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Beyond the Bars: Formerly Incarcerated Individuals as Workers and Giving Citizens

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ABSTRACT

Formerly incarcerated individuals face stigmatization at work because of their conviction history. Previous research focuses on the difficulty of finding a job once reintegrating into society. However, few studies speak on the actual treatment at work that these individuals experience and if it affects them from doing good deeds in the community. In doing so, the significance of social bonds, empathizing among co-workers, and motivation are outlined to suggest how these factors have an impact on formerly incarcerated individuals' success in the work environment and giving. A regression analysis of the 2012 General Social Survey (N=654) supports the first hypothesized statement: Formerly incarcerated people will experience higher levels of workplace exclusion and negative treatment than people who have never been incarcerated. However, the results refute the second hypothesized statement: Ex-incarcerated people who are excluded at work, are less likely to be involved in charitable ways and engage in the community in ways that other people might expect of ex-incarcerated people. Consistent with Labeling theory and Social Control theory, the findings suggest support towards formerly incarcerated individuals being stigmatized which leads to the effect of how they give back to their community.

Ex- incarcerated individuals who were incarcerated for a length of time, are used to the isolation in the context of mental and physical experiences. They are considered by some as useless and unproductive to society. These perceptions from society result in their unsanitary living conditions, frequently experiencing harsh treatment by the prison staff (Ross 2009:28). Due to the negative attitudes towards this group, some people tend to judge them without knowing their story. If ex-incarcerated individuals are not being rehabilitated during their time in prison or jail, how are they reforming themselves after being incarcerated? Research explains the difficulty of getting a job after individuals have been incarcerated, however, it is unlikely to hear about their actual experiences in the work environment (Apel and Sweeten 2010:451). Therefore, how are individuals formerly incarcerated, treated in the work environment? Are they engaging in their community?

Formerly incarcerated people are oftentimes treated as inferior and thought of as incompetent by some people in society. These perceptions of ex- incarcerated individuals result in the experience of having negative attitudes forced upon them due to their minority status. First off, incarcerated individuals are a representation of what not to be in society. Their positionality in society, causes their experience in social settings, like work, to differ from an individual who hasn't been incarcerated.

Moreover, labeling theory and social control theory explain phenomena which shape an ex-incarcerated individual's social situation and internal perception of themselves after being incarcerated. Labeling theory means that a person's self-identification may be influenced by their social surroundings (Davies and Tanner 2016:399). Therefore, if those that surround the ex-incarcerated individual perceive them as capable and worthy, they will internalize these positive affirmations which will result in successful outcomes. Social control theory signifies that with

change in criminal behavior, it comes with life changing circumstances (Horney, Osgood and Marshall 1995:656). If ex-incarcerated individuals have a healthy social surrounding, their more likely to improve their lifestyle.

However, since formerly incarcerated individuals spent time incarcerated it may be difficult for them to learn how to handle the social settings of the outside world again. The outside world which includes a normal job, school and other social settings, differs from prison and jail. Being incarcerated means that these individuals are restrained physically and emotionally, while in the outside world there is more freedom. Therefore they are unable, or it may be difficult for them to follow the social obligations of a citizen in the general society because they are used to being under authority and hiding their emotions in order to not be perceived as weak. Moreover, can empathy help or hinder the way in which this population is treated? The public media and research often focus on ex-incarcerated individuals' journey towards rehabilitation, and less frequently on how they are treated once they attain a job and if they actually give back to their community. Some people in society assume that giving back to the community is always necessary in order for formerly incarcerated individuals to be considered good.

I hypothesize that formerly incarcerated people will experience higher levels of workplace exclusion and negative treatment than people who have never been incarcerated. I also hypothesize that ex-incarcerated people who are excluded at work are less likely to be involved in charitable ways and engage in the community. Therefore, they are treated unfairly because of society's perception of them.

Theoretical Framework

Social control and labeling theory reflect and describe the experiences of formerly incarcerated persons in terms of how they are treated in the workplace and if they give back to their communities. Social control theory refers to developing strong relationships that help people change (Bahr, Fisher and Armstrong 2010; Horney, Osgood and Marshall 1995). If parolees have a strong bond in their home or work environment, this will contribute to more pro-social behaviors. Formerly incarcerated individuals face stigma which can affect the social bonds. Some people's misperception of formerly incarcerated individuals can cause ex-incarcerated individuals to be belittled. Due to formerly incarcerated individuals' position in society, some people may think they can treat them however they want because they created a deviant act that was against the societal norms. Furthermore, attitudes towards ex-incarcerated individuals are shaped by the media and society's portrayal of them.

