

EXONEREE STIGMA: AN INVESTIGATION OF ATTITUDES TOWARD GUILTY AND
WRONGFULLY CONVICTED PERSONS

By

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To Lora, who knew I could and is always right

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The Innocence Project has exonerated 266 individuals to date who were wrongly convicted of crimes they did not commit. As exonerations increase, there is a need to examine the social effects of wrongful conviction. Previous research has demonstrated that individuals who are paroled from prison are discriminated against and stigmatized in our society. Using correspondence bias as a theoretical framework, this study hypothesized that exonerees would be similarly stigmatized. Using a 2 (status: exonerated, convicted) X 4 (crime: robbery, assault, sexual battery, murder) between subjects factorial design, this study investigated whether exonerees were stigmatized at the same level as guilty persons, and whether that stigma was moderated by the type of crime committed. Results indicated that the guilty/paroled were always stigmatized more than the exonerated. However, the exonerated were rated above or near the midpoint of the scale on some measures of stigma, indicating that they still experience some stigma. Additionally, an effect of the interaction between status and crime type was observed on measures of desired closeness, showing that the guilty who committed more severe crimes were thought of less favorably than the guilty who committed less severe crimes. However, no such relationship existed for exonerees.

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In 1989, Gary Dotson became the first person to be exonerated using DNA evidence. Tests on a semen stain in the victim's underpants cleared Dotson of the rape of 16-year-old Cathleen Crowell (Warden, 2002). Dotson was incarcerated for more than a decade prior to his exoneration (Scheck et. al, 2000), and with his case, a new innocence movement was born. The Innocence Project has been at the forefront of this movement.

The Innocence Project is a not-for-profit legal counseling program that specializes in DNA exonerations for the wrongfully convicted. Since its inception in 1992, the project has aided in the exonerations of 266¹ men and women who were convicted of crimes they did not commit (innocenceproject.org). Seventeen of these exonerated individuals had been convicted of first-degree murder and were sentenced to death. Others were exonerated of violent crimes such as rape and assault. The Innocence Project exonerations may represent only a small proportion of all wrongful convictions, which some scholars have estimated to be in the tens of thousands (Gross et. al, 2005). These scholars have suggested that there are many cases of wrongful conviction that have not been discovered, either because there is no biological evidence to examine, or because the crime or sentence is not considered severe enough to warrant re-visiting the original conviction (Gross et, al, 2005). Other scholars suggest that wrongful convictions occur in between .5% and 15% of all cases (Poveda, 2001; Huff et al, 1986).

1 As of February 25th, 2011

To date, most research dealing with wrongful conviction has examined why these mistakes occur (Rattner, 1988; Scheck et al., 2000) and how to compensate those who have been wrongfully convicted (Armbrust, 2004; Bernhard, 2004; Burnett, 2005; Chinn & Ratliff, 2009; Chunias & Aufgang, 2008; Lonergan, 2008; Lopez, 2002; Martin, 2006). Other research has investigated the psychological effects of wrongful conviction (Grounds, 2004; Grounds, 2005), but only one study has examined the social consequences exonerees may experience as a result of their wrongful convictions (Clow & Leach, 2009).

Though exonerated individuals are innocent, they still must struggle with the consequences of their past convictions. Once exonerated, they are often not even afforded the basic reentry services granted to parolees, such as psychological and physical health care or housing assistance (Chinn & Ratliff 2009), and only 27 states offer some form of compensation to exonerees (innocenceproject.org)². Monetary compensation varies widely from state to state. Some states, such as New Hampshire, offer a set amount of money for the entirety of one's incarceration, while others, such as Texas, pay per year. Montana provides no monetary award, but only educational services (Norris & Redlich, 2010). Of the 27 states that offer some form of compensation, only Massachusetts provides post-release re-entry services in addition to money (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008). Other states offer reentry programs to parolees, but these programs may be unavailable to or inappropriate for exonerees. Reentry programs mostly focus on preventing recidivism, or reoffending. Exonerees did not commit the crime for which they were imprisoned, so it is unlikely these programs

² See appendix A for a list of compensation statutes by state

geared toward parolees will meet exonerees' needs (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008).

Scholars suggest that, like the parolee, the exoneree's experiences in the first days and weeks after release will influence how successful his³ reentry will be (Travis et al., 2001). However, parolees receive structured, society-sponsored support while exonerees may not, despite the fact that exonerees and parolees face many of the same social challenges. Research has demonstrated that guilty individuals who have been released from prison are subject to stigmatization that affects their ability to find work, secure housing, and generally participate in the community outside of the penal system (Boshier & Johnson, 1974; Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971; Harding, 2003). This occurs despite the social assistance services provided to them upon release. The present study tested whether exonerees are subjected to these same sorts of stigmas.

Some exonerees have reported dealing with stigma related to their wrongful convictions (Warden, 2002; Chin & Ratliff, 2009; Lonergan, 2008; Westervelt & Cook, 2010). Anecdotal research suggests that people may be uncomfortable working alongside exonerees (Frontline PSB television broadcast (2002) as cited in Chinn & Ratliff, 2009), and an empirical study found that negative perceptions of an exoneree were affected by the type of evidence that caused his original conviction. This was especially true in cases in which the main evidence against the exoneree during the original trial had been a false confession or the testimony of a jailhouse snitch, which some have conceptualized as a 'secondary confession' (Clow & Leach, 2009; Neuschatz et al., 2008). This suggests that there is a stigma associated with exoneration. Given that the evidence contributing to the wrongful conviction affects

³ Exonerees will be referred to using masculine pronouns, as the vast majority are male.

stigma against exonerees, it is possible that the seriousness of the crime the exoneree was originally convicted of may affect stigma as well. I hypothesized that this effect would be due to the mistakes people make in understanding others' behaviors and that the level of stigma will change depending on the seriousness of the crime in question. In addition, I hypothesized that the stigma associated with exonerees would be similar to that experienced by parolees. Previous research has found that parolees are discriminated against in housing and in employment (Boshier & Johnson, 1974; Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971; Curtin, 2005; Harding, 2003; Petersillia, 2001; Travis, 2002), and I hypothesized that exonerees would experience similar marginalization in these areas. Additionally, I hypothesized that exonerees and parolees would likely both receive low ratings on scales of competency and warmth and would both be found undesirable as friends, neighbors, business partners, or spouses, as previous research suggests (Clow & Leach, 2009).

To further explore this issue, this literature review will examine pertinent research in three key areas: correspondence bias (formerly referred to as the fundamental attribution error), the stigmatization of parolees, and the successful release and reintegration of exonerees. Correspondence bias will help provide a theoretical background for understanding why exonerees may be stigmatized (Clow & Leach, 2009), and the research regarding parolee stigma will help explain what possible stigmas exonerees may experience and why those stigmas may be dangerous. Finally, a review of the literature examining the current status of exonerees will help explain why these unique individuals are a vulnerable population that risks being negatively and indelibly affected by public perception.

Correspondence Bias

The most basic tenant of correspondence bias is that people tend to attribute others' behaviors to dispositional rather than situational factors (Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977). In the case of exonerated individuals, observers may attribute the initial conviction to the exoneree's inherent criminality rather than to a flaw in the criminal justice system (Clow & Leach, 2009). This is a complex cognitive process that includes a number of decisions to be made by the observer.

There are three steps to any attribution (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1967; Ross, 1977). First, the observer must make a causal judgment- to what action should a particular outcome be attributed? For example, in the case of a car crash, perhaps failure to stop at a red light was the action that caused the accident. Next, the observer must make social inferences- what caused the action to occur? Was the action the result of a characteristic of the actor, or the result of the environment or situation in which the actor was placed? For example, in the case of the car accident, an observer might attribute the crash to the driver's poor driving skills (personal characteristic) or to the ice on the road (situational constraint). Finally, the observer makes predictions about future outcomes and behaviors- is the individual likely to act in the same manner again? If the outcome (the crash) is attributed to poor driving skills (a personal attribute), the observer may assume the outcome will happen again because the individual will continue to drive poorly. If the outcome is attributed to an icy road (a situational constraint), the observer may assume the outcome is unlikely to occur again in the absence of the same situational constraint.

In the case of an attribution related to wrongful conviction, the steps of attribution may operate in the following manner: In step one, the causal judgment phase, the

observer must determine what action caused the wrongful conviction. Did the exoneree supply a false confession? Was he involved peripherally in the crime but not primarily? Did he talk back to police when he was questioned? Did he resist arrest? Was he in the wrong place at the wrong time? In this phase, the observer would determine if the exoneree was initially suspected, tried and convicted because of some action he legitimately committed, or if he was the victim of a flawed legal system. If the observer determines that the exoneree did in fact do something to contribute to his wrongful conviction, or deduces that the exoneree has criminal tendencies, the observer moves on to the next step. In the second step, the social inference step, the observer would determine whether he contributed to his false conviction because of some inherent criminality (a personal attribute), or whether it was caused by something situational such as an intimidating interrogation, a misidentification, faulty forensic evidence, or snitch testimony. The observer may be likely to assume the exoneree is inherently criminal, as prior research on correspondence bias shows people are more likely to attribute others' actions to their personal attributes (Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977). The observer may commit correspondence bias and neglect to account for the situational factors over which the exoneree had no control, such as faulty forensic evidence or an incompetent attorney, and rather assume he caused his own wrongful conviction because he is a bad person.

This bias carries over into the third phase: prediction of future behavior. If the observer believes the exoneree's initial conviction is due to a personal attribute or personality flaw, the observer is likely to make two misjudgments in the third phase. First, the observer is likely to assume the exoneree is in some way at fault for his

wrongful conviction, and that he is at fault because he is inherently “bad”. Second, because the observer regards the exoneree as inherently criminal, the observer is likely to expect the exoneree to behave criminally in the future. Thus, because of the correspondence bias and misjudgment in the second phase of attribution, the observer will be likely to expect future criminality from the exoneree, and therefore, the exoneree is likely to be stigmatized.

There are several explanations for why attribution errors occur that are delineated in the literature (see Gilbert & Malone, 1995 for a good overview). These include: ignorance of situational constraints (e.g., the observer not knowing that the road was icy), unrealistic behavior expectations on the part of the observer (e.g., the observer assuming that if the road was icy, the driver would have taken a detour), inflated categorizations of behavior on the part of the observer (e.g., the observer assuming the driver failed to apply the brakes altogether), and incomplete corrections of observers’ beliefs once situational constraints are exposed (e.g., believing that even though the road was icy, the driver likely had poor road skills to begin with). These explanations, when combined, can help delineate why observers might misattribute the exoneree’s circumstances to personal rather than situational factors.

