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ARTICLE



The long reach of prejudiced places? Stereotype expectations and motivation to pursue education among previously- and never-incarcerated black men

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ABSTRACT

In America, Black men are often stereotyped as criminal. Previously-incarcerated Black men must contend with this negative group stereotype and with the knowledge that their incarceration status confirms this image to others. The present study is one of few to examine the psychological consequences of incarceration status among Black men. Drawing on our social-contextual theory of prejudice, we investigate the role of previous incarceration on Black men's expectations about being stereotyped by educators, beliefs about the utility of education to better their circumstances, and motivation to seek education. Previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated Black men reported greater stereotype expectations, which mediated their utility beliefs and motivation. We discuss incarceration as a "prejudiced place" with lasting and disparate psychological and educational consequences.

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Many lay individuals locate the problem of prejudice within people – their biased attitudes and behavior (Allport, 1954). Prejudiced people are bigots, racists, sexists, homophobes. This "prejudice-in-people" model – advanced by many psychological theories of prejudice – locates prejudice within individuals. Prejudiced individuals have explicitly or implicitly prejudiced attitudes; and our goal in social psychology has often been to either change these prejudiced beliefs or, in some cases, identify the problematic, prejudiced individuals and attempt to reform them through certain techniques like intergroup contact and exposure (e.g., Dasgupta & Greenwald, 2001; Devine, Forscher, Austin, & Cox, 2012; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006)

However, prejudice stems from both people and *places*. Over the years, my colleagues and I have developed a social-contextual theory of prejudice to identify the cues, contexts, and situations that comprise prejudiced places (Murphy, Steele, & Gross, 2007; Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Murphy & Walton, 2013; Murphy, Kroeper, & Ozier, 2018). Prejudiced places are settings with predictable, systematic inequalities in experience and outcomes based on people's social group memberships – advantaging people from some social groups while disadvantaging people from others (Murphy et al., 2018; Murphy & Walton, 2013). The "prejudice-in-places"

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model illuminates sources of inequality that would otherwise be overlooked and suggests novel avenues for intervention. By understanding how environments, policies, practices, and procedures can create disparate outcomes, leaders and policy-makers can intentionally de-bias environments so that members of all social groups can flourish in society and, especially, in mainstream settings such as school and work.

There are many examples of prejudiced places. For instance, in October 2018 – one month before the American midterm elections – the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a lower-court order requiring North Dakota voters to present proof of their residential address to be eligible to vote (Levy, 2018). On its face, this decision is neutral – requiring the same of every individual who wishes to cast a ballot. However, this decision was challenged on behalf of Native Americans who comprise a large portion of the North Dakota population. These challengers argued that the law would disproportionately block Native Americans from voting. Many Native Americans who live on tribal property do not have residential addresses on their identification cards because the United States postal service does not provide residential postal delivery to many rural Indian communities. As a result, tribal identification cards use P.O. boxes, which are insufficient under North Dakota’s new law. When the Supreme Court upheld this law, they contributed to making North Dakota a more prejudiced place. Now, election polling places – and elections in this State more generally – are settings of predictable, systematic inequalities in experience and outcome based on people’s social group memberships – advantaging people from some social groups, while disadvantaging people from others. The “prejudice-in-places” model allows us to identify how policies and procedures such as this law can create biased outcomes – regardless of the individual beliefs and attitudes of the people who proposed the law, voted on it, or decided the case.

Incarceration as a prejudiced place

Incarceration itself is another prejudiced place – exacting disparate experiences and outcomes among those previously (vs. never) incarcerated, especially upon release. Incarceration is socially stigmatized and that stigma follows previously-incarcerated individuals throughout life after prison. However, there is little psychological research focused on the experiences of previously-incarcerated individuals.

While it is likely that the stigma of incarceration influences all previously-incarcerated individuals, this stigma may be particularly acute for Black men who are not only disproportionately imprisoned relative to the general population, but who also contend with stereotypes that impugn their racial group more broadly. In recent decades, well-documented racial disparities in American incarceration rates have been cause for concern among citizens, law enforcement officials, and human rights groups alike (e. g., Mauer, 2011). Although Blacks comprise only 12.3% of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2010), they represent over one-third of the prison population suggesting disproportionate policing and enforcement toward Black individuals (Carson & Sabol, 2012; U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011). This racial disparity is particularly large among men. Indeed, it is estimated that 32% of Black men will be incarcerated in their lifetime (Carson & Sabol, 2012; The Sentencing Project, 2013; U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1997). Despite these statistics, surprisingly little is known about how past incarceration affects people psychologically as

they rejoin the general population. Does this prejudiced place continue to exert its effects after individuals are released? As a first step toward investigating this question, we focused on the experiences of previously- and never-incarcerated Black men.