Davies and Tanner (2016) refer to labeling theory to support their hypothesis that early encounter with school and justice authority can lead to difficulty in occupational attainment (399). Ex-incarcerated individuals already bear the burden of a subordinated status, which is likely to shape the attitude of people they interact with. This demonstrates that status matters in interactions across both, non-ex-incarcerated individuals and ex-incarcerated individuals. When it comes to the employment application process, oftentimes employers ask for a criminal background check (Metcalfe, Baker and Brady 2019:909). This can be a determining factor when it comes to hiring formerly incarcerated individuals because the criminal background check is a form of judging indirectly.

Research often describes the significance of keeping in mind macro level issues like poverty, racism and discrimination because these are topics that formerly incarcerated

individuals face (Tripodi 2010:368). Though these are important aspects to consider when thinking about formerly incarcerated individuals, there are micro level issues that contributes to their reintegration. Relationships created within and outside of the work environment, has an effect on formerly incarcerated individual's lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Important topics that need discussion prior to this research are what motivates ex-incarcerated individuals, the significance of social bonds, empathy among co-workers and motivation. An analysis of the different factors that contribute to the reintegration process is helpful for understanding the significance of how ex-incarcerated individuals are treated at work and if they are giving back to their community. The discussion of these topics help to better interpret the results later on in the study.

Social Bonds

The social groups that ex-incarcerated individuals surround themselves with impact how they behave. Finding a job as an ex-incarcerated individual is difficult because of their record. The labels placed onto ex-incarcerated individuals in employment is dangerousness and incompetence (Hipes 2019:91). Once they obtain a job, the types of treatment they face in the workplace are a crucial aspect in readapting to society. Formerly incarcerated individuals often times have to go to great lengths to show that they are safe and capable of accomplishing tasks at work (Hipes 2019:95). If they are around people who have negative attitudes and are mean towards them, then they will think they are not worth enough. This internalization will make it difficult to improve as a person in society. If people at work perceive an ex-incarcerated individual negatively, then the individual will live up to that expectation (Judge et al. 2001). The

workplace influences how ex-incarcerated individuals interact with their co-workers and that has implications on whether they are more likely to give back (Baur et al. 2018). Formerly incarcerated individuals who obtain a poor-quality employment that do not help gain any skills, will less likely give back as much to their community and instead focus on their old habits of criminal activities (Uggen and Staff 2001). Co-workers should be more understanding of ex-incarcerated individual's situation and be opened to learning more about them on the individual level rather than judge them by their record.

Moreover, the labels that some ex-incarcerated individuals encounter at work are ones that they have had to learn how to deal with since a young age. The beginning stages of labeling happen in formerly incarcerated individual's youth when they encounter school and justice authorities and are viewed as the 'trouble' student (Davies and Tanner 2016:399). This results in a long-lasting effect in terms of labeling in the work field. Knowing that ex-incarcerated individuals were labeled in their youth helps in understanding that they probably still have a low level of confidence, consistently hearing negative perceptions of themselves. Therefore, the negative weight of labels that coworkers place upon them adds to the feelings of unworthiness they already experienced from the labels placed on them at a young age. This can affect their performance in giving back because they may be under the impression that everyone thinks poorly of them.

Furthermore, ex-incarcerated individuals faced maltreatment growing up which might have influenced their deviant acts as adolescents (Manzoni and Schwarzenegger 2019; Chapple, Tyler, and Bersani 2005). Being called a child delinquent is a degrading label which can affect how they perceive themselves in their adulthood. They may have a mentality that all they are good at is criminal activities. When it comes to the work field, adding the mindset of being

unworthy from a young age with the labels from their co-workers, makes them less likely to give back to their community. To add, being criminally active in one's childhood can lead to adulthood crime.

Sometimes when formerly incarcerated individuals surround themselves with people who engage in drugs, violence or other criminal activity, they are more likely to reoffend. However, strong social relationships in adulthood prevent ex-incarcerated individuals from engaging in criminal acts (Sampson and Laub 1990:625). Short term changes in their life, such as going to rehab and workshops that help with integrating them into society, positively result in social bonds (Horney, Osgood and Marshall 1995:671). When ex-incarcerated individuals have strong social bonds, they are less likely to fall into the labels put on them from a young age.

Regardless of personal change, due to ex-incarcerated individuals' position in society, employers are more reluctant to hire them. Developing a relationship with coworkers is part of making a work setting enjoyable. The significance of social bonds makes any individual feel valued and understood. Having strong social bonds can contribute to ex-incarcerated individuals' success in the outside world.