First, observers may be ignorant of the situational constraints operating in the exoneree’s case. Laypeople may be unaware that DNA, fingerprint and other forensic evidence can be fallible (Lawson, 2003; Lieberman et al., 2008), that snitch testimony can be untrue or driven by incentives (Neuschatz et al., 2008), that eyewitnesses can make misidentifications (Wells et al., 1998; Wells & Olson, 2003), or that confessions can be false and/or coerced (Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004; Kassin et al., 2005; Kassin &

Neumann, 1997). However, all of these are situational factors that have contributed to the wrongful conviction of individuals who have been exonerated by Innocence Project attorneys (Scheck, Neufeld & Dwyer, 2000). Lay observers may not even consider a false confession or the circumstances leading to a false confession to be a situational constraint because they may blame that confession on the disposition of the confessor (Clow & Leach, 2009). They may assume that the confession arises from some inherent criminality on the part of the confessor, rather than from a volatile interrogative environment.

Second, observers may have unrealistic expectations about what the subject is likely to do in a given situation. For example, observers may assume that an innocent individual would never confess to a crime he did not commit or that an innocent individual would continue to maintain his innocence throughout the interrogation process. In addition, observers may have misperceptions of the situation that may contribute to their beliefs. For example, many people believe that innocent suspects in the criminal justice system are protected by their innocence (Kassin, 2005). Third, observers may make inflated categorizations of the subject's behavior, meaning they may make the subject's behavior more important than it truly is. If a snitch indicates that the subject committed the crime, observers may assume it is because the subject is truly criminal. Fourth, observers may make incomplete corrections once situational factors are exposed. If the individual is ultimately exonerated, having been convicted based on inaccurate snitch testimony, faulty forensic testing or poor interrogation tactics, observers might still assume the initial conviction was correct because they fail to incorporate new situational information into their paradigms.

A wide body of research has found empirical support for the correspondence bias. Most commonly, experimenters manipulate whether situational factors are salient in a given situation and instruct participants to make attributions for the individual's behavior. This has commonly been done with stimulus essays that instruct the participant to make an inference as to the true opinion of the essay writer (Ajzen et al., 1979; Jones & Harris, 1967; Reeder & Fletcher, 1989). As one might intuit, essay-consistent attitudes are more often attributed to writers who composed their essays under high-choice conditions (a dispositional factor) than those who composed their essays under low choice conditions (a situational factor) (Tetlock, 1985). However, a second, less intuitive effect that which scholars have termed the "overattribution effect" also emerged. Even when participants are told that the essay writer was compelled to compose an essay supporting a particular viewpoint, participants still infer some level of correspondence between the essay's topic and the writer's true opinion, despite the explicit knowledge that there was no actual link between the writer's attitude and the subject of the essay (Jones & Harris, 1976; Tetlock, 1985)

One study that investigated overattribution found that when an attitude or action is unexpected, it is likely to be attributed to personal rather than situational factors. This means that degree of choice matters more when behavior has what the literature refers to as "low prior probability" (Jones & Harris, 1967). This study investigated the attribution of pro and anti-Castro attitudes with predominantly anti-Castro participants and found that some individuals who wrote pro-Castro essays were judged by observers to personally hold pro-Castro opinions, even when the observers were told that the writers were assigned to write such an essay (Jones & Harris, 1967).

To test the generalizability of these findings, Jones and Harris conducted a second similar experiment investigating pro and anti-segregation attitudes as attributed to northerners or southerners who either chose or were assigned to write about segregation attitudes. They hypothesized an interaction between the independent variables- specifically, that southern integrationists would be seen as more pro-integration than the northern integrationist, and that the northern segregationist would be seen as more pro-segregation than his southern counterpart. This was expected to occur because the stronger attitudes were deviations from what is expected of their reference groups (i.e., one would expect the northern target to be integrationist, and one would expect the southern target to be segregationist). Thus, choice manipulations were not expected to affect attribution when an unexpected opinion was expressed. The results showed a main effect for geographic location- southerners were always seen as more pro-segregation than northerners were. However, this main effect was qualified by an interaction between geographic location and level of choice- for northern targets, choice affected attribution for segregationist speeches, but not for integrationist speeches. Northerners who chose to make segregationist speeches were seen as more segregationist than their non-choosing counterparts. This experiment provided partial, but not unequivocal support for the theory that unexpected behaviors are more often attributed to personal rather than situational factors.

A later study that tested attributions of attitudes related to marijuana legalization similarly found that although choice is important, “unequivocal behavior in a no-choice setting still carries a powerful message to the subject” (Jones et al., 1971, p.69). Another study, which investigated the attribution of attitudes about amnesty for draft

evaders, found similar results (Miller, 1974). Further research on overattribution found that that even when marijuana essays and Castro essays were truly written under choice or no-choice constraints (and not prepared by the investigator) the overattribution effect remained (Snyder & Jones, 1974). Regardless of the social issue being investigated, and regardless of who writes the essay that will be used as stimulus, research has overwhelmingly demonstrated that the overattribution effect holds empirical weight.

These findings are integral to the study of exoneree stigmatization because it is outside the norm to become involved in the criminal justice system. Therefore, a conviction, whether or not it later results in an exoneration, may be more likely to be attributed to the inherent criminality of the individual rather than to external circumstances over which the individual had little or no control (Clow & Leach, 2009). If the conviction is attributed to personal characteristics or inherent criminality, it is possible that a subsequent exoneration will be of little concern to observers, and they will stigmatize exonerees in the same way they would stigmatize ex-convicts. The exonerees are comparable to the essay-writers discussed above. The content of the essays was attributed to the writer's opinion, independent of choice. Similarly, the wrongful conviction may be attributed to the exoneree's own criminality or fault, independent of the role the exoneree played in his conviction or the circumstances of the crime. Correspondence bias may explain why exonerees could be stigmatized by the public. However, there are those who deny the existence of correspondence bias altogether (Ajzen et al., 1979; Kruglanski & Ajzen, 1979).

Though there is significant research that supports their existence, correspondence bias and the overattribution effect are not without their detractors. These detractors suggest that correspondence bias, which was formerly referred to as the fundamental attribution error, isn't an "error" at all, citing a distinction between the term "error" and the term "bias" (Harvey et al., 1981). Researchers define bias as the subjective tendency to select one cognition over another and error as an inconsistency between a hypothesis and a fact (Kruglanski & Ajzen, 1979). They therefore suggest that what had been called the fundamental attribution error is truly a fundamental attribution bias, and suggest that sometimes, the dispositional judgments levied by the bias are actually accurate. Further, they challenge the "fundamentality" of the supposed error, citing prior contradictory findings (Ajzen et al., 1979), and suggesting that the effect isn't really as fundamental as researchers suggest, given that it is possible to manipulate and even eliminate it. Research that challenges the fundamentality of the error may be the precise reason why the new vernacular refers to the phenomenon as correspondence bias.

There are those who continue to challenge the effect in its iteration as correspondence bias. One study found that, contrary to other empirical evidence, correspondence bias was eliminated when participants were told that an essay author was compelled to compose a certain type of essay (Ajzen et al., 1979). In this experiment, essays stating pro or anti-abortion opinions were attributed to dispositional attributes under choice conditions, but to situational factors under no-choice conditions. However, when a personality description was presented along with the essay, participants behaved consistent with the predictions of correspondence bias and attributed essay positions under both choice and no choice conditions to dispositional

attributes of the essay writers. These findings suggest that the more an observer knows about the actor, the more likely that observer is to commit correspondence bias, but that it is in fact possible to eliminate the bias in a controlled experimental environment. This finding suggests that given a precise manipulation in a laboratory setting, correspondence bias can be overcome. However, daily life does not take place in a laboratory, and the squelching of the effect in a controlled environment in this study does not eliminate the possibility that correspondence bias will continue to operate outside of the laboratory setting. Therefore, it is still possible that correspondence bias will contribute to the public's perceptions of exonerees.

Though a small group of researchers challenge whether correspondence bias exists, they are in the minority. The phenomenon is considered widely accepted in psychological research communities, with the vast majority of empirical findings supporting it rather than disconfirming it (Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Johnson & Jemmott, 1984; Reeder et al., 1989). Given the empirical support previously found for the effect, it is possible that correspondence bias will lead observers to rate the exonerees as inherently criminal and stigmatize them in much the same manner as they stigmatize parolees, although possibly to a lesser degree because the exonerees have been proven innocent. Those who were correctly convicted of severe crimes, such as rape and murder, are likely to be subjected to the highest level of stigmatization. These individuals' actions may be most likely to be attributed to dispositional rather than situational factors because observers may assume that in order to commit such an atrocious crime, the perpetrator must have deep-rooted criminal tendencies. Those convicted of lesser crimes, such as assault or robbery, may still be stigmatized, but to a

lesser degree given the lesser seriousness of the crime. Similarly, observers may rate those who are exonerated of serious crimes (murder or rape) as even more criminal than those who are exonerated of less severe crimes (assault or robbery). The observer might assume that it is highly unlikely for a person who was wrongfully convicted of murder to be totally without fault, due to the severity of the crime. Thus, those who are wrongfully convicted of more severe crimes may be at a higher risk of stigmatization than those who are wrongfully convicted of less severe crimes.

Next, I will discuss parolee stigmatization to provide a reference point by which to compare possible exoneree stigmatization. The research on parolee stigmatization suggests that this population is at risk for discrimination in housing, employment, and other crucial arenas (Petersillia, 2001; Harding, 2003; Petersilia, 2003; Rakis, 2005). If correspondence bias leads to exoneree stigmatization, exonerees may be subjected to social difficulties that are similar to what parolees face.