Racial stereotypes about criminality and intelligence

In American society, all Black men must contend with associations between their racial group and negative stereotypes such as criminality, unintelligence, and laziness (Davis, Aronson, & Salinas, 2006; Devine, 1989; Devine & Elliot, 1995; Payne, 2001; Sagar & Schofield, 1980), as well as media depictions that reinforce these associations (Chiricos & Eschholz, 2002; Entman & Rojecki, 2001; Oliver, 2003; Welch, 2007). Indeed, many Black men report experiences of being misperceived as criminals by both police and citizens (Ayres, 2008; Goldstein, 2013). Though all Black men must contend with these cultural associations, those who have been previously incarcerated have been labeled with the criminality component of the cultural stereotype, potentially making them be more likely to anticipate being stereotyped negatively along other stereotype dimensions.

Two primary dimensions that have long comprised the cultural stereotype about Blacks in America are “criminal” and “unintelligent” (Devine & Elliot, 1995; Devine, Monteith, Zuwerink, & Elliot, 1991; Payne, 2001) – characteristics that are more strongly associated with Black men than Black women (Eagly & Kite, 1987; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998). Like other stigmatized individuals, Black men are aware of the stereotypes that impugn their group (Devine & Elliot, 1995) and the possibility that others might negatively stereotype them along these dimensions (Wout, Shih, Jackson, & Sellers, 2009). However, previous incarceration is likely to confer additional psychological and motivational burdens because previously-incarcerated Black men have ostensibly *confirmed* the criminal stereotype about Black men in America.

Indeed, this stereotype confirmation is likely to be known by important gatekeepers, as a person’s incarceration status is public knowledge. For example, when applying for a job or college admissions, most states require individuals to report whether they have been convicted of a crime (Pager, 2003).¹ Moreover, a person’s criminal record is a legally acceptable reason to withhold a job or school admission (Alexander, 2012). Thus, incarcerated Black men may avoid settings – such as employment and educational opportunities – that require them to reveal their status and thus risk becoming the target of stigma and negative stereotypes in these settings.

In addition to criminality stereotypes, previously-incarcerated Black men may also be aware that they will be viewed and evaluated in line with other negative group stereotypes. For example, contact with the criminal justice system connotes a stigma of “essentially deviant,” suggesting that the target is less trustworthy and rule-abiding; thus, employers are less likely to hire previously-incarcerated individuals (Haney, 2002; Pettit & Lyons, 2007). Social cognition and criminal justice research alike suggests that people who confirm one dimension of a stereotype are likely to be viewed in line with other dimensions of the stereotype. Consequently, it is possible that previously-incarcerated (relative to never-incarcerated) Black men may be more likely to believe that others will apply additional negative group stereotypes (e.g., unintelligent) to them.

Indeed, targets of stigma are often concerned that perceivers will make stereotype-consistent judgments about them that extend beyond a particular behavior. For

example, Asian Americans who were positively stereotyped (e.g., Asians are good at math) were more likely to believe perceivers would hold negative stereotypes about them as well (e.g., Asians are bad drivers; Siy & Cheryan, 2016). Thus, Black men who have confirmed the criminal dimension of the group stereotype by their incarceration status may believe that others will apply additional stereotypic traits to them beyond the criminal dimension, relative to Black men who have not. Given that “unintelligent” is a central dimension of the Black stereotype (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002; Gaertner & McLaughlin, 1983), previously-incarcerated Black men may believe that by confirming the criminal dimension, they will also be perceived as unintelligent by others. Here, we focus on the psychological and motivational effects of incarceration that are relevant to the domain of education because education is one of the primary means by which previously-incarcerated individuals are encouraged to rejoin society.

Education as a way forward after incarceration?