Empathizing Among Co-workers

People in society empathizing with ex-incarcerated individuals makes their reintegration into society easier. With empathy comes vulnerability and openness to learning. Empathy affects workplace treatment because it generates an interest in others and paves the way towards strong work relationship bonds (Keena and Krieger-Sample 2018; Shanafelt et al. 2005). First off, people have a built-in perception of prisoners being dangerous from a young age because it is embedded in society that they are outcasts. Before Moak, Walker, Earwood and Towery's (2019)

conducted their study, participants believed ex-offenders were not nice and smart (135). However, after convicting their study, participants showed that there were significant improvements in the participants' understanding of empathy as it related to ex-incarcerated individual's reintegration into society (Moak et al. 2019).

Empathizing is the first step in creating a social bond with an ex-incarcerated individual, without it some people may feel uncomfortable being around ex-incarcerated individuals which then can negatively affect how they are treated at work. If co-workers are understanding of the situation, then they will not judge them, have an open mind about the employee and will be more likely to establish a bond with formerly incarcerated individuals. The forms in which co-workers can demonstrate their empathy is by listening and helping formerly incarcerated individuals if they need help with a task, rather than questioning their intelligence and capability of the job. Empathy is beneficial to the reintegration process for ex-incarcerated individuals because it helps them develop productive bonds. If people empathize with formerly incarcerated people, ex- incarcerated individuals will be understanding of others' situations because they would have understood being stigmatized, therefore, are more likely to give back to their communities.

Furthermore, inadequate treatment in different systems can be first shown in how incarcerated people are physically and emotionally treated in the prison or jail system. Incarcerated individuals inevitably hold a subordinate status to the professionals they have to interact within the incarceration system. People who have not been incarcerated have a judgment or negative attitude towards formerly incarcerated individuals and incarcerated people, which is likely to shape the attitude of people they interact with. People who interact with recent released incarcerated individuals are more likely to have a change in attitude toward this group after a few

weeks of getting to know them (Batson et. al. 1997:1663-1664). In all, empathizing with formerly incarcerated individuals can lead to stronger social bonds and it is a form of motivation for ex-incarcerated individuals (Keena and Krieger-Sample 2018; Shanafelt et al. 2005).

Motivation

If ex-incarcerated individuals have a job or if they are in a rehabilitation program or attending a college program, then they are more likely to feel the drive to continue improving their lives and situation. Success is more likely attained when ex-incarcerated individuals have taken a class or treatment that helped improve their lives for the better (Bahr, Fisher, and Armstrong 2010). When it comes to success, some define it as an attainment accepted by society, like the development of social bonds and having a job (Rocque et al. 2013; Laub, Nagin and Sampson 1998; Horney, Osgood and Marshall 1995).

With this form of motivation, formerly incarcerated individuals are less likely to care what others think and are more likely to act to accomplish their goals. If co-workers or bosses see that these individuals are motivated, then they will not judge them and will provide support. Bahr, Fisher, and Armstrong (2010) highlight that those individuals who had success after being incarcerated may have also participated in enjoyable activities, like spending time with family, during their reentry phase. Participating in enjoyable activities and having resources that help ex-incarcerated individuals' reentry process become more positive can motivate them to engage in their communities. If ex-incarcerated individuals are doing what they need to do to improve their situation, then they will want that for other people and will want to help others, especially other formerly incarcerated individuals, re-integrate successfully.

To further emphasize, once a formerly incarcerated individual has attained a job, they are less likely to follow their past path of deviance. When an ex-incarcerated individual is provided with a job it can be a turning point in their lives. Uggen's (2000) study showed that older ex-incarcerated individuals (ages 27 and up), were less likely to commit crimes and get arrested, compared to the younger generation, once they had a job. Obtaining security after being incarcerated makes these individuals feel as if a change is to come. Most of the time, ex-incarcerated individuals that do not have experience in the work field may find it unmotivating to find a job after being incarcerated (Apel and Sweeten 2010:448). Many of the prisons and jails do not provide programs to motivate and educate ex-incarcerated people on rehabilitation (Olson, Rozhon, and Powers 2009:300), basic work etiquette and job searching. This lack of knowledge of etiquette may become an obstacle when finding a job or managing social settings when attaining a job. The study helps identify how much of an impact a negative work environment has on the formerly incarcerated individuals and their good deeds in the community.

Overall, there is an abundance of information on the difficulty that ex-incarcerated individuals face when reintegrating into society, including finding a job. Research that focuses on these difficulties lacks information on how ex-incarcerated individuals are treated at work and if they give back to their community. It is important to understand how these individuals are being treated once they obtain a job. Past research only focuses on the lack of employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals but does not adequately address how these individuals are treated in the workplace. Fewer studies look at how treatment in the workplace influences whether the individual is likely to give back to the community. The present study will

attempt to fill those gaps by looking at formerly incarcerated individuals' treatment at work and if the treatment affects how much they give back to their communities.