Parolees and Stigmatization

In the last decade, post-release services for parolees have decreased, while post-release legal restrictions have increased (Petersilia, 2003). Paroled prisoners face a wide range of difficulties when released from prison, such as social, economic, and political challenges as well as medical and even emotional challenges (Petersilia, 2001). Compared to a decade ago, there are fewer post-release services for parolees and more legal restrictions levied against them. Parolees are often released back into the neighborhoods where they lived prior to arrest, and might find that their homes, cars, and jobs have been lost and that their families have moved on without them. The majority of offenders come from poor, inner-city neighborhoods, and these are the places where they find themselves after prison, places that are rife with temptations to

turn back to lives of crime (Petersilia, 2000; Petersilia, 2001). Some probation and parole conditions stipulate that recently released prisoners may not live near other convicts, which limits housing options in the neighborhoods to which they have returned (Bradley et al., 2001). Often, these newly-free individuals are soon rearrested, creating a revolving-door effect (Petersilia, 2003). This is not to say that all parolees will go back to prison. Many lead productive lives post-prison, and some even go on to become criminal justice and criminology scholars, studying the system from an insider's perspective (Ross & Richards, 2003). However, such cases are the exception rather than the rule. It is much more common for a parolee to be rearrested. In fact, of the individuals who were on parole in the United States in 2006, 1 in 6 returned to prison within the year (Glaze & Bonczar, 2007).

Employment

Provided they are not rearrested soon after being paroled, new parolees must quickly find housing and employment in order to "make it" on the outside. Ex-convicts are often barred from professional and occupational licenses, which makes finding work difficult (Petersilia, 2003). Even if a job does not require licensure, it may be difficult for an ex-convict to secure employment because employers are often unwilling to hire individuals who have criminal histories (Harding, 2003; Rakis, 2005). Employers and ex-convicts have different opinions about why it is hard for the newly released to find work. Ex-convicts indicate that they have difficulty getting jobs because employers simply do not want to give someone with a criminal record a chance, and employers say it is lack of skill and not the issue of conviction that impedes them from hiring ex-felons (Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971). A Netherlands study attempted to settle this debate. Researchers sent three types of letters to three types of potential employers- a letter

from someone convicted of drunken driving, a letter from someone convicted of theft, and a letter from someone who mentioned no criminal history. All three individuals had the same qualifications- the only difference between the applicants was their criminal backgrounds. The results showed that employers stigmatized the convicted.

Specifically, letters from individuals with no criminal record had a 52% positive response rate, letters from the paroled thieves had a 32% positive response rate, and letters from the paroled drunk drivers had a 26% positive response rate (Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971). Paroled drunk drivers were stigmatized more than paroled thieves, and both were stigmatized more than those without any criminal history, thus supporting the hypothesis that employers will consider criminal history when deciding who to hire.

A study conducted in New Zealand attempted to replicate the results of the Netherlands study (Boshier & Johnson, 1974). Again, those with no criminal history received the most positive response. Drunk drivers received a similar number of job offers compared to those with no criminal history. The difference between drunk drivers and non-criminals was insignificant. However, the thieves received considerably fewer job offers than both drunk drivers and non-criminals. A later study that investigated the effects of a drug crime conviction on the ability to gain employment found that both race and criminal history affected job offers. Blacks who had been incarcerated for drug crimes were less likely to be perceived favorably than both whites who had been incarcerated for drug crimes and whites who had no criminal records, and whites who had been incarcerated for drug crimes were perceived less favorably than whites who had no criminal histories (Pager, 2003).

If individuals convicted of non-violent crimes, such as drug crimes, are stigmatized in the job market, it is likely that those convicted of violent crimes will be similarly- if not more strongly- affected by their past criminal history. In addition, those who are wrongfully convicted of violent crimes may experience an effect of their past on the ability to gain employment, similar to those who were correctly convicted of violent crime. This is especially true if the criminal record has not been expunged, because the exoneree must explain the conviction to a potential employer (Lopez, 2002). This is troubling because individuals who are exonerated were generally convicted of violent crimes.

There is evidence to suggest that even individuals accused, tried, and *acquitted* of violent crime are affected by stigma. One study found that individuals who were accused but acquitted of assault had almost as much trouble finding unskilled jobs as individuals who were convicted of assault (Schwartz & Skolnick, 1962). In this study, researchers submitted four job applications for unskilled hotel worker positions in New York. The applications were all the same with the exception of the applicant's criminal history. The applications reported that the applicant was either convicted of assault, tried and acquitted of assault, tried and acquitted of assault with a letter from a judge certifying the acquittal, or had no criminal history. The results were dichotomized as successful or unsuccessful. An application was deemed successful if the employer considered the applicant for the job. An application was unsuccessful if the employer did not respond to the application at all, or if the employer responded negatively. Applicants without criminal records had a 36% success rate, and those who had been convicted had a 4% success rate. Of those who were acquitted, those with a letter certifying

acquittal had a 24% success rate and those without a letter had a 12% success rate.

The inclusion of a letter from the judge doubled the number of job offers the acquitted individual received. Those acquitted without a letter received only a third of the number of offers the individual without a criminal history received. This finding demonstrates that merely being suspected of a crime can be detrimental to one's employment prospects, which suggests that being suspected and convicted of a crime may also be detrimental to one's employment prospects, even if one is later exonerated.

Parolees and ex-convicts have developed coping mechanisms that affect at what point in the application process they choose to tell a potential employer about their criminal histories. They typically choose one of three strategies: nondisclosure, full disclosure, or conditional disclosure (Harding, 2003). Those who choose the nondisclosure strategy attempt to "pass" as law-abiding citizens by hiding their criminal history (Jones, 2003), and those who choose full disclosure choose to "cover" by acknowledging their criminal past and attempting to reduce its impact (Harding, 2003; Goffman, 1963). The nondisclosure strategy increases the likelihood of finding a job but does not facilitate keeping a job, because the employer is likely to fire the employee if the criminal history is discovered. Conversely, the full disclosure strategy makes finding employment difficult initially, but increases the probability of maintaining that job in the long term.

The third coping strategy, conditional disclosure, combines the attractive elements of both nondisclosure and full disclosure (Harding, 2003). Initially, the individual conceals his or her criminal history, which facilitates finding a job. The individual later reveals the information by choice, and acknowledges that it was wrong to conceal the

information. The ex-convict thereby bucks the “dishonest criminal” stereotype by coming clean and may get to keep the job.

All three of the ex-convict coping strategies affect not only whether the individual finds employment, but also the type of employment for which the individual is eligible. Ex-convicts’ transgressions will be revealed in a background check, so they may vie for jobs where no background check is performed. Therefore, they are often relegated to short-term, low-wage, and low-skill jobs that do not offer opportunity for advancement (Harding, 2003).

Housing

Whether jobless or working for minimum wage, parolees are often unable to pay rent on apartments and may become homeless. In 1999, the state of California reported that one quarter of its parolees were homeless (Petersillia, 2001). There are three issues that ex-convicts face when looking for housing: affordability, accessibility, and criminal history (Curtin, 2005). These elements intertwine to affect parolees’ housing options. First, there is a dearth of affordable housing in the United States, and parolees are often not eligible for government-sponsored housing. Individuals who have been evicted for drug-related activity, who have a lifetime registration requirement similar to that of sex offenders, or who have been convicted of manufacturing methamphetamine on public housing premises are all permanently banned from public housing (Curtin, 2005). The individuals who are denied access to affordable government-sponsored housing are the same individuals who are unable to find work, and are thus faced with a catch-22. They cannot find work without a permanent address, but they cannot secure a residence until they find work to pay for it. Even if parolees are able to scrape together the money to afford a residence, they are often denied housing because of the third

obstacle in the housing triad: criminal history. Once again, a background check is the roadblock as more landlords are performing them to screen out those individuals whom they consider undesirable. Individuals with criminal histories are lumped together as undesirables and may be denied housing. Thus, even if parolees have money, they are often unable to find a place to live because of the bias levied against them by realtors, landlords, and the federal government.

The federal government further restricts the quality of life of ex-convicts by blocking access to federal financial assistance programs. The welfare reform law of 1996 requires states to ban individuals convicted of drug-related felonies from ever receiving federally funded public assistance or food stamps for the rest of their lives (Travis, 2002). Further, the law requires that individuals who violate parole or probation become temporarily ineligible to receive money from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families block grants, to receive social security, or food stamps. These individuals are also denied access to public housing (Travis, 2002). The laws work against the newly released individual to produce, “a state of ‘civil death’ in which the offender is defined as unworthy of the benefits of society,” (Travis, 2002, p.25) and reduce the likelihood that the ex-offender will become successfully reintegrated into the community. It is likely that the exoneree, who receives even less support upon release than the guilty person, will find it similarly difficult to reintegrate into society.

The social and economic difficulties that ex-offenders face are referred to as “collateral sanctions” (Curtin 2005, p. 111) or “invisible punishments” (Travis 2002, p.16). These are penalties that are not levied by judges; rather, they are natural consequences of criminal justice system involvement that often impact the offender long

after he or she is released from prison. The adage “don’t do the crime if you can’t do the time,” truly becomes, “don’t do the crime if you can’t do the time, and do the time, and do the time,” (Curtin 2005, p. 118), which refers to the way offenders continue to pay from their crimes via the social consequences they experience even after they have served their sentences.

There are some scholars who question whether these collateral sanctions are as impactful as some research suggests. Research on the long-term earnings of ex-convicts, for example, found that although white collar and drug criminals experience a reduction in earnings in the initial 5-8 years following release from prison, these reductions are not permanent and correct themselves over time (Kling, 1999). Violent and drug criminals, who are likely to have low earnings overall to begin with, were found to earn more money after serving time in prison than they did before they were incarcerated. Across all types of crime, the length of time served did not affect how quickly individuals’ earnings returned to pre-prison levels. Additionally, after the 5-8 year post-release window, the unemployment rate of ex-convicts was 0-3% lower than the unemployment rate among those who had no criminal history. These results are in line with prior research that found that the effect of arrest on the wage-earning potential of young men is short-lived (Grogger, 1995). It may be that the relationship between employment and criminality is spurious, and that both are the result of social and personality factors such as a lack of self control that contributes both to the propensity toward crime and the inability to maintain stable employment (Western et al., 2001). If exonerates are believed to have a propensity toward criminality- that is, if they are found

to have contributed to their own convictions- they may be believed to have similar characteristics that could prevent them from finding employment.

Though there is evidence to suggest that the impact of a criminal history might not affect employment as much as some research suggests (Grogger, 1995; Kling, 1999; Western et al., 2001), there are still other types of invisible punishments levied on the ex-convict (Curtin, 2005; Travis, 2002). What the present study attempted to discern was whether these biases are levied on the exonerated in the same way they are levied on the guilty. The summation of the relevant research supports the hypothesis that those who have been convicted of crimes are discriminated against; that the offender status becomes the “master” status by which the ex-convict is known (Clear, Rose, & Ryder 2001). Interestingly, some research also suggests that even those who have been acquitted are subjected to similar discrimination. Recall that individuals acquitted of assault were less like to be offered jobs than individuals who had no reported association with the criminal justice system (Schwartz and Skolnick, 1962). This suggests that observers may perceive criminality in anyone who comes into contact with the criminal justice system, whether found guilty or not guilty; that they “blur the otherwise important distinction between the innocent, the accused, and the convicted” (Mele & Miller, 2005, p. 20).