Society, state, and federal governments encourage recently released inmates to rehabilitate by seeking education (Vacca, 2004). Indeed, studies have demonstrated the benefits of education for previously-incarcerated individuals. For example, research following past inmates over a three-year period found that only 5% of those who received a degree as part of a post-release rehabilitation program were reincarcerated for a criminal offense, compared to 40% of inmates who did not receive a post-secondary degree during rehabilitation (Stevens & Ward, 1997). Furthermore, a meta-analysis conducted by the nonprofit RAND Corporation found that correctional education programs reduce recidivism by 13%; postsecondary programs, in particular, reduce recidivism by 16% (Davis et al., 2014). Thus, a considerable amount of evidence demonstrates that education can help buffer ex-offenders from recidivism (Dale, 1976; Visher & Travis, 2003; Williamson, 1992). Yet, because many previously-incarcerated individuals lack access to rehabilitation programs with an education component, they must seek education in more mainstream ways (i.e., through the direct application; Petersilia, 2001; Vacca, 2004). However, beliefs about being negatively stereotyped along the dimension of intelligence by educational gatekeepers such as teachers and professors may sap the motivation of previously-incarcerated Black men to pursue education.

In addition to shaping educational aspirations, incarceration status may also influence people’s more global beliefs about the utility of education for accomplishing long-term goals. In general, Black youth have relatively positive beliefs about education, citing it as one of the primary ways to gain upward mobility in society (Gay, 2010; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Mickelson, 1990). However, as they progress through the educational system, Black students express doubts that education will provide as high a “return on investment” for them as it will for Whites (Mickelson, 1990). Previously-incarcerated individuals, who believe that teachers and professors will stereotype them as lacking intelligence, may be particularly likely to report skepticism about the utility of education. In sum, expecting to be stereotyped as unintelligent by teachers and professors may not only diminish previously-incarcerated Black men’s motivation to pursue education, but also their beliefs that education is a feasible way to improve the quality of their lives.

Scope and alternative explanations

One novel contribution of the present research is that we examine an understudied group in social psychology: Black adult men with and without incarceration experiences. Of course, previously-incarcerated and never-incarcerated Black men might vary in other ways besides incarceration status (e.g., social class, phenotypic stereotypicality, etc.; Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns, & Johnson, 2006; Maddox & Perry, 2018). We, therefore, view this work as a first step in establishing whether incarceration plays a role in shaping Black men's expectations about being judged according to negative stereotypes and their beliefs regarding the utility value of education following release from prison. Future work is certainly necessary to identify the experience of incarceration as a causal factor in these educational outcomes.

We were, however, able to investigate several alternative explanations for our findings. First, we examined whether previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated Black men differed in whether they *personally* valued education. Researchers have argued that personally valuing something (e.g., education) and believing in the utility of it to achieve one's long-term goals are distinct constructs (e.g., Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). We explored whether previously- and never-incarcerated individuals differed in the value they personally placed on education – and if so, whether this personal value (instead of incarceration status) might predict differences in stereotype expectations, utility beliefs, and motivation to pursue education. Second, we investigated whether previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated men in our sample may have contended with different environmental factors growing up (e.g., living in a neighborhood with more criminal activity; Clear, 2007; Lopoo & Western, 2005; Pettit & Western, 2004; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Sampson & Lauritsen, 1997). Third, we examined whether previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated participants differed in their current socioeconomic status (SES) and parental education levels. Fourth, we examined racial identification as an alternative explanation. It could be that previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated Black men may be more racially identified, and racial identification may predict participants' stereotype expectations, utility beliefs, and motivation to pursue education instead of incarceration status.

One question we are not able to explore with our data is whether it is incarceration or the interaction of incarceration and race (or gender) that produces these effects. We focus on Black men in this study because of the disproportionate experiences of incarceration among this group and because there are specific criminality and intelligence stereotypes tied to the group that may make incarceration a particularly prejudicial experience for Black (compared to White) men upon release from prison. However, future work could examine whether incarceration predicts similar or different patterns of stereotype expectations, utility beliefs, and motivation to seek education among people of other races (e.g., White men) and genders (e.g., Black women).

The present study

The present research is part of a larger field study that was conducted in a large metropolitan city to explore Black men's incarceration history and psychological experiences. All survey measures were brief to allow for the exploration of several research questions and to

minimize the time commitment to participants. In the current study, we focused on participants' expectations about being intellectually stereotyped by teachers and professors, their beliefs about the utility of education, and their motivation to seek education.