METHODS

Data. For this study, datasets is taken from the General Social Survey (GSS) from 2012 in order to answer the intended research question. The GSS monitors societal change by studying trends in behavior, attitudes, and many more attributes within the United States (Smith et al. 2012). This system of data collection provides surveys through in-person interviews on a variety of topics on non-institutionalized individuals. The population consisted of English and Spanish speakers over the age of 18 living in the United States. The overall sample size for 2012 was *N*=1974, but after removing missing data it became N=654. The following variables, *GIVBLOOD*, *GIVHMLSS*, *GIVSEAT* and *VOLCHRTY* were split ballot measures which led to a resulting sample size of *N*=654. Moreover, the GSS response rate for 2012 was 71% (Smith et al. 2012). Lastly, the unit of analysis is individuals. For further information on how the data was collected, see https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/.

Independent Variable. The independent variable that will be examined is *Time in Jail or Prison* also known as *LOCKEDUP*. The dichotomous question used for this survey was: "Have you ever spent any time in prison or jail?" Respondents either chose "Yes" or "No." The variable was dummy coded so that 0 = No and 1= Yes.

Dependent Variable. There will be two dependent variables within this study. The first one will consist of four variables that are under the module workplace conflict, which are *IGNORWK*, *RUMORWK*, *JOKESWK*, and *EHARASWK*. These variables will be computed into the variable name WRKTREAT2 signifying "How r is treated at work." The alpha for

WRKTREAT2 is 0.691. The variable had to be reversed coded in order to make it the higher

score means workers have a bad experience. The variable was coded to be 1= Never, 2= rarely,

3= sometimes and 4= often. First, the variable IGNORWK, addresses the question: "I have felt

ignored, excluded, or isolated from others at work." For the variable *RUMORWK*, the question it

is associated with is: "People at work have spread rumors or gossip about me." Moreover, for

JOKESWK the question targeted is: "I have been the target of derogatory comments or jokes at

work." Lastly, for the *EHARASWK* variable the question addressed is: "I have received emails,

text messages, mobile cell phone calls, or other electronic, internet, or social network

communications from people at work." For all four variables, respondents had the option of

choosing "Often," "Sometimes," "Rarely," "Never," "Don't know," "No answer," and "Not

applicable."

The second dependent variable will be recoded and consist of four variables as well. The

variables are *GIVBLOOD*, *GIVHMLSS*, *GIVSEAT* and *VOLCHRTY*. The recoded name given

will be GIVE2 to signify the module, altruism, that the variables are under. The alpha for GIVE2

is 0.507. Similar to WRKTREAT2, GIVE2 had to be reversed coded in order for the higher score

on the scale to mean that respondents conducted acts of giving or engaging with the community

more frequently. The question asked was "How much R gives" in which the variable was coded

to be 1= "Not at all in the past year," 2="Once in the past year," 3= "At least 2 or 3 times in the

past year," 4= "Once a month" and 5="Once a week," 6= "More than once a week." First, the

variable *GIVBLOOD*'s prompt is: "During the past 12 months, how often have you donated

blood?" Second, for the variable *GIVHMLSS* the question is: "During the past 12 months, how

often have you given food or money to a homeless person?" For *GIVSEAT* the question was

"During the past 12 months, how often have you offered your seat on a bus or in a public place

to a stranger who was standing?" Lastly, for *VOLCHRTY* the question was: "During the past 12 months, how often have you done volunteer work for a charity?" For all variables' questions were accompanied by "More than a week," "Once a week," "Once a month," "At least 2 or 3 times in the past year," "Once in the past year," "Don't know," "No answer" and "Not applicable" for the respondents to answer. In all, knowing respondent's altruism was useful in order to know if they engaged in their community and gave back.

The control variables for this study is race, age, and political views. For race, the variable was dummy coded so that 0= White and Other and 1=Black. Further, for age, respondents ages 18-89 is used for this study. Lastly, political views, respondents were asked: "Think themselves as liberals or conservatives." Respondents had to answer either "Extremely Liberal," "Liberal," "Slightly Liberal," "Moderate," "Slightly Conservative," "Conservative," or "Extremely Conservative."

FINDINGS

Univariate Findings

[Insert Table 1 about here]

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

For this study's independent variable, prison or jail ever, and dependent variables, work treatment and give, Table 1 shows the mean, median and standard deviation. The independent variable has a mean of 0.14, meaning that on average most respondents answered 'No' to being in prison or jail ever. As shown in Figure 1, more than 80% of respondents responded to not being in prison or jail ever and 14% answered 'Yes' to being in prison or jail ever.