It is possible that the correspondence may lead observers to stigmatize exonerees, if those observers attribute mere contact with the justice system as the result of disposition rather than situation, regardless of whether the person is guilty or innocent. Will exonerees, who fall victim to many of the same social problems as parolees, experience the same discrimination as parolees even after they are found to

be innocent? A recent study suggests that levels of exoneree stigma might change depending on the evidentiary cause of the wrongful conviction (Clow & Leach, 2009).

When the main piece of evidence was a false confession, participants were more likely to consider the exoneree guilty than if the main evidence was a jailhouse snitch, a mistaken eyewitness, or another, unknown piece of evidence. Participants also gave the exoneree who falsely confessed the lowest rating on a competency and warmth scale. Additionally, participants desired a lower level of social closeness to the exoneree when the main evidence that convicted him was a false confession or a jailhouse snitch. In a second study that measured how closely participants would choose to sit to exonerees, guilty people, or innocent people, participants chose to sit farther from exonerees than they did to innocent people or guilty people (Clow & Leach, 2009). This finding suggests that the public might be even more wary of exonerees than they are of people who were confirmed guilty. These findings provide initial support for the theory that the public might stigmatize the exoneree because they believe that he contributed to his own conviction as the result of an innate criminality⁴. The next section of this paper will discuss exonerees, the causes of their wrongful convictions and the remedies available to restore them to whole.

Exonerees

An exoneration is proof of an individual's *actual* innocence, not merely an individual's factual innocence (Lonergan, 2008). This means that the exoneree's conviction was overturned not simply because of procedural error, but because he truly

⁴ This study also suggests that it may not be innate criminality that led participants to sit farther from exonerees, but rather a unique stigma for this new classification of person. It is also possible that these findings are not the result of stigma, but rather a different, unmeasured construct. For example, it is possible that participants didn't know what to say to the exonerated target, and therefore didn't desire to be near that target. Participants may simply have been uncomfortable with the situation as a whole.

did not commit the crime in question. Therefore, an exoneree is one proven unequivocally innocent, and who was likely originally convicted based on faulty evidence, perjured testimony, or official misconduct. An entire specialized literature focuses on the causes of wrongful conviction (see Leo, 2005 for an overview).

In July 2009, The Innocence Project released a report that identified the most pervasive causes of wrongful conviction. Mistaken eyewitness testimony ranked at the top of the list, contributing to the conviction of over 70% of the first 239 DNA exonerees. Improper forensic testing contributed to almost 50% of the convictions, false confessions to over 20%, and incorrect informant or snitch testimony to over 15% (Innocence Project, 2009). These percentages total more than 100% because there is often more than a single factor that contributes to any wrongful conviction. A wrongful conviction might be caused by any combination of these factors, as well as by other factors such as prosecutorial or police misconduct. Regardless of the cause, those who find themselves the victims of wrongful conviction often must fight to get any manner of compensation from the state or from the federal government (refer to Appendix A for a list of state compensation statutes.)

There are three ways an exonerated individual might seek monetary compensation for wrongful conviction and imprisonment: tort lawsuit, special legislation, and statutory legislation. A full review of these methods is beyond the scope of this paper, but previous examination by scholars has shown that these methods are rife with problems (Lopez, 2002; Martin, 2006). A tort lawsuit, or suit for wrongdoing, can be brought against police officers, the prosecutor, or even the exoneree's attorney or public defender. However, prosecutors and police officers are protected by immunities that

make it difficult to sue them (Bernhard, 2004), which generally makes this a poor avenue for seeking compensation. Additionally, suing these individuals is expensive and time consuming. The resulting damages, if any, vary widely from case to case.

Exonerated individuals also have the option to lobby for special legislation. Special legislation refers to a bill crafted specifically and solely for the person requesting it. This method tends to yield low sums and its success seems to be based on the individual's political connections (Martin, 2006). Some states' constitutions prohibit the passing of such special legislation altogether (Lopez, 2002).

The third available method is compensation under statutory legislation. Of the available options, statutory legislation is the most equitable and logical way for an exoneree to seek compensation (Armburst, 2004; Bernhard, 2004; Burnett, 2005; Lopez, 2002; Martin, 2006). The availability of statutory compensation varies from state to state, but there has been a federal statute in place since 1994 that provides monetary compensation for the wrongfully convicted. Until 2004, it provided a maximum amount of \$5,000 compensation for wrongful imprisonment, regardless of how long the individual was incarcerated. When the Innocence Protection Act of 2004 became law, that amount was increased to a maximum of \$50,000 per year of incarceration for non-capital sentences and a maximum of \$100,000 per year of incarceration for those who sat on death row (Martin, 2006).

As of this writing, 27 states and the District of Columbia also have compensation statutes for the wrongfully convicted (theinnocenceproject.org). In some of these states, exonerees are not eligible to recover damages under these statutes if they, according to the state, contributed to their own convictions. For example, in New York, this is

interpreted to mean that any exoneree who falsely confessed (even if the confession was coerced) is ineligible to petition for damages under the state's compensation statutes (Bernhard, 2004). In other states, exonerees who plead guilty are ineligible to receive damages, even if they plead guilty to avoid what they perceived to be a harsher inevitable punishment.

Many of these state statutes, like the federal statute, put caps on the amount of money the exoneree can recover. These sums also vary considerably from state to state. In Florida, exonerees are eligible for up to \$50,000 per year of wrongful imprisonment up to a maximum sum of \$2 million, provided they have no prior felonies on their records. Additionally, Florida exonerees are eligible for 120 hours of tuition at a state institution of higher learning within Florida (Innocenceproject.org). Conversely, exonerees in Illinois are eligible for a maximum of \$199,150 upon pardon by the governor or reception of a certificate of innocence, regardless of how many years they were wrongly incarcerated.

Of the states that have compensation statutes, Massachusetts is the only state that provides reentry services along with monetary restitution. Exonerees in Massachusetts can petition to receive services to care for any emotional or physical damage received while incarcerated (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008). Outside of the Massachusetts statute, there are precious few protections and programs that take the exoneree's unique situation into account. Though exonerees may be eligible for post-release programs offered by the states to parolees, these programs often do not satisfy their specific needs. A key premise of most reentry programs is that the offender committed a crime for which he served his sentence. These programs focus on the

offender putting his crime behind him and returning to a law-abiding life. The exoneree did not break the law, so he does not need to “return” to a law-abiding lifestyle. These programs also often focus on curbing recidivism, or reoffending (Chunias & Aufgang, 2008). Such programs are inappropriate for exonerees because there was no crime committed and thus no potential for recidivism; in fact, the assumptions of such programs may be offensive to the exoneree. Ironically, paroled felons who actually committed a crime or crimes tend to receive more state support and reentry assistance than the exonerated individuals, who are released because they did not violate the law (Burnett, 2005; Chunias & Aufgang, 2008).

The states further restrict the exoneree’s possibility for success in the outside world by retaining an unfortunate and undeserved blemish against him. Technically and on paper, the exoneree may still have a criminal record, because the crime for which he has been exonerated is not erased or expunged by default (Martin, 2006, Chunias & Aufgang, 2008). The rules governing expungement vary from state to state. Some states may allow an exoneree to petition for expungement, while other states forbid expungement for any felony conviction or forbid expungement for adults altogether (Martin, 2006). As mentioned above, a criminal record can impact housing, employment, and voting rights and thus is a detriment to the individual trying to reintegrate into society. In order to reduce the burden of a criminal record, some scholars demand a policy change (Armbrust, 2004; Burnett, 2005; Chinn & Ratliff, 2009; Chunias & Aufgang, 2008; Lopez, 2002). In states where expungement is permitted, the exoneree’s record should be expunged as soon as the wrongful conviction is established. In states that do not allow expungement, the exoneree’s record should be

amended to reflect the wrongful conviction (Martin, 2006). In addition to expungement or amendment of the criminal record, it is often of great personal value to the exoneree to be issued a formal, public apology (Campbell & Denov, 2004; Martin, 2006).

There is one kind of damage that wrongful conviction causes that no restitution, monetary or otherwise, can correct: stigma. Though some exonerees do their best to reject the application of a stigmatizing criminal label while incarcerated (Campbell & Denov, 2004), anecdotal evidence suggests that upon release “the most damaging injury inflicted upon the wrongfully convicted is not necessarily the time lost behind bars, but the stigma that follows them for the rest of their lives” (Lopez, 2002, p.721). It was the goal of the present study to systematically determine the degree to which this stigma exists, and whether it is as strong for exonerees as it is for the justly convicted. If such a stigma does exist, the suffering of the 266 people exonerated to date by the Innocence Project is perpetuated because even though they have been legally exonerated, they are unable to shed the criminal label. By discriminating against the people who were wrongfully convicted in our courts, we continue to convict them each day in the court of public opinion.

Current Research

In the previous pages, I have discussed three topics: the correspondence bias, the stigmatization of parolees, and the plight of exonerees. These three topics triangulate to form my hypotheses regarding exoneree stigma. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that parolees are discriminated against in the realms of employment and housing (Boshier & Johnson, 1974; Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971; Curtin, 2005; Harding, 2003; Petersillia, 2001; Travis, 2002) and research supports the hypothesis that these individuals are stigmatized by the public (Curtin, 2005; Travis, 2002).

Exonerees, like parolees, have been arrested, accused, tried, convicted, and imprisoned. Exonerees, like parolees, have criminal records on file that are accessible to anyone interested in obtaining them. The only difference is that exonerees do not belong. They are not guilty of the crimes that began the windfall of arrest-conviction-incarceration. They are innocents who were housed among the guilty.

In a perfect world, the public would see the clear distinction between the parolee and the exoneree. However, a psychological phenomenon blocks this manner of perception. Remember that correspondence bias posits that people will attribute actions and behaviors of others to disposition rather than situation (Jones & Harris, 1967; Ross, 1977). The prevalence of the correspondence bias leads to the following hypotheses regarding public perception of the exoneree:

H1. There will be a main effect of defendant status (guilty vs. exonerated) on level of stigma.