The present study examines the heterogeneity of beliefs among two subgroups of a larger, stigmatized racial group (Black men), based on their previous experience with incarceration. We hypothesized that previously-incarcerated Black men would expect to be stereotyped as unintelligent by teachers and professors more so than never-incarcerated Black men. Further, we expected that previously-incarcerated Black men – compared to never-incarcerated Black men – would report less faith in the utility of education and less motivation to seek future education. Finally, we examined whether expectations about being intellectually stereotyped by teachers and professors mediated the link between participants' incarceration status and their utility beliefs and motivation to pursue education.

Method

Participants and procedure

One hundred Black men ($M_{age} = 30.91$, $SD = 8.88$) were recruited from community centers located on the Southside of Chicago, IL. Thirty-six participants reported being previously incarcerated and 64 reported being never incarcerated. Participants who had been previously incarcerated did not differ in age from those who had never been incarcerated ($M = 29.65$, $SD = 6.61$ and $M = 31.55$, $SD = 9.81$), $t(91) = 0.97$, $p = .33$. For those who had been incarcerated, the length of total incarceration ranged from 2 months to 15 years (see Table 1 for other demographic information).

A Black female research assistant who volunteered at a community center in a predominately Black neighborhood asked participants to complete a research survey about the life experiences of Black men. Upon consent, participants completed the survey. During the debriefing, participants were told that the survey aimed to better understand the attitudes and motivation of Black men who were either previously incarcerated or never incarcerated.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

	Previously-Incarcerated		Never Incarcerated	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Current Income				
25,000 or less	21	58.3%	33	51.6%
25,001–34,999	7	19.4%	11	17.2%
35,001–49,999	2	5.6%	9	14.1%
50,000–74,999	2	5.6%	4	6.3%
75,000 or more	1	2.8%	4	6.3%
Mother's Level of Education				
HS or less	10	27.8%	25	39.1%
Post-secondary	22	61.1%	38	59.4%
Father's Level of Education				
HS or less	17	47.2%	36	56.3%
Post-secondary	12	33.3%	18	28.1%
Participant Currently in School	7	19.4%	17	26.6%
Participant Currently Employed	11	30.6%	32	50.0%

Some participants declined to respond to some items. Previously- and never-incarcerated participants did not significantly differ on any of the variables (all $ps > .05$).

Primary measures

Stereotype expectations

Consistent with published measures of cultural stereotypes (e.g., Devine & Elliot, 1995; Vorauer, Main, & O'Connell, 1998), participants were presented with a list of 14 traits that represented intellectual stereotypes, criminality stereotypes, and positive stereotypes of African Americans. Participants were asked to rate the likelihood that teachers and professors might think that they (the participant) embodied those traits. All traits were rated on a 1 (not at all likely) to 7 (extremely likely) scale; higher average ratings reflect greater expectations that teachers and professors would stereotype them.

An exploratory factor analysis with Promax rotation (to allow for correlated factors) on the 14 traits produced three factors: intellectual stereotypes, criminality stereotypes, and positive stereotypes. Six traits (i.e., *unintelligent*, *lazy*, *uneducated*, *poor*, *ignorant* and *unreliable*) loaded on the intellectual stereotypes factor, five traits loaded on the criminality stereotypes factor (i.e., *violent*, *threatening*, *criminal*, *aggressive*, *loud*) and three traits loaded on the positive stereotypes factor (i.e., *athletic*, *musical*, *ambitious*). Composites were created by averaging items within factors (intellectual stereotypes, $\alpha = .89$; criminality stereotypes, $\alpha = .91$; positive stereotypes, $\alpha = .70$). Because we asked participants to reflect on how teachers and professors would perceive them – and because teachers are important gatekeepers in the domain of education – our primary analyses focused on participants' perceptions that teachers would stereotype them intellectually. However, we report whether previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated individuals differed in their expectations about being stereotyped along the dimensions of criminality and according to positive stereotypes as well.

Utility of education

Participants indicated their agreement with three items ($\alpha = .62$) from Massey, Charles, Lundy, and Fischer (2003) measuring African Americans' beliefs in the utility of education. These items were: "Any African American who is educated and does what is considered proper will be accepted and eventually excel in their place of work"; "The future looks very promising for educated African Americans"; and, "The best way to overcome discrimination is for each individual African American person to be even better trained and more qualified than the most qualified White person". All responses were made on a scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).²

Motivation to pursue education

Participants' motivation to pursue education was assessed by two items ($r = .56$, $p < .001$) originally developed by Stevens, Puchtell, Ryu, and Mortimer (1992). These items were: "How much education would you like to receive?" and "How much education do you think you will actually complete?" Participants responded to both items on a 6-point scale (e.g., 1 = GED, 2 = Associates degree, etc.).