For the first dependent variable, work treatment, the median is 1 as shown in Table 1. This indicates that most of the respondents' answer to 'How R is treated at work' falls close to the 'Never' response, meaning they have never been treated badly at work because of being incarcerated. This relationship can also be seen in Figure 2, where a little more than 10% fell in the 1 category. Furthermore, for the second dependent variable, give, the median is 2 signifying that most respondents answered in between the categories 'Once in the past year' and 'At least 2 or 3 times in the past year when answering how much they give.' This can be represented in Figure 3, where more than 8% of respondents were in the range 2.

[Insert Figure 2 about here]

Bivariate Findings

[Inset Table 2 about here]

Table 2 represent the correlation between the dependent, independent and control variables. The table shows support for the first hypothesis being that ex-incarcerated individuals are more likely to experience negative work treatment. However, the table does not support the second hypothesis because ex-incarcerated individuals are more likely to give back to their community. For instance, in support of the first hypothesis, there is a weak statistically significant relationship of .115 (p<.05) of people who have been incarcerated that are more likely to experience harsh work treatment. Moreover, in support for the second part of the hypothesis, there is a weak but statistical significance relationship of .081 of ex-incarcerated people that say that they are treated worse at work are also people who contributed more to the community.

Multivariate Findings

[Insert Table 3 about here]

[Insert Table 4 about here]

In table 3, the regression results show that all the variables together in the model account for 2.0% (R^2) of the variation in how much respondents give back to their community. The F test signifies that the model is significant. Furthermore, the regression model is statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. The independent variable, *Prison or Jail Ever,* and the second dependent variable, *Work Treatment*, are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. The rest of the control variables are not statistically significant. The strongest predictor for how much respondents give back to their communities is *Prison or Jail Ever* (.087) and *Work Treatment* (.079). People who have been to prison or jail are more likely to give .087 of an unstandardized deviation higher than those who haven't been incarcerated. Controlling for other factors, those who have been to prison or jail are more likely to give by .162 higher on a 6-point scale of giving in their community than people who haven't been to prison or jail. Therefore, people who have been incarcerated are more likely to contribute to their communities than people who haven't been to prison or jail.

In similar aspect, for table 4, there is a 2.1% (R^2) of variance of the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variables. *Prison or Jail Ever*, *Good Deeds in the Community*, and *Age* are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level. The rest of the control variables are not statistically significant. The model (F test) is significantly different than the y-intercept model. For those who have been to prison or jail are .140 higher on a 6-point scale of bad workplace treatment. Similarly, for each 1 unit increase in good deeds in the community, there is a .061 increase in negative work treatment. Yet, amongst all statistically significant variables, *Prison or*

Jail Ever, has a stronger effect on work treatment (β= .097*) followed by *Good Deeds in the Community* (β= .079*) and *Age* (β=-.084*). However, it is worth noting that these are pretty small magnitude effects.

In sum, the data provides support for the first intended hypothesis. Those who have been incarcerated do experience bad workplace treatment than those who have never been incarcerated. However, the data does not support my second hypothesis. Those who have been incarcerated are more likely to give back to their community than those who have never been incarcerated.

DISCUSSION

This study examines how formerly incarcerated individuals are treated at work and if the treatment they received affects them giving back to their community. The findings confirm the first hypothesis that formerly incarcerated people will experience higher levels of workplace exclusion and negative treatment than people who have never been incarcerated. It does not provide support for the second hypothesis that ex-incarcerated people who are excluded at work, are less likely to be involved in charitable ways and engage in the community. Further, social control and labeling theory, are supported in that the labels put forth on formerly incarcerated individuals can have an effect on the social bonds at a work setting. This then affects how much formerly incarcerated give back to their communities.

Furthermore, the bivariate findings suggest that there is a relationship between the independent, dependent and control variables. The results reveal that ex-incarcerated individuals that are treated badly at work are more likely to contribute more to the community. However, the statistical significance is a weak one because there is probably not a lot of respondents that have

been incarcerated that contributed to the data. At a glance, ex-incarcerated individual's engage in the community in ways that other people might not expect of them. This shows that formerly incarcerated individuals are judged by their record and not much their character (Hipes 2019). If the formerly incarcerated individuals had strong bonds within their work environment the results would prove otherwise a strong statistical significance relationship.

Ultimately, the multivariate results and bivariate results coincide. People who have been incarcerated are more likely to be treated bad at work and give back to their community. For Table 4, *Age* has weak statistical significance meaning that the older respondents are the less likely they are to be treated badly at work.