H1a. The levels of stigma levied on a guilty person and an exoneree will both be above the mean of the scales (that is, both groups will experience stigma), but the levels of stigma levied on the guilty person will be higher than the levels of stigma levied on the exonerated person.

H1b. Participants will attribute both the guilty person's conviction and the exoneree's conviction to inherent criminality (disposition), but levels of inherent criminality will be higher for the guilty person than for the exonerated person.

H1c. Participants will consider both the guilty person and the exoneree to have contributed to their own convictions, but the guilty person will be perceived as more culpable than the exoneree.

H1d. Participants will expect both the guilty person and the exoneree to commit a crime in the future, but will believe guilty people to be more likely to offend than exonerees.

H2. There will be a main effect of type of crime (robbery vs. assault vs. sexual battery vs. murder) on level of stigma.

H2a. There will be a positive relationship between severity of crime and level of stigma levied on both the convict and the exoneree.

H3. There will be no interaction between IV1 and IV2.

CHAPTER 2 METHOD

Participants

Participants were 350 undergraduate students drawn from the department of Sociology and Criminology & Law participant pool and from undergraduate criminology classes at the University of Florida.

Design

This study used a 2 (defendant status: guilty vs. innocent) X 4 (type of crime: robbery vs. assault vs. sexual assault vs. murder) between subjects factorial design.

Stimulus

Participants received one of eight simulated news articles that presented a male prisoner (“Frank L. Jeffries”) who was released from detention. Stimulus articles were written by the investigator (See Appendix B for a summary stimulus) and were based on news articles collected from internet archives, from the Lexis-Nexis research database and from the Innocence Project press releases (www.innocenceproject.org; AP News; Mather 2005; Pinkham 2009).

Defendant Status

Four of the articles indicated that Frank L. Jeffries was released because he was convicted of a crime and had completed his sentence. The other four articles indicated that he was released because his conviction was overturned when DNA evidence was examined.

Type of Crime

Two of the articles indicated that Jeffries was originally convicted of robbery, two indicated he was originally convicted of aggravated assault, two indicated sexual battery and two indicated murder.

Measures

After reading a simulated news article, participants were asked to fill out a survey. This survey contained seven sections of questions. The full survey is included in Appendix C.

Section One: Guilt, Culpability, and Attribution Measures

Section one of the survey asked questions about Frank L. Jeffries' guilt and culpability for the crime, as well as his probability of future criminality. Participants responded to a dichotomous question asking them to render a verdict: (a) Is Frank L. Jeffries guilty or not guilty of the crime he was in prison for? Participants then responded to statements to questions on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R). All items were recoded so that higher numbers indicate a more negative evaluation of the target. Participants responded to the following statements to measure their perceptions of culpability ($\alpha = .86$): (a) Frank L. Jeffries is not guilty of the crime he went to prison for (R); (b) Frank L. Jeffries did not deserve to be in prison (R); (c) I am suspicious of Frank L. Jeffries; (d) Frank L. Jeffries is no more dangerous than the average person (R); (e) Frank L. Jeffries deserves to have the same rights and privileges that I have (R). Participants responded to the following statements to measure their perceptions of the target's criminality ($\alpha = .86$): (a) Frank L. Jeffries will not commit a crime in the future (R); (b) Frank L. Jeffries will be arrested in the future

(R); (c) Frank L. Jeffries will return to prison. Participants responded to the following statements to measure their attributions for Jeffries' behavior ($\alpha = .91$): (a) It is Frank L. Jeffries' fault that he went to prison; (b) Frank L. Jeffries is a victim of a flawed criminal justice system (R); (c) Frank L. Jeffries caused his own conviction.

Section Two: Competency Measures¹

Section two asked questions about Frank L. Jeffries' competency. These questions were adapted from Fiske et al.'s (2002) competency scale. Participants responded to the following statements on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R). All items were recoded so that higher numbers indicate a more negative evaluation of the target. Participants responded to the following statements: (a) Frank L. Jeffries is incompetent (R); (b) Frank L. Jeffries is confident; (c) Frank K. Jeffries is dependent (R); (d) Frank L. Jeffries is competitive; (e) Frank L. Jeffries is not intelligent (R).

Section Three: Warmth Measures²

Section three asked questions about Frank L. Jeffries' warmth. These questions were adapted from Fiske et al.'s (2002) warmth scale. Participants responded to the following statements on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R). All items were recoded so that higher numbers indicate a more negative evaluation of the target: (a) Frank L. Jeffries is intolerant; (b) Frank L. Jeffries is warm (R); (c) Frank L. Jeffries is good-natured (R); (d) Frank L. Jeffries is dishonest.

1 Competency measures were analyzed as individual items because of poor factor loading

2 Warmth measures were analyzed as individual items because of poor factor loading.

Section Four: Closeness Measures

Section four asked questions about desired social closeness to Frank L. Jeffries. The closeness measures were adapted from the Bogardus Social Distance Scale (Bogardus, 1933). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R). All items were recoded so that a higher number indicates a more negative evaluation of the target. The closeness questions are divided into five hypothesized sub-scales:

Personal closeness sub-scale ($\alpha = .83$): (a) I would be willing to be friends with Frank L. Jeffries (R); (b) I would be willing invite Frank L. Jeffries over to my house for dinner (R); (c) I would not be willing to spend time alone with Frank L. Jeffries; (d) I would be willing to share a cab with Frank L. Jeffries (R).

Closeness to one's family sub-scale ($\alpha = .79$): (a) I would be willing to let my sister or daughter go on a date with Frank L. Jeffries (R); (b) I would be willing to let my kids play with Frank L. Jeffries' kids (R); (c) I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries babysit my little brother; (d) I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries be my child's schoolteacher.

Closeness in housing sub-scale ($\alpha = .82$): (a) I would be willing to be roommates with Frank L. Jeffries (R); (b) I would be willing to live next door to Frank L. Jeffries (R); (c) I would not be willing to live in the same apartment complex as Frank L. Jeffries; (d) I would not be willing to live in the same neighborhood as Frank L. Jeffries.

Closeness in the workplace sub-scale ($\alpha = .82$): (a) I would be willing to work in the same office as Frank L. Jeffries (R); (b) I would not be willing to share a cubicle with

Frank L. Jeffries; (c) I would be willing to collaborate on a project with Frank L. Jeffries (R); (d) I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries be my boss.

Closeness in business dealings sub-scale ($\alpha = .81$): (a) I would not be willing to rent an apartment to Frank L. Jeffries; (b) I would not be willing to hire Frank L. Jeffries; (c) I would be willing to lend money to Frank L. Jeffries (R); (d) I would be willing to be business partners with Frank L. Jeffries (R).

Section Five: Government Assistance Measures

Section five asked questions about whether Frank L. Jeffries should receive post-release government-sponsored reentry assistance ($\alpha = .77$). Participants responded on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R). All items were recoded so that a higher number indicates a more negative evaluation of the target. Participants answered the following questions: (a) The government should not help Frank L. Jeffries find a job; (b) The government should help Frank L. Jeffries get his record expunged (R); (c) The government should help Frank L. Jeffries find a place to live (R); (d) Frank L. Jeffries should get government-sponsored family counseling (R); (e) Frank L. Jeffries should not receive legal assistance from the government.

Participants then answered questions indicating whether Frank L. Jeffries should receive monetary compensation from the government for each year spent in prison ($\alpha = .92$). Participants responded to the following items on a 7-point Likert-type scale, where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, and reverse coded items are indicated by (R); all items were recoded so that a higher number indicates a more negative evaluation of the target: (a) Frank L. Jeffries should receive monetary compensation for the years he spent in prison (R); (b) Frank L. Jeffries deserves

restitution for the years he spent behind bars; (c) The government does not owe Frank L. Jeffries anything for the years he spent in prison; (d) Frank L. Jeffries should not get any money to start his life outside of prison. Participants were then asked to indicate how much compensation Frank L. Jeffries should receive by circling one of the following answers: no money; \$5,000 or less per year; \$5,000-\$15,000 per year; \$15,000-\$30,000 per year; \$30,000-\$60,000 per year; \$60,000-\$100,000 per year; More than \$100,000 per year. Participants answered the following question: (a) How much money should Frank L. Jeffries receive from the government for each year he spent in prison (R)?

Section Six: Demographic Questions

Section six of the survey asked a series of demographic questions as well as questions about prior crime victimization³. Participants responded to the following questions: (a) How old are you; (b) What is your gender; (c) What racial group do you identify with; (d) Do you consider yourself Hispanic or Latino/Latina; (e) What is your current marital status; (f) What is your class standing; (g) What is your major; (h) Have you ever been the victim of a crime; (i) Was the perpetrator of the crime against you apprehended; (j) Was the perpetrator of the crime against you tried in a court of law; (k) Have you ever committed a felony; (l) Have you ever committed a misdemeanor; (m) Have you ever been arrested for a crime; (n) Have you ever been convicted of a crime; (o) Have you even been incarcerated in a prison, jail, or other correctional institution.

³ Victimization responses are being collected for a possible future study examining exoneree stigma as related to the observer's prior victimization.

Section Seven: Manipulation Check Questions

Section seven of the survey asked manipulation check questions. The first set of questions asked participants to rank the seriousness of four crimes on a scale of one to ten, with one being least serious and ten being the most serious: (a) In your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how serious a crime is robbery; (b) In your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how serious a crime is assault; (c) your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how serious a crime is sexual battery (rape); (d) In your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how serious a crime is murder.

Participants were then asked to rate DNA evidence on a scale of one to ten, with one being not at all conclusive and ten being the most conclusive: (e) In your opinion, on a scale of 1-10, how conclusive is DNA evidence that is being used to match a crime to a perpetrator?

Finally, participants were asked a series of true or false questions related to the stimulus article to ensure they noticed the manipulations of the independent variables: (a) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted of robbery; (b) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted to assault; (c) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted of sexual battery; (d) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted of murder (e) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was released from prison because he served his entire sentence; (f) According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was release from prison because new evidence proved his innocence; (g) According to the article, DNA

evidence confirmed Frank L. Jeffries' guilt⁴; (h) According to the article, DNA evidence proved Frank L. Jeffries' innocence.

Procedure

Participants were drawn from the Sociology and Criminology & Law participant pool and from undergraduate criminology classes at the University of Florida. They received class credit for participation in this study. When participants arrived to the laboratory, they were asked to sign an informed consent form indicating their willingness to participate in the study (see Appendix D for a copy of the informed consent form). They participated anonymously and had the opportunity to withdraw consent to participate both during and after the experiment. After signing the consent form, participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions using random number generation. Participants were told they were participating in an evaluation of a news article written by a journalism student that was to be published in a local newspaper. Each participant received the stimulus article that corresponded to the assigned condition and was asked to read the article critically and carefully.