Alternative predictors

Personal value of education

To test whether previously-incarcerated participants personally valued education to a lesser degree than never-incarcerated participants, we examined participants' responses to the Intellectual Orientation Inventory (Major, Spencer, Schmader, Wolfe, & Crocker, 1998), a scale that assesses the degree to which academics and intelligence are valued aspects of a person's self-concept. This scale includes 12 items such as, "Doing well on academic tasks is very important to me" and "I really don't care what tests say about my intelligence (reverse-scored)." Participants rated each item on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) scale ($\alpha = 0.85$) and higher average ratings indicate that participants value academics and consider it central to their self-concept.

Environmental factors

Participants reported the frequency with which 13 different factors associated with high crime, dangerous environments were present in their neighborhood (e.g., Clear, 2007). This measure included factors such as the sound of gunshots, drug paraphernalia in the streets, graffiti on businesses, and gang members hanging out in the streets ($\alpha = .95$). Responses were made on a 5-point (*never* to *very often*) scale and higher average numbers indicate greater exposure to these environmental risk factors.

Socio-economic status

Current socio-economic status (SES) was assessed by a 5-point item that measured annual income in the past year (ranging from "less than 25,000" to "75,000 and over").

Parental education

Parental education was assessed by questions asking participants to report the highest level of education of their mother and their father (ranging from "less than high school" to a "Master's degree or higher").

Racial identification

Two subscales of the Multidimensional Model of Black Identity scale (MMBI; Sellers, 2013) assessed different components of racial identification: Private regard ($\alpha = .70$; e.g., "In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.") and Public regard ($\alpha = .61$; e.g., "Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.").

Results

An independent samples t-test revealed that previously-incarcerated participants expected teachers and professors to intellectually stereotype them more than did never-incarcerated participants ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.79$ and $M = 1.63$, $SD = 0.89$), $t(95) = -2.83$, $p = .006$.³ Thus, compared to never-incarcerated participants, previously-incarcerated participants expected to be intellectually stereotyped more by teachers and professors.

Previously-incarcerated participants also reported marginally less faith in the utility of education than did never-incarcerated participants ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.43$ and $M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.15$), $t(98) = 1.99$, $p = .05$. Previously-incarcerated participants also reported

marginally lower motivation to pursue education than did never-incarcerated participants ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.77$ and $M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.70$), $t(67) = 1.73$, $p = .09$.

Mediation analyses

Mediation analysis using PROCESS (v3; Hayes, 2013) and 5000 bootstrapped samples revealed that participants' expectations about being stereotyped intellectually by teachers and professors mediated the relationship between incarceration status (dummy-coded; 0 = never incarcerated and 1 = previously incarcerated) and participants' beliefs about the utility of education (see Figure 1, top panel), Indirect effect = $-.24$, BootSE = $.14$, 95% CI: $-.57$, $-.02$).

A second mediation analysis revealed that participants' expectations about being intellectually stereotyped by teachers and professors also mediated the relationship between incarceration status and participants' motivation to pursue education (see Figure 1, bottom panel), Indirect effect = $-.29$, BootSE = $.17$, 95% CI: $-.66$, $-.008$).⁴

Alternative explanations

Personal value of education

A t-test revealed that previously- and never-incarcerated participants reported similar, relatively positive attitudes about education on the Intellectual Orientation Inventory ($M = 5.18$, $SD = .92$ and $M = 4.84$, $SD = 1.24$, respectively), $t(96) = 1.52$, $p = .13$. In other words, previously-incarcerated and never-incarcerated participants did not differ significantly in the extent to which they value education and hold it as a central part of their self-concept.

Environmental factors

A t-test revealed that never-incarcerated participants reported being exposed to marginally fewer environmental risk factors than did previously-incarcerated participants ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.08$ and $M = 3.87$, $SD = .79$), $t(95) = -1.74$, $p = .08$. While exposure was associated with greater expectations about being stereotyped intellectually by teachers and professors ($r = .26$, $p = .01$), it was not significantly associated with participants' utility beliefs or their motivation to pursue education ($ps > .07$), nor did exposure mediate utility beliefs (Indirect effect = -0.07 , BootSE = $.06$, 95% CI: $-.23$, $.02$) or motivation to pursue education (Indirect effect = -0.12 , BootSE = $.10$, 95% CI: $-.37$, $.03$).

