

Abstract for Plenary on Reproductive Rights

Priscilla A. Ocen
Loyola Law School

Over the last four decades, the size of the carceral state has expanded tremendously in scope. Similarly, the state has increased its role in regulating marriage, family and reproduction. Scholars and advocates have explored the consequence of the expansion of state power within these spheres independently. Less well understood is the interaction between the two and the ways in which mass incarceration has impacted reproductive autonomy and familial rights. Indeed, states have leveraged their power to punish to prosecute women who have engaged in drug use or other allegedly harmful behaviors during pregnancy, impose limits on sexual intimacy and childbearing during incarceration, provide negligent or non-existent medical care during for pregnant prisoners, and place significant burdens on the exercise of reproductive capacity and streamline processes for the termination of the rights of incarcerated parents. Much of this is possible because of constitutional interpretations that broaden state interest in safety and security at the expense of the fundamental rights of prisoners (i.e., *Turner v. Safley*). During our discussion, I plan to highlight these dynamics and explore the consequences of these unique burdens experienced by people who are incarcerated, particularly for incarcerated women of color.