Overall, the results better help to understand or question if the criminal justice system is providing efforts needed to succeed after being incarcerated, beyond having a job and more so the relationship developed at their workplace and in their personal lives. It also helps question if governmental representatives are trying to create policies that better fit the work environment when dealing with this vulnerable population. Past literature discussed the difficulty of finding a job after being incarcerated but what remains under-researched is providing information on what happens once a formerly incarcerated individual is in the workplace and if they give back to their community. Further, the study did not align with labeling theory nor social control theory because the results showed the opposite of each theoretical approach. Since this is a quantitative study, it is difficult to show if formerly incarcerated individuals self-identification is influenced by their social surroundings (Davies and Tanner 2016). Qualitative research would be best in showing this relationship. Moreover, the results did not fully support the social control theory. Though respondents experienced bad treatment at work, they still ended up doing good deeds in the community. This showed that sometimes respondents do not need to be in healthy social

surroundings in order to improve their lifestyle because the decision to improve is within the individual. In all, prior empirical research informs this study because it provides context as to why formerly incarcerated individuals have difficulty in the reintegration process and what it is needed in order to better understand this population.

Limitations

Although the GSS provides information on respondents going to *Prison or Jail Ever* throughout the years, there are limitations that could have impacted this study's results. First, the *Prison or Jail Ever* variable does not provide information on the extent of the offenses committed that caused them to go to prison or jail. Respondents could have gone for a minor offense. It is difficult to rely on the prison or jail variable when there is not enough information provided. In addition, the variable lacks information on the duration spent in prison or jail. To clarify, prison is where people go for their sentencing and jail is where they await their sentence. Moreover, this study also lacks a number of control variables that could have provided effective information in better understanding the study. For instance, gender could have been used as a control variable. The incarceration system is deeply gendered, and it would have useful information knowing how gender affects the results.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this study sought to answer how individuals formerly incarcerated are treated at work and if they showed signs of giving back to their community. The results showed support towards higher levels of workplace exclusion and negative treatment. In addition, the results suggest that ex-incarcerated people who are excluded at work were less likely to be involved in

charitable ways and engage in the community. Knowing how formerly incarcerated individuals

are treated in the work environment helps question what procedure the criminal justice system

has in place when preparing these individuals to reintegrate back into society. The treatment

within the workplace can affect the way they engage with their community. However, it helps

with evaluating people in society's morals and beliefs.

Formerly incarcerated individuals face negative labels that can affect their self-identity

and behaviors (Hipes 2019; Moak et al. 2019). Having a strong social bond in a work setting can

affect formerly incarcerated individuals views on themselves and outlook in life (Judge et al.

2001). The results essentially confirms the theoretical approach that had been tested. When it

comes to this vulnerable population, criminal justice reform policies should question if the

policies are providing a positive change in formerly incarcerated individual's lives. The

questions that should be asked to better improve the policies and programs are: Are there

reintegration trainings for ex-incarcerated individuals in the workplace? Do employers and

employees get trainings on how to treat formerly incarcerated individuals in the workplace?

Though race is not discussed thoroughly throughout this study, it is important to acknowledge

the affect it has on mass incarceration. Black and Latinx individuals make up majority of the

incarceration system. When reintegrating into society, what are the local authorities doing to help

these individuals reintegrate properly? Are the policies catering towards people of color?

Moreover, there are a few aspects based on the results that future research can further

look into. First off, based on the results, formerly incarcerated people were doing good deeds in

their community, maybe if authorities made their lives a little easier, they would do better things.

Would that show the same results as this study? Furthermore, a questionable aspect of the results

was that people who were incarcerated and treated badly at work still ended up doing good deeds

in the community. Qualitative research can further explore this relationship. To add, it was difficult to know what some of the causal mechanisms were. For example, were people treated worse at work because they went to prison or jail? Or were people doing good deeds in the community because they went to prison or jail? Moreover, in terms of the GSS, the independent variable used, *Prison or Jail Ever,* did not provide information on the extent of the offenses committed that caused respondents to go to prison or jail. This could have been helpful in further understanding the study.

In all, this country is all about freedom, liberty and justice for all. However, does that apply to everyone? With the current political climate, are these individuals treated fairly under the President's Trump administration? What will the President-elect, Joe Bidden, do to improve the reintegration policies in the criminal justice system? Should people reconsider how they treat ex-incarcerated individuals? These are questions to further evaluate and consider when thinking about formerly incarcerated individuals' lives in America.