Socio-economic status

A t-test revealed that previously- and never-incarcerated participants did not significantly differ in their current annual income ($M = 1.64$, $SD = 1.06$ and $M = 1.93$, $SD = 1.25$, respectively), $t(92) = 1.16$, $p = .25$.

Parental education

Previously- and never-incarcerated participants also did not significantly differ in their mothers' levels of education ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 1.62$ and $M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.86$, respectively), $t(94) = -0.89$, $p = .38$ nor their fathers' levels of education ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 2.16$ and $M = 3.76$, $SD = 2.13$), $t(83) = -0.08$, $p = .94$.

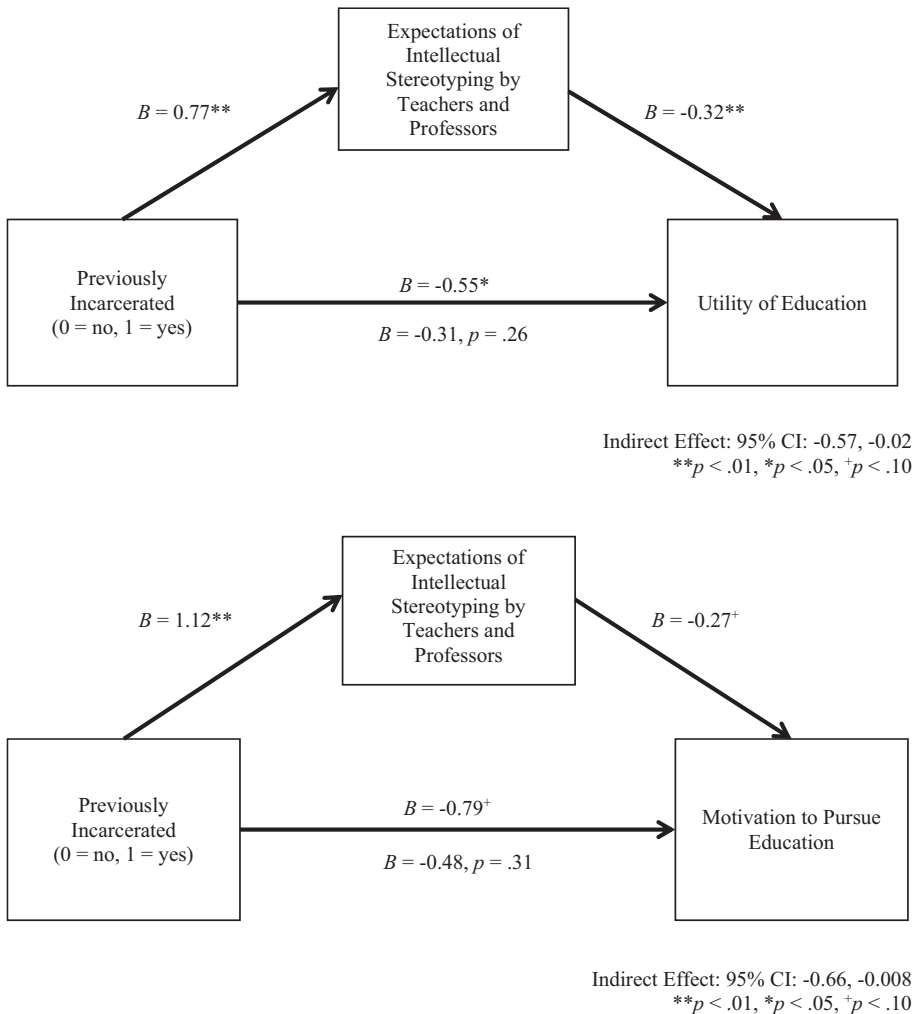


Figure 1. Participants’ expectations that teachers and professors will intellectually stereotype them mediate (a) the relationship between incarceration status and beliefs about the utility of education (top panel); and (b) the relationship between incarceration status and motivation to pursue education (bottom panel).

Racial identification

Previously- and never-incarcerated participants also did not significantly differ in their levels of racial identification (MMBI Private Regard: $M = 5.84, SD = 0.73$ and $M = 6.01, SD = 0.75$, respectively); $t(96) = 1.08, p = .28$; MMBI Public Regard: $M = 3.81, SD = 1.43$ and $M = 3.79, SD = 1.22$; $t(96) = -0.10, p = .92$).

