for Black women to continue to engage in collective, formally organized political labor as a mechanism of liberation.

Indeed, justice-involved Black women have fewer options for political action available to them than most groups but face more circumstances for which they may need their political demands to be met. Claimsmaking is a framework to describe how many may engage in resistance that often goes unseen and unrecognized. It is the labor-intensive process of articulating how they are treated versus how they want to be treated, or rather, expect to be treated, as humans.

The notion of claimsmaking is directly related to the theory of political labor, and the experiences of justice-involved Black women more broadly, as it captures a type of resistance that takes place when a group is at the bottom of capitalist hierarchy and *is working to assert themselves as citizens*. It is a theory for understanding how a group negotiates their un-mattering, and their fight to matter *again* or perhaps for the first time. In a context where their humanity is constantly being questioned and their right to citizenship challenged, claimsmaking is a tool that these groups may use to remind themselves and convince others of their shared humanity. For the women in our sample, it is a way of saying that, regardless of what others think, they are deserving of the promises of American democracy. Unsurprisingly, this requires a lot of effort, or rather "labor," on behalf of themselves and others.

Despite the labor required, justice-involved Black women engage in claimsmaking not only, or even necessarily, because they believe it will effect change or transform political outcomes, but as an assertion of dignity and citizenship itself. This process of asserting themselves may be reflected in their decision to vote in a current or future election, or in their decision not to. But it may also be reflected in their engagement with implicit political decisions involving daily life, such as choosing not to disclose one's criminal record at a job. These claims may amount only to verbal utterances and not entail any physical act, such as articulating the strength it takes to navigate prison and combat the stigma associated with incarceration. Yet, we regard all claimsmaking as meaningful political labor.

Understood in this context, claimsmaking represents both political sensemaking and political labor. For many of the justice-involved Black women in this study, however, such labor appears unlikely to contribute to commensurate improvement in their material conditions. This perpetuates the need for the women to engage in future, continuous political work. Perhaps if more scholars and policymakers focused on the content of Black women's political claims, rather than just their formal political actions, this could contribute to the development of more radical and liberatory political theories and practices that may be able to better address their needs. Until then, Black women, especially those who are justice-involved, may remain in a vicious cycle of state subjugation, political labor, and state non-responsiveness.

Notes

[1] Cohen (2004) summarizes the term in the following way: "These individuals are not fully or completely defining themselves as outsiders nor are they satisfied with their outsider status, but they are also not willing to adapt completely, or to conform. The cumulative impact of such choices might be the creation of spaces or counter publics, where not only oppositional ideas and discourse happen, but lived opposition, or at least autonomy, is chosen daily" (p. 29).

[2] The facility offered a range of services beneficial to low-income communities more broadly, such as substance abuse counseling, so there were a small number of residents who had not been formally incarcerated but were admitted based on their potential to benefit from the program. Admission in these exceptional cases was determined at the discretion of the facility's director.

[3] The remaining three declined to characterize their experiences as unfair, instead describing any negative treatment as fully their own fault.

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Appendix A: Residential Center Participant Interview Protocol

Part I: Personal Life

Introduction: Thanks so much for taking the time to talk with me. As you might already know, I'm working on a project that is trying to understand more about the experiences of women who were formerly incarcerated. We are talking to a lot of current and former residents of [residential center].

1) Can you start by telling me a little bit about yourself?
   a) Probe: How would you describe your upbringing? The neighborhood you grew up in?
   b) Key Demographics: Time Served, employment, education/certifications?

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   c) Follow-up: Can you remember a particular moment in your childhood that altered the path of your life?
2) It's my understanding that you were formerly incarcerated. Can you describe that time of your life?
   a) Probe: Where were you detained? For how long? What do you remember feeling and thinking during that experience?
   b) What were some of your biggest worries/challenges while incarcerated?
3) How has being incarcerated impacted your life post release (i.e. personally, professionally)?
   a) How has that experience impacted your relationships with loved ones?
   b) How, if at all, has it impacted you professionally (or work-wise)?
   c) Has it impacted your overall outlook on life? Future aspirations?
4) What do you wish you and your community had more, or better, access to? Why?
   a) Or what do you think your community needs in order to thrive moving forward? What does that look like?

Part II: Law Enforcement

Transition: One of our big goals in this project is to understand how experiences with discipline shape people's views about their citizenship. First, I want to understand a little bit about how your experiences have shaped how you think about law enforcement.

5) What's your overall perception of law enforcement? Criminal justice system?
   a) Would you agree/disagree with the following statement: Law enforcement officials, including police officers, "protect and serve" all communities. Why do you agree or disagree?
   b) Probe: How do your various social identities (i.e., race, gender, class, and/or sexual orientation) inform your answer?
6) In your opinion, are there better ways to address crime/conflict that do not involve law enforcement? What are those ways?
   a) Have you seen that done before? If so, can you describe the situation?

Part III: Citizenship

Transition: Now I'd like to get to the idea of citizenship.

7) What comes to mind when I say the word 'citizenship'?
8) In your experience, what does it mean to be a citizen of the United States in particular?
   a) Are there any particular rights or privileges you associate to being a citizen of this country?
   b) What does that mean for you as a Black/Latinx woman?
   c) Would you say you've been granted, or afforded, those rights/privileges?
9) How has your understanding of citizenship changed over time?
10) When I say 'democracy', what comes to mind for you?
   a) What's your role in our democracy? Have you voted? Worked as a poll worker? Participated in the census? Participated in protests? Have you always done these things? Have you done them recently?
   b) What drives you to do those things?