Once participants finished reading their assigned articles, the experimenter collected the articles. Each participant then received a survey to complete. Participants were asked to complete the surveys to the best of their abilities.

Once all participants had completed their surveys, the experimenter collected the surveys and distributed a debriefing form (see Appendix E for a copy of the debriefing form). The form explained the goal of the study and the relevant hypotheses. Participants were offered a copy of that form to take home, and were instructed to

⁴ This question was ultimately dropped from the analysis because 48.5% of participants got it wrong, demonstrating that it was not diagnostic of whether participants noticed the manipulations.

contact the principle investigator with any questions or to learn about the study results. Participants were also asked not to share information about the experiment with any classmates, because discussing the experiment could affect the results. The experimenter then asked if the participants had any questions, answered any questions that were asked, and then thanked the participants for their time. Participants were then asked to exit the lab and were reminded not to discuss the experiment with their classmates.

CHAPTER 3 RESULTS

Analysis

Data for 350 participants were collected. Data were entered into SPSS twice and cross-checked to ensure accuracy. Participants' responses to manipulation check questions were analyzed. Participants who failed or skipped one or more manipulation check questions were dropped from the analysis¹. Participants who were under the age of 18 were also dropped from the analysis. A total of 119 cases were dropped, leaving a sample size of 231 cases, distributed in the following manner: 23 participants in condition 1; 28 participants in condition 2; 35 participants in condition 3; 29 participants in condition 4; 32 participants in condition 5; 25 participants in condition 6; 32 participants in condition 7; 27 participants in condition 8.

Data were coded such that higher Likert-scale scores indicated more negative attitudes toward the target (i.e., more stigma). Factor analyses were conducted for each scale to ensure adequate single-factor loading for scales, and Cronbach's alpha was estimated for each scale to test inter-item reliability (presented in method).

Descriptive Statistics

Participants ranged in age from 18-42 years old with a mean age of 20.1 years. Participants were mostly female (67.2%), white (57.6%), and never married (94.8%). The majority classified themselves as criminology majors (57.6%), and an additional 13.4% indicated they were double-majoring in criminology and a second subject. The largest percentage (37.2 %) classified themselves as juniors or third year students,

¹ No statistically significant differences were observed between those participants who failed the manipulation check and those participants who passed the manipulation check on assigned condition or demographic information.

followed by sophomores/second-years (20.8%), freshman/first-years (20.8%), seniors/fourth-years (17.7%) and undergraduates with more than four years (0.7%). About a quarter (25.5%) of the participants indicated they had been victims of crime in the past, and 15 victims (23.8%) indicated that the perpetrator had been apprehended. Four participants (1.7%) indicated they themselves had committed a felony in the past, and 29 participants (12.6%) indicated they had committed a misdemeanor. Fifteen participants (6.5%) indicated they had been arrested for misdemeanors, and no participants indicated they had been arrested for felonies. Of those who were arrested, six were convicted and three were incarcerated in a jail or prison.

Culpability, Criminality, and Attribution

To analyze the data, I ran a series of 2 (defendant status: guilty vs. innocent) X 4 (type of crime: robbery vs. assault vs. sexual battery vs. murder) ANOVAs with culpability, criminality, and attribution scales as the dependent measures. The target's status was predictive of participants' ratings of the target on these three measures (culpability: $F(1, 217) = 182.45, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .46$; attribution: $F(1, 221) = 186.61, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .46$; criminality: $F(1, 221) = 17.00, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .08$), and the guilty target was always regarded more negatively than the exonerated target. There was no effect of the interaction between status and crime type on these measures. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 1.

Participants rated the guilty target as more culpable for his crimes than the exonerated target and as more inherently criminal than the exonerated target. Additionally, participants were more likely to indicate that the guilty target caused his own conviction and were more likely to attribute the exonerated target's conviction to flaws in the justice system rather than to inherent criminality. Using the midpoint of the

scale as a rating of neutral, it was evident that the guilty target was viewed more negatively than neutral, whereas the exonerated target was not viewed more negatively than neutral. Participants consistently rated the guilty target above the midpoint of the scale, while they consistently rated the exonerated target below the midpoint of the scale.

Competency and Warmth

To analyze the data, I ran a series of 2 (defendant status: guilty vs. innocent) X 4 (type of crime: robbery vs. assault vs. sexual battery vs. murder) ANOVAs with competency and warmth as the dependent measures. Neither target status nor crime affected whether the target was perceived as incompetent, competitive, dependent, or unintelligent (all p 's > .05). However, target status but not crime was predictive of whether the target was perceived as confident ($F(1, 218) = 6.39, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$), whether the target was perceived as intolerant ($F(1, 218) = 6.77, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$), whether the target was perceived as good-natured ($F(1, 216) = 55.980, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .21$), and whether the target was perceived as dishonest ($F(1, 218) = 6.938, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .03$). Exonerated targets were perceived as more confident, warm, and good natured, and less intolerant and dishonest than guilty targets across all crime types. These results are presented in Table 2.

Crime type was also predictive of participants' ratings of the target's warmth ($F(1, 215) = 3.116, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$), and targets in the robbery condition were seen as warmer than targets in either the assault or murder conditions ($p < .05$). No effect of the interaction between disposition and crime was observed on measures of competence and warmth ($p > .05$).

Closeness

To analyze the data, I ran a series of 2 (defendant status: guilty vs. innocent) X 4 (type of crime: robbery vs. assault vs. sexual battery vs. murder) ANOVAs with personal, family, housing, work, and business closeness scales as the dependent measures. Target status was predictive of participants' ratings of the target across all scales (personal: $F(1, 217) = 48.15, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$; family: $F(1, 221) = 61.20, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .22$; housing: $F(1, 221) = 50.01, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .19$; work: $F(1, 221) = 38.36, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$; business: $F(1, 222) = 39.96, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .15$), and participants were always less likely to desire to be close to the guilty target than to the exonerated target. Mean ratings of the target by status on personal, family, housing, work, and business closeness scales are presented in Table 3. For measures of personal and family closeness, the exonerated target's mean rating was above the midpoint of the scale, indicating that although participants were less likely to desire closeness to the guilty target compared to the exonerated target, they still did not desire to be close with the exonerated target. These results are presented in bold in Table 3.

Analysis of the closeness scales also revealed an effect of the interaction between status and crime type on measures of personal and housing closeness (personal closeness: $F(3, 217) = 3.23; p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$); housing closeness: $F(3, 221) = 3.621, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$) but not for measures of family, work, and business closeness (all p 's $> .05$.) These results are presented in Table 4.

Personal closeness: On measures of personal closeness, simple main effects analyses revealed that crime type interacted with status for the guilty target ($F(3, 217) = 3.23, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$) but not for the exonerated target ($F(3, 217) = .81, p = .49, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$). Participants were less likely to desire personal closeness with the

guilty target who committed murder or sexual battery than with the guilty target who committed robbery, and participants were also less likely to desire personal closeness with the guilty target who committed sexual battery than the guilty target who committed assault. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4. Again, no significant simple main effects were observed for the exonerated target, indicating that for the exonerated target, the crime type did not have an effect on personal closeness ratings.

Housing closeness: Simple main effects analyses showed that crime type interacted with status to affect participants' housing closeness ratings for the guilty target ($F(3, 221) = 3.62, p < .05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$) but not for the exonerated target ($F(3, 221) = 4.44, p = .72, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .01$). Similar to the results found for personal closeness, participants were less likely to desire closeness in housing with the guilty target who committed murder or sexual battery than with the guilty target who committed robbery or assault. However, no such interactions were observed for the exonerated target, indicating that for the exonerated target, the crime type did not have an effect on housing closeness ratings. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.

Government Assistance

To analyze this data, I ran a series of 2 (defendant status: guilty vs. innocent) X 4 (type of crime: robbery vs. assault vs. sexual battery vs. murder) ANOVAs with the government-sponsored reentry assistance and government financial assistance scales as the dependent measures. Only target status was predictive of participants' ratings of government-sponsored reentry assistance ($F(1, 214) = 31.79, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .13$), and participants always thought the guilty target should receive less government reentry assistance and less financial assistance than the exonerated target. No effect of crime

type or effect of the interaction between crime type and target status was observed (all p 's > .05). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 5. These items were reverse-coded such that higher values reflect a more negative view of the target, so higher numerical values in this case correspond to lower levels of re-entry assistance and less financial support.

Target status was also predictive of how much money participants thought the target should receive for each year of his incarceration ($F(1, 213) = 173.93, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .45$). Participants assessed monetary allotment by rating the target on a scale from 1-7. These results were reverse-coded such that a rating of 7 indicated that the participant thought no money should be allotted to the target, ratings of 2-6 reflected various monetary intervals, and a rating of 1 indicated that the participant thought the target should be allotted in excess of \$100,000. Participants' mean rating of the compensation for the exonerated target was 4.01, corresponding to an average allotment of \$15,000-\$29,999 for each year of his incarceration. Participants' mean rating of the guilty target was 6.33, corresponding to an average allotment of \$4,999 or less for each year of his incarceration. No effect of crime or effect of the interaction between target status and crime type was observed (all p 's > .05).