Discussion

The pattern of results suggest that incarceration continues to be a “prejudiced place” that engenders psychological and motivational disparities between previously- and never-

incarcerated Black men – even after previously-incarcerated people rejoin mainstream society. These disparities are particularly consequential when education is marketed as a way forward for previously-incarcerated individuals upon release. The results of this study show that previously-incarcerated Black men expect teachers and professors to intellectually stereotype them more than do never-incarcerated Black men. Previously-incarcerated Black men also experience marginally greater cynicism about the utility of education as a means to achieve success in society and report marginally lower motivation to pursue education relative to their never-incarcerated peers. Finally, stereotype expectations were related to lower utility beliefs and lower motivation to pursue education.

The findings that never-incarcerated participants were, on average, relatively motivated to pursue education and believed in the utility of it are consistent with previous literature showing the value that Black individuals continue to place on education (Mickelson, 1990) – even in the face of statistics suggesting worsening circumstances for Black people in America (Eckholm, 2006). The intra-group heterogeneity revealed by the present study underscores the nuanced experiences of stereotype expectations and its correlates within stigmatized groups. All participants in this study share the same racial identity; however, these results suggest that Black men who were previously incarcerated had greater expectations about being seen through the lens of negative stereotypes above and beyond racial group membership.

This work also took an initial look at potential alternative explanations. Participants reported personally valuing education to the same, relatively high level. This suggests that it is *not* that previously-incarcerated Black men value education less than their never-incarcerated peers – they simply believe they are more likely to be stereotyped by teachers and professors; and these stereotype expectations predict lower utility beliefs and lower motivation to pursue education. There were marginally significant differences in the groups' exposure to environmental risk factors; however, these differences did not predict or mediate utility beliefs and motivation to pursue education. Finally, the groups did not differ by age, current socio-economic status, parental education level, or racial identification. These results provide more confidence that previous incarceration is likely responsible for the observed effects on stereotype expectations, utility beliefs, and motivation to pursue education.

Where might these negative stereotype expectations originate? Although this question is beyond the scope of the present research, previous studies have found that students from stigmatized groups (e.g., disabled individuals, racial/ethnic minorities, women) are aware that teachers may not expect the same level of high academic performance from them as from nonstigmatized students (Carlisle & Chang, 1996; Cohen & Garcia, 2008; Good, Rattan, & Dweck, 2012; Inzlicht & Good, 2006; Murphy et al., 2007; Steele, 1997, 2010). For instance, stigmatized individuals may worry that teachers and professors may stereotype them, and this may impede their ability to be accepted and excel at school (Crocker, Major, & Steele, 1998). Because the content of cultural stereotypes are ubiquitous and widely known, stereotype threat theory posits that underperformance and psychological distress can occur among stigmatized groups when it is *merely possible* that others may apply negative stereotypes to them. That is, stigmatized individuals may experience stereotype threat without overt evidence that perceivers personally endorse or believe in the stereotypes (Wout et al., 2009). Moreover, stigmatized group members are vulnerable to stereotype threat even when they

themselves do not endorse negative stereotypes about their group (Shapiro & Neuberg, 2007; Steele, 1997; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Steele, Spencer, & Aronson, 2002; Walton & Spencer, 2009). Future research could examine whether stereotype threat is intensified when previously-incarcerated individuals have explicit evidence that educational gatekeepers endorse stereotypes about their group or hold lower achievement expectations for them compared to never-incarcerated individuals.

Limitations and future directions

This study is not without limitations. First, due to the correlational nature of the data, it is not possible to make causal inferences. Moreover, larger sample sizes are necessary to test the replicability of effects, especially given the presence of marginally significant findings in this study (Pritschet, Powell, & Horne, 2016). Though we took an initial look at some alternative possibilities, others remain. For example, it is possible that previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated Black men may be more phenotypically stereotypical (e.g., Eberhardt et al., 2006), and this difference could predict people's educational beliefs and aspirations.

Future research could also evaluate whether incarceration status influences the educational aspirations and beliefs of White men. Although it is an empirical question whether previously-incarcerated people of any race (and gender) expect to be intellectually stereotyped, criminal justice research has shown that previously-incarcerated White individuals are afforded more opportunities after release than previously-incarcerated racial and ethnic minorities, particularly when it comes to educational opportunities (e.g., educational rehabilitation programs, Case & Fasenfast, 2004; Pager, Western, & Bonikowski, 2009). Though their utility beliefs and educational motivation may be negatively impacted, the process may be different from that demonstrated here for previously-incarcerated Black men. Whereas criminality is a core dimension of the negative cultural stereotype of Black men (Devine & Elliot, 1995), it is not a part of the cultural stereotype of White men. Therefore, previously-incarcerated White men have not confirmed a core dimension of their *racial group* stereotype by their incarceration status as have previously-incarcerated Black men.