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Table 1. Means, Medians, and Standard Deviation for Variables. (N= 654)

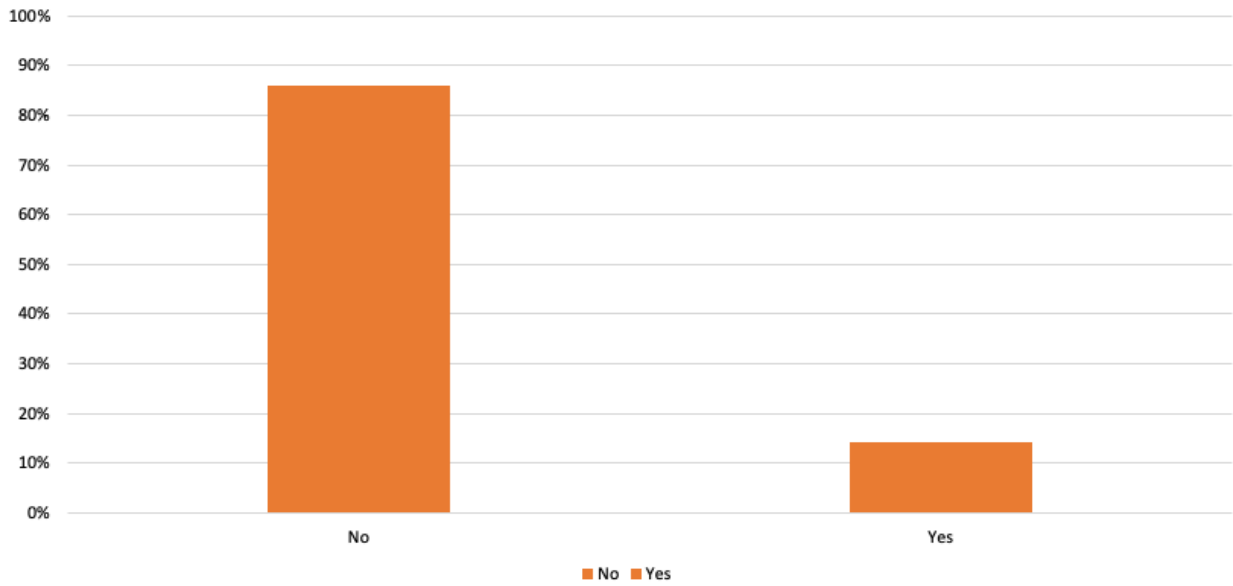| Variable	Mean	Median	SD
Prison or Jail Ever	.14	0	.348
Good Deeds in the Community	2.33	2.33	.644
Work Treatment	1.38	1.25	.5
Age	42.58	42	13.128
Black	.13	0	.337
Liberal to Conservative	4.05	4	1.461

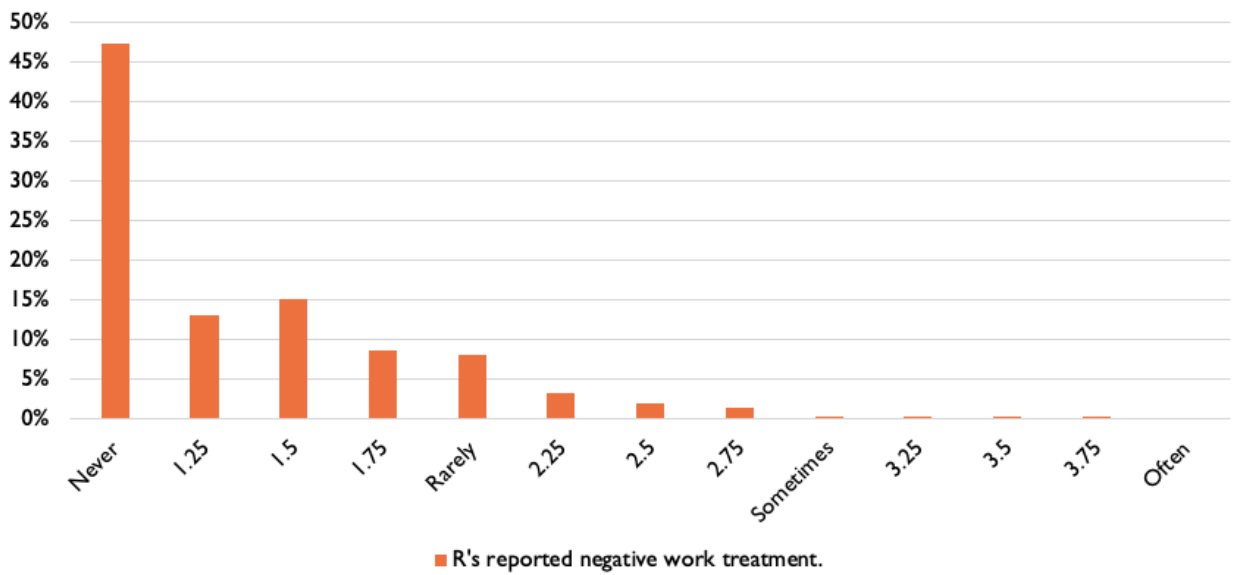Figure 1. Graph of respondents been to prison or jail ever (*N*=654).