Table 1: Culpability, attribution, and criminality by target status

Scale	Mean Guilty (CI)	Mean Exon(CI)	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Culpability	4.70 (4.51, 4.90)	2.82 (2.62, 3.01)	182.45	1,217	<.01	.46
Attribution	4.91 (4.68, 5.13)	2.66 (2.43, 2.90)	186.60	1,221	<.01	.46
Criminality	4.44 (4.27, 4.61)	3.96 (3.74, 4.09)	18.00	1,222	<.01	.08

Table 2: Competence and warmth by target status

Measure	Mean Guilty(CI)	Mean Exon (CI)	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Confident	3.73 (3.65, 3.90)	4.04 (3.87, 4.21)	6.39	1,218	<.05	.03
Good Natured	4.94 (4.77, 5.10)	4.06 (3.89,4.22)	55.98	1,216	<.01	.21
Warm	4.77 (4.62, 4.92)	4.03 (3.88,4.18)	47.39	1,215	<.05	.04
Intolerant	4.03 (3.87, 4.19)	3.68 (3.52,3.84)	6.77	1,218	<.01	.04
Dishonest	4.30 (4.12, 4.70)	3.96 (3.78,4.14)	6.94	1,218	<.01	.03
Incompetent	3.41 (3.20, 3.63)	3.27 (3.06, 3.48)	0.87	1,218	.35	.00
Competitive	3.99 (3.85, 4.13)	3.87 (3.73, 4.02)	1.24	1,217	.27	.01
Dependent	4.06 (3.92, 4.21)	3.97 (3.82, 4.11)	0.85	1,217	.36	.00
Not Intelligent	3.94 (3.72, 4.16)	3.65 (3.43, 3.86)	3.56	1,218	.06	.02

Table 3: Closeness measures by target status

Scale	Mean Guilty (CI)	Mean Exon. (CI)	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Personal	5.07 (4.86, 5.28)	4.01 (3.80, 4.23)	48.15	1,217	<.01	.19
Family	5.49 (5.27, 5.71)	4.24 (4.02, 4.47)	61.20	1,221	<.01	.22
Housing	4.81 (4.60, 5.02)	3.74 (3.53, 3.95)	50.01	1,221	<.01	.19
Work	4.39 (4.18, 4.61)	3.43 (3.22, 3.65)	38.36	1,221	<.01	.15
Business	4.76 (4.55, 4.97)	3.79 (3.58, 4.01)	39.96	1,222	<.01	.15

Table 4: Personal and housing closeness as a function of crime and disposition

Guilty Target								
Measure	Means (CI)				Univariate Effect of Target Disposition			
	Robbery	Assault	Sexual Battery	Murder	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Personal Closeness	4.72 (4.33,5.11)	4.79 (4.34,4.24)	5.41 (5.02,5.81)	5.35 (4.90,5.80)	3.23	3,217	<.05	.04
Housing Closeness	4.38 (3.99,4.78)	4.48 (4.03,4.93)	5.19 (4.79,5.59)	5.20 (4.77,5.64)	3.62	3,221	<.05	.05
Exonerated Target								
Measure	Means (CI)				Univariate Effect of Target Disposition			
	Robbery	Assault	Sexual Battery	Murder	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Personal Closeness	4.10 (3.63,4.56)	4.24 (3.82,4.66)	3.88 (3.50,4.27)	3.83 (3.39,4.26)	.81	3,217	.49	.01
Housing Closeness	3.86 (3.39,4.33)	3.84 (3.41,4.28)	3.56 (3.17,3.94)	3.70 (3.28,4.11)	4.44	3,221	.72	.01

Table 5: Reentry assistance by disposition

Measure	Mean Guilty (CI)	Mean Exon.(CI)	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2
Reentry Assist.	3.52 (3.33, 3.71)	2.73 (2.53, 2.93)	31.79	1,214	<.01	.13
Financial Assist.	5.18 (4.94, 5.43)	2.36 (2.12, 2.61)	255.38	1,222	<.01	.54
Monetary Amount	6.33 (6.09, 6.57)	4.02 (3.78, 4.27)	173.93	1,213	<.01	.45

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

As more wrongful convictions are uncovered and exonerations increase, the research community has begun to take notice and begun to investigate this unique artifact of the criminal justice system. Whereas scholars have examined the causes of wrongful conviction (Rattner, 1988; Scheck et al., 2000) and have argued for compensation for the exonerated (Armbrust, 2004; Bernhard, 2004; Burnett, 2005; Chinn & Ratliff, 2009; Chunias & Aufgang, 2008; Lonergan, 2008; Lopez, 2002; Martin, 2006), only one previous study has examined the social consequences of wrongful conviction for exonerees (Clow & Leach, 2009). The present study attempted to further the literature on social consequences for exonerees by investigating whether stigma is applied to both the guilty and the exonerated in a similar manner. A wide body of research as demonstrated that parolees and ex-convicts are stigmatized in the areas of housing and employment (Harding, 2003; Rakis, 2005; Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971; Boshier & Johnson, 1974), but to date no research as investigated whether exonerees are stigmatized in these areas.

Using correspondence bias as a theoretical framework, it was hypothesized that exonerees would be less stigmatized on measures of criminality, culpability, and closeness than the guilty, but would still be stigmatized to some degree because observers might attribute the exonerees' predicaments to personal rather than situational factors. Simply, observers might believe that exonerees were responsible for their own original convictions because of some innate criminality. It was also hypothesized that the type of crime in question would affect levels of stigma, such that crimes that were perceived as more severe, such a sexual battery and murder, would

yield more stigma on average than crimes that were perceived as less severe, such as robbery and assault.

The results of the present analyses lent overwhelming support for hypothesis 1, which predicted a main effect of status on level of stigma, measured by scales of culpability, attribution, criminality and closeness, as well as individual-item measures of competency and warmth. Participants always regarded the guilty target more negatively than the exonerated target. These findings suggest that participants were aware of the meaning of exoneration, and understood that the exonerated target was not guilty of the crime of which he had been previously convicted. Additionally, these findings add to the literature on parolee and ex-convict stigmatization. On every measure except warmth, good-natured disposition, and government re-entry assistance, the guilty target was stigmatized above the midpoint of the scale, providing support for previous findings that ex-convicts are subjected to stigma. These findings are also congruent with the results of previous research on parolee employment issues, which found that ex-convicts' criminal records may negatively affect their employment prospects (Buikhuisen & Dijksterhuis, 1971; Boshier & Johnson, 1974; Harding, 2003; Rakis, 2005). Additionally, the current findings suggest that criminal history may affect housing prospects, as had been suggested previously in the literature on prisoner re-entry. (Travis, 2002; Curtin, 2005). The present results add to previous work by suggesting that parolees may be stigmatized in personal, familial, and business relationships in addition to the previously identified stigmatization in employment and housing transactions.

Although the results of the present study supported previous findings with regard to parolees, providing support for hypothesis 1, the results also established partial

support for hypothesis 1a, which predicted that exonerees would experience some manner of stigma, although to a lesser degree than guilty individuals. On scales measuring desired personal closeness and desired family closeness, participants appeared to regard exonerees with some negativity, as evidenced by scores either at or above the midpoint of the scale on personal and familial closeness scales. In addition, participants' ratings of stigma for other dependent measures were not far below the midpoint of the scale. These findings also provide additional support for the findings of Clow & Leach (2009), who also found that participants preferred not to be close friends with exonerees.

Although the present results seem to support the notion that exonerees are stigmatized to some degree, these results should be interpreted with caution. It is possible that the observed differences in closeness ratings are not the result of stigmatization of exonerees. Participants did not appear to desire closeness with exonerees in personal and familial relationships, but this does not necessarily translate to stigmatization. It is possible that other factors that were not included in the original model affected participants' ratings of exonerees. Participants may have perceived unstated issues of race or class, which may have affected their ratings. They may have been fearful of how the wrongful conviction experience may have affected the target's personality. Participants may also have felt they did not have enough information about the exonerated target to make a character judgment, and therefore did not desire closeness because they didn't know the individual. Based solely on the measures used in this study, it is not possible to definitively state that the ratings of exonerees on

measures of personal and familiar closeness translate to a stigmatization of that population.

Although exonerees were rated at or above the midpoint of the scale on measures of personal and family closeness, they were not rated above the midpoints of the scales measuring housing, work, or business closeness. Exonerees were also not considered culpable for their wrongful convictions and were not considered inherently criminal, which was in direct contrast to what was predicted in hypotheses 1b and 1c. Additionally, exonerees' ratings on scales of culpability, criminality, and attribution suggest that his wrongful conviction was attributed to situational rather than dispositional characteristics, providing no support for hypothesis 1c. These results may be explained by the perceived veracity of DNA evidence. Participants rated DNA evidence as a very reliable form of evidence on average; participants gave DNA evidence a mean score of 8.14 on a scale from 1-10, with 1 being least reliable and 10 being most reliable. Given that the target had been exonerated by DNA evidence, and participants rated DNA evidence as highly reliable, the participants may have been more likely to have faith in the actual innocence of the exonerated target than had the target been exonerated by another form of evidence. The perceived veracity of DNA evidence may have therefore impacted participants' ratings of the exonerated target.

Guilty individuals were always stigmatized more than exonerated individuals, regardless of crime type. In hypothesis 2, I predicted a main effect of crime type on level of stigma; this hypothesis was not supported. However, there was an interaction observed between crime type and status for participants' ratings of personal and housing closeness, which was unexpected. For the guilty target, crime type mattered on

measures of personal and housing closeness. However, crime type never mattered for the exonerated target. These findings did not support hypothesis 2a, which predicted that crime type would matter for both the guilty target and for the exonerated target. The fact that crime type never mattered for the exonerated target indicates that participants were able to separate the exonerated individual from the crime that had been committed.

On measures of re-entry and financial assistance, only target status was predictive of participants' ratings. Participants allotted more reentry assistance and financial assistance to the exonerated target than the guilty target regardless of crime type. Additionally, participants suggested that the exonerated target receive an average of between \$15,000 and \$29,999 per year for each year of incarceration, which differed significantly from the \$4,999 or less allotment for the guilty target. These findings may demonstrate that participants think exonerees were the victims of state harm (Westervelt & Cook, 2010), and are thus owed restitution by the government.

One might note that the sum participants allotted to exonerees seemed low in contrast to what some states offer. Florida, for example, offers exonerees \$50 thousand for each year of wrongful incarceration, up to a cap of \$2 million. One possible explanation for this may be that participants allotted compensation based on what they thought the target may have earned each year had he not been wrongfully incarcerated. Participants may have assumed the target had low income to begin with, and thus allotted compensation accordingly.

For the most part, participants were receptive to the exonerated target as he re-entered the community. However, the results of the analysis demonstrated some

deviation from these general findings. Exonerees were stigmatized at or above the midpoint of the scale on measures of personal and family closeness but not on any other measures. It would appear that the correspondence bias did not operate as strongly as predicted, because participants did not perceive exonerees as culpable or criminal compared to parolees, did not attribute their convictions to internal causes compared to parolees, did not stigmatize them in housing, work, or business dealings compared to parolees, and suggested that they should be allotted re-entry and financial assistance. This suggests an understanding of exoneration, and is inconsistent with the stigmas observed. It may be that these observations are related to a factor not included in the model. That is, participants' perceptions of the effect of another factor, such as prisonization, on those who have been imprisoned may have affected their ratings of their desire to be close to an exoneree (someone who was imprisoned, albeit wrongfully). Prisonization is defined as, "the taking on in greater or less degree of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary" (Clemmer, 1958). Also called institutionalization, it refers to the negative effects of the prison environment on those who inhabit it. So, participants may have stigmatized exonerees on measures of personal or familial closeness not because of their exoneree status, but rather because of their status as ex-prisoners. Despite their innocence, exonerees spend an average of 13 years incarcerated prior to the discovery of their actual innocence (innocenceproject.org). It may be that the stigma against exonerees is related not to their original wrongful convictions, but to the time they spent behind bars. The results may have been observed because participants were wary of entering into personal relationships with an individual who had been incarcerated regardless of his status as

an exoneree, but were more comfortable entering into more distant social and business relationships with such an individual.