Finally, it is possible that teachers and professors do stereotype previously-incarcerated Black men along the dimension of intelligence and therefore these men are accurately perceiving teachers and professors. Indeed, our identity threat theory stems from the knowledge that previously-incarcerated individuals have confirmed "criminality" stereotypes associated with both Black men and incarcerated individuals and perceivers often apply additional stereotypes to targets when they have confirmed a group stereotype. It is therefore possible that teachers stereotype previously-incarcerated Black men as less intelligent than never-incarcerated Black men. While very little work has examined teachers' perceptions of previously-incarcerated adults who pursue education after incarceration, a qualitative study of teacher-student relationships in court-mandated adult education suggest that teachers' perceptions of previously-incarcerated adults tend to become more positive as teachers witness the development of students' understanding of educational concepts (e.g., Mottern, 2013). To rigorously examine this meta-perceptual accuracy hypothesis, more research is needed to assess teachers' perceptions of previously- (vs. never-) incarcerated adults.

Conclusion

Taken together, this research contributes to our understanding of the psychological consequences associated with incarceration status among Black men. Sociological research suggests that education decreases the likelihood of recidivism (Vacca, 2004); therefore, some community programs encourage previously-incarcerated Black men to pursue education as a means toward upward mobility. However, the present research suggests that previously-incarcerated Black men may be reluctant to pursue educational opportunities, and one reason may be because of expectations about being stereotyped by important gatekeepers including teachers and professors.

Identity-based interventions that negate the validity or relevance of stereotypes in the intellectual domain may motivate previously-incarcerated Black men to pursue education with less concern for group-based judgments. For instance, teachers may be able to reassure previously-incarcerated individuals that stereotypes do not apply in their classrooms by applying high standards to their work and assuring previously-incarcerated individuals that they believe the students can meet those expectations (Cohen, Steele, & Ross, 1999). That is, teachers can make their classrooms non-prejudiced places. It is important to find ways to change prejudiced places and intervene on stereotype beliefs so that all people will have equal opportunities to pursue their educational goals.

Notes

1. Although “ban the box” movements have seen moderate success in removing the requirement that applicants report past incarceration status, only 10 states and 51 cities have adopted this reporting change (Harless, 2013). Thus, most previously-incarcerated applicants still may be concerned about being stereotyped and denied opportunity based on their incarceration status.
2. Correlation analysis indicated that utility beliefs and motivation to pursue education were not significantly related, $r(69) = 0.08$, $p = .50$. Thus, they were examined as separate constructs.
3. Degrees of freedom vary across different analyses due to missing data on some measures. Participants were allowed to skip questions that they did not wish to answer. Not surprisingly, previously-incarcerated participants expected teachers and professors to stereotype them along the dimension of criminality more so than did never-incarcerated participants ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 1.99$ and $M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(95) = -2.24$, $p = .03$. However, previously- and never-incarcerated participants did not significantly differ in their expectations about being positively stereotyped by teachers and professors, $t(95) = .32$, $p = .75$.
4. Exploratory mediation analyses also examined whether criminality stereotype expectations mediated participants’ utility beliefs (Indirect effect = $-.19$, BootSE = $.12$, 95% CI: $-.47, -.002$) and motivation to pursue education (Indirect effect = $.03$, BootSE = $.13$, 95% CI: $-.23, .30$); and whether positive stereotype expectations mediated participants’ utility beliefs (Indirect effect = $-.002$, BootSE = $.03$, 95% CI: $-.06, .06$) and motivation to pursue education (Indirect effect = $-.03$, BootSE = $.08$, 95% CI: $-.20, .15$). Only one of these analyses reached statistical significance: criminality stereotypes mediated the effect of incarceration status on participants’ motivation to pursue education. No other analyses were significant (all CIs included zero). Thus, it seems that participants’ expectations about being *intellectually stereotyped* are more consistently mediating differences in motivation to pursue education while both intellectual and criminal stereotype expectations are mediating differences in utility beliefs.

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