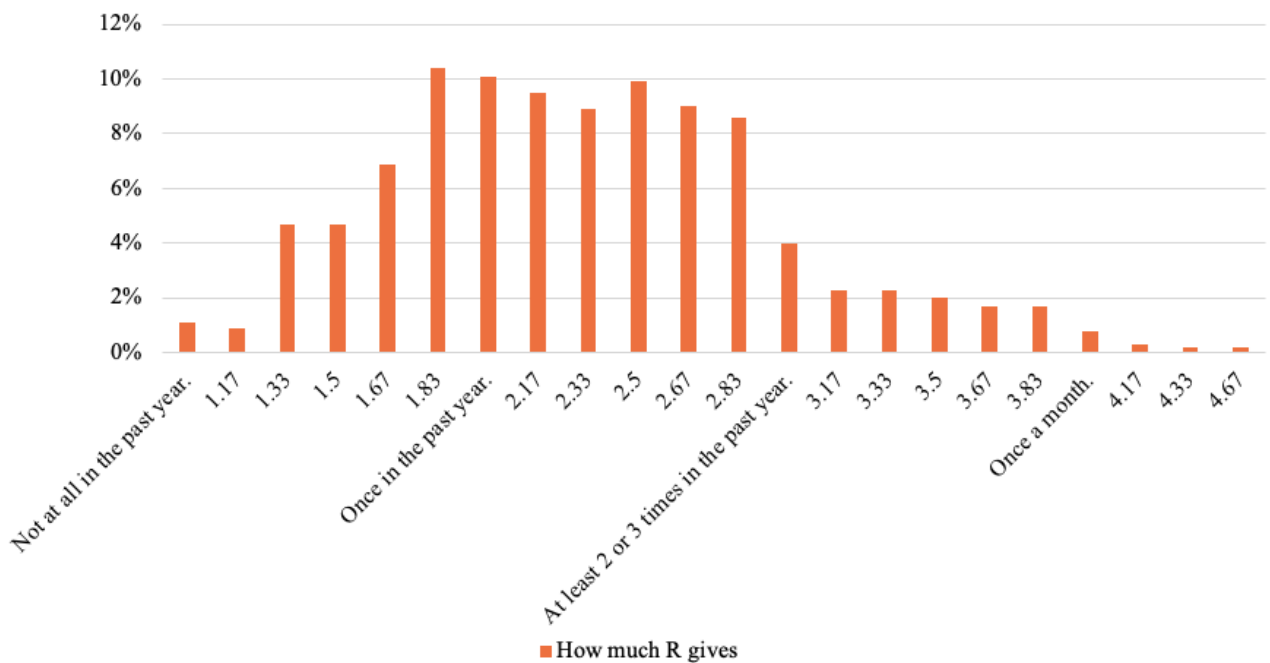Figure 2. Frequency distribution of respondent's reported negative work treatment (*N*=654).

Figure 3. Graph of respondent's good deeds in the community (*N*=654).

Table 2: Correlations (R) between the dependent, independent and control variables (listwise deletion, two tailed test, N=654).

Variable	Negative Work Treatment	Good Deeds in the Community	Prison or jail ever	Black	Age
Good Deeds in the Community	.081*				
Prison or jail ever	.115*	.085*			
Black	-.007	.097*	.066		
Age	-.091*	.059	-.089*	.022	
Think of self as conservative	-.074	.034	-.081*	-.032	.163*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3. Regression of Good Deeds in the Community on All Variables (N=654).

Variable	b	β
Prison or Jail Ever	.162	.087*
Work Treatment	.102	.079*
Black	-.010	-.010
Liberal to Conservative	.041	.051
Age	.003	.066
Constant	1.987	0

R^2= .020; $F(5,648)$= 2.706*; $p < .05$

Table 4. Regression of Work Treatment on All Variables (N=654).

Variable	b	β
Prison or Jail Ever	.140	.097*
Good Deeds in the Community	.061	.079*
Black	-.013	-.018
Liberal to Conservative	-.023	-.036
Age	-.003	-.084*
Constant	1.382	0

R^2= .021; $F(5,648)$=3.623* ; $p < .05$