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   c) Which of those things matters the most to you? Which makes the biggest difference for our country?
11) Does the outcome of elections affect your life?
   a) Is life different for you now than it was during the Obama administration?
12) Does the outcome of the census affect your life?
13) Where do you turn for information about how to vote?
   a) What are your priorities when you vote? How do you choose candidates? What do you think of Trump? Biden? Kamala Harris? [City Mayor]?

Part IV: Conclusion

Transition: I really appreciate you sharing your time and energy today.

14) What do you wish people knew/understood about your experience(s) as a Black/Latinx formerly incarcerated woman?
15) What do you hope for in the future for yourself and women like you?
16) Is there anything I didn't ask that you would like me to know? Anything you would like to add to any of your previous answers?
17) Is there anybody else who you remember from your time at [residential center] that you'd recommend I talk to? Do you know the best way to contact them?

Appendix B: Coding Scheme

List of First-Round Index Code Categories

Agency experience: *I went to the social security board just about once every two weeks for five months. When I walked in, the people knew me.*

Courtroom experience: *I might not understand all educational proper terms. It's like going into the court. I don't understand. Well, what does that mean?*

Direct welfare aid: *When it comes to food stamps, I've dealt with that basically my whole life. I've been trying to apply for Section Eight, which I haven't had the best luck [with]. It's all waiting lists and long applications.*

Everyday political talk: *So, we'll just have a son and mother's day. I was going to take him out to dinner or a movie or something. And his teacher was like, "Make sure you take him to vote, and tell the people that he should be voting for."*

Ideas about citizenship: *Like now, what I'm putting in when I'm being a law-abiding citizen. I'm doing everything I need to do but I'm still being treated as a criminal.*

Jail experience: *Went to jail for the [X] County, but when they couldn't release me after my thirty days, I pleaded guilty. I didn't have to plead guilty to any of them. Being incarcerated for over two days, it was like: I have enough of being here. I need to be doing stuff.*

Media source: *I saw something on Instagram last night with Nick Cannon and this other lady. She said they tell us that our vote doesn't matter, but it does.*

Police interaction: *They'd been knowing me since I was a little kid. They had been on the beat since I was a little kid. Then I think when I was about twenty-one, I got involved with drugs. They were the biggest tricks I had.*

Political knowledge: *Even those statistics show back in the eighties that for the amount of space that they were building in this penal system, it wasn't even that many people being arrested.*

Political learning: *[Residential center] opened my eyes to what the community needs to be doing for the society in order to help make those changes, as a citizen. It was the fundraising. It was going to listen to different ethnicities, which helped break some of those racial divides that we had.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Prison experience: *I think I just, I learned a lot, but I think I just did that class and stuff to pass time. Yeah, because I took a lot of self-help classes while I was incarcerated. I was always in the gym, always on the yard, always in church.*

Reentry experience: *It kind of makes me feel sometimes like I'm still incarcerated because the same things I'm doing now, I did for so many years in there.*

Residential home experience: *And you know when you start a job or whatever at [residential house], you have to save seventy-five percent of your income. That was mandatory. So I had a bunch of money. Well, it was a bunch of money to me then. It was about fifteen hundred dollars, so I had everything that I needed to move. Plus, if you needed kitchen utensils, a bed, or whatever, if [residential house] could get it for you, they would. They helped with everything. Even food.*

Second class/"other" messaging: *But only with me being an ex-felon and me having to register for the rest of my life, that messes me up by getting a good job.*

Self-definition/self-concept: *I never considered myself a criminal unless buying drugs was criminal. That's the only criminal act I did.*

Social network: *I've been trying to build up a support system. I have a couple of friends from the addiction center. The one that's offered me the job. I have a couple good people that I talk to there. I'm trying to be careful though and selective and I worry about safety and I have some trust issues.*

Statement about ideological sensemaking: *So, with that, unfortunately Obama was a token, and this is whitelash. It's just showing how racist America is. I am so happy that they're not hiding up under sheets anymore.*

List of Second-Round Analytical Code Categories

Subordinate civic treatment: *As soon as you say, "Yeah I've been to the penitentiary," they cringe up and you can see it. They're weary about are you who you say you are.*

Resistance to subordinate treatment: *I'm trying to hang with a different crowd of people. Be more positive about yourself … but you can't convince nobody that's never been to the penitentiary that you're not a bad person.*

Counternarrative of subordinate messaging: *Just because a person has been incarcerated doesn't mean, for one, that they're guilty and, for two, it doesn't mean that they're some type of different person than you are. At the end of the day, I'm still human and I want to be treated fairly.*

Personal positive attributes: *At the end of the day, I'm still human and I want to be treated fairly. I'm a beautiful person.*

Assertion of dignity/claim to rights and/or citizenship: *My housing is a right, not a choice. It's a right. Give me my props.*

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Cite this article: Nuamah, Sally, and Leah Ouellet (2025). Claiming Citizenship: The Political Labor of Black Women's Resistance. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X25100039