Another factor that may have been related to the present results is the unique characteristics of the sample. Participants were drawn from the participant pool of the University of Florida's Sociology and Criminology & Law department and from undergraduate criminology classes, and 71% of the sample identified themselves as criminology majors. As criminology majors, it is possible that they had been previously aware of cases of wrongful conviction, and may have been educated as to its causes. As a result, it is possible that participants in this study viewed exonerees more favorably than the average person might, due to previous education on the topic. Additionally, because they were mostly criminology students, it is possible that participants were more educated about the veracity of DNA evidence than the average person. This may have affected their perceptions because they may have been more likely than the average person to understand the conclusive nature of DNA exoneration. As such, participants in this study may have been more likely to believe the exonerated target as actually innocent, which may have affected their ratings of the target.

In sum, analysis of these data confirmed previous findings in the ex-convict stigmatization literature as they demonstrated that guilty individuals are subjected to stigma in housing and in the workplace. Additionally, these data somewhat replicated the findings of Clow & Leach (2009), whose work demonstrated that participants did not desire personal relationships with exonerees. This study also expanded on those results by demonstrating that desired closeness in housing, work, and business relationships was not affected by wrongful conviction. However, the present study did not find that

exonerees may be stigmatized *more* than convicted individuals, as Clow & Leach had observed.

The present study added new information to the literature examining the social consequences of wrongful conviction by demonstrating that participants may have understood that wrongful conviction is not the exoneree's fault, but is rather the result of a flawed criminal justice system. The results of this analysis suggest that the exoneree may be able to successfully reintegrate into society, as the public may understand that he is not a criminal, but rather a victim. These results also suggest a number of policy implications with regard to both exonerees and parolees.

Policy Implications

The findings from the present study suggest that re-entry services for parolees are useful and warranted, and that such services should continue to be provided to parolees as they re-enter society. The findings also suggest that re-entry services would be useful for exonerees. Furthermore, the current research supports the provision of monetary compensation to exonerees, and suggests that state statutes should mandate such compensation. Currently, not all states provide the wrongfully convicted with financial compensation upon exoneration. The present research suggests that the public might be supportive of financial compensation for this population.

Limitations

Although the present findings may help to inform public policy, there were a number of limitations to the study that may affect the ability to generalize these findings. Limitations include the homogeneous sample, participants' possible biases related to wrongful convictions, lack of a control condition, and problems pertaining to ecological validity.

Sampling

The first limitation is related to the homogenous sample. The sample for this study was drawn from the students in a number of criminology classes at the University of Florida. As such, all participants were college students and the majority were criminology majors. This sample is not representative of the general population, and as such results cannot be generalized. These participants were more educated than the general population, and specifically more educated on matters of criminal justice, criminology, and research in general, which may have impacted results. To combat this limitation, the study should be replicated with a community sample that is more representative of the general population.

Prior Biases

The second limitation is related to the possibility of prior biases held by participants. The majority of the sample was made up of criminology students, and these participants may have had prior knowledge about wrongful convictions that may have impacted the way they answered questions about the target. In some criminology classes at the University of Florida, students are exposed to the evidentiary causes of wrongful conviction, watch videos released by the Innocence Project, and write papers on exonerated individuals. Due to this exposure, the sample may have been more likely than the general population to perceive exonerees favorably. To combat this limitation, future iterations of this study should include questions pertaining to previous knowledge about wrongful conviction and questions about specific classes taken that deal with the subject, so prior exposure can be controlled for in the model. Also, this can be controlled for by conducting the study with students who are not criminology majors, or by using a community sample.

Lack of Control Condition

A third limitation of the present study is its lack of a proper control condition. Although the current findings demonstrated that exonerees were stigmatized above the midpoint of the scale on certain measures, this level of stigma was not compared to stigma of the average person, it was compared to stigma of parolees. As such, it is impossible to discern the severity of the exoneree stigma without a control condition to use as a measuring stick. Previous research has demonstrated that the average person may actually be *less* desirable than the exonerated person (Clow & Leach, 2009). Without a control condition, these previous findings cannot be confirmed or refuted by the present findings. To combat this limitation, future iterations of this study should include a neutral target with no previous criminal justice history.

Ecological Validity

A fourth limitation is related to the study's ecological validity, or real-world validity. Ecological validity refers to the study's ability to simulate real-world situations and events. In this study, participants' only exposure to the target was one news article. In a real-world situation, observers may be exposed to a host of media coverage of a crime and a suspect or perpetrator, all of which may impact observers' assessments. It is highly unlikely that observers' only exposure would be a single news article. To combat this limitation, future iterations of this study should include multiple stimuli to triangulate around the target. This will help to simulate real-world exposure conditions.

An additional ecological validity issue relates to how seriously participants took the task of assessing the target. Participants in this study participated for class credit, and that credit was not affected by how much effort they put into answering the questions. As evidenced by the failure of many participants to pass the manipulation

checks, it is possible participants did not take the task seriously, and as such did not read the stimulus carefully or take time to consider their answers. In a real-world situation, one would likely take more care in assessing a guilty or exonerated individual. In order to combat this limitation, future iterations of this study might make the task seem more serious to participants. To do this, instead of evaluating a news article, participants might evaluate a target as a candidate for a civil service job such as mail carrier or school bus driver. This might make the task seem more important, and thus lead participants to take the task of evaluating the target more seriously.

Directions for Future Research

The results of the present research open up avenues for future studies. In the present study, the exonerated target was stigmatized on some measures but not on others. Future studies should investigate prisonization as an alternate explanation for this stigma, and should employ other theoretical models that might explain the present results. If researchers can isolate the cause of the stigmatization of exonerees, they may be more equipped to combat that stigma through creative use of public policy.

The present study also investigated the stigmatization of a specific class of exoneree, namely those who had been exonerated by DNA evidence. Although DNA is the most commonly cited catalyst for the overturning of a wrongful conviction, it is not the only way. Future research should investigate the stigma of DNA exonerees compared to exonerees whose release was secured by other types of evidence to discern whether the public is more receptive to one class of exoneree as compared to another.

Future studies should also investigate whether the issue at hand is indeed stigmatization based on the fact of wrongful conviction, or whether the issue is

stigmatization for other latent reasons. For example, exonerees might be stigmatized because they are perceived to be racial minorities, because they are perceived to be of low socioeconomic status, or because they are perceived to be from high-crime neighborhoods. Future studies should control for these factors to isolate whether the root cause of exoneree stigmatization is the wrongful conviction itself, or whether unrelated factors influence individuals' perceptions of this population. Additionally, future research should undertake a qualitative analysis of the exoneree experience by interviewing the wrongfully convicted about their perceptions of stigma. It is possible that exonerees perceive stigma in areas that have yet to be recognized by researchers, and as such their collective experiences are an invaluable resource in the study of the social consequences of wrongful conviction.

CONCLUSION

Since its inception in 1992, the Innocence Project has aided in the exonerations of 266 men and women who were convicted of crimes they did not commit (innocenceproject.org). As exonerations have increased, so has research into the causes of wrongful conviction. However, little prior research has investigated its social consequences. The present study added to the wrongful conviction literature by examining the differences in stigma against guilty and wrongfully convicted individuals. Using data from a sample of 231 college student participants, it was determined that guilty individuals are more stigmatized than exonerated individuals, regardless of crime type. For the guilty target, crime type interacted with status on measures of desired closeness in personal relationships and in housing, and those who committed robbery or assault were less stigmatized than those who committed sexual battery or murder. On measures of personal and familial closeness, exonerees were stigmatized above the

midpoint of the scales, indicating that this population may be stigmatized to some degree. Future research is needed to determine the cause of these stigmas, and to investigate whether stigmas are similarly applied to DNA and non-DNA exonerees. Future research should also attempt to analyze stigma from the exonerees' points of view by undertaking a qualitative analysis of their individual experiences. As the population of exonerees continues to grow, more research is necessary to examine the consequences of wrongful conviction on those who have been its victims.

APPENDIX A
COMPENSATION STATUTES BY STATE

State	Compensation (adapted from www.innocenceproject.org)
AK	\$50,000 for each year of wrongful incarceration with no specified maximum
CA	Maximum of \$100 per day of wrongful incarceration
CT	Compensation available; amount not specified
DC	Compensation available; amount not specified
FL	\$50,000 for each year of wrongful incarceration (adjusted for cost of living increases), up to a maximum of \$2 million
IL	Various amounts. Maximum \$85,350 total (up to 5 years wrongful incarceration); \$170,000 total (5-14 years); \$199,150 total (over 14 years)
IA	\$50 per day of wrongful incarceration; lost wages up to \$25,000 a year; attorney's fees.
LA	\$15,000 year for each year of incarceration up to a maximum \$150,000.
ME	Maximum of \$300,000 total
MD	Compensation available; amount not specified
MA	Maximum of \$500,000 total
MS	\$50,000 for each year of wrongful incarceration up to a maximum \$500,000
MO	\$50 per day of wrongful incarceration
MT	No monetary award; state will pay tuition, fees, books, room, and board at any accredited institution in the state
NE	Maximum of \$500,000 total
NH	Maximum of \$20,000 total
NJ	The greater of twice the amount of income in the year prior to incarceration or \$20,000 per year of incarceration
NY	Compensation available; amount not specified
NC	\$50,000 for each year of incarceration up to a maximum of \$750,000.
OH	\$40,330 per year of wrongful incarceration (or amount determined by state auditor) in addition to lost wages, costs, and attorney's fees
OK	Maximum of \$175,000 total
TN	Maximum of \$1,000,000 total
TX	\$80,000 per year of wrongful incarceration, as well as \$25,000 per year spent on parole or as a registered sex offender.
UT	The equivalent of the average annual nonagricultural payroll wage in Utah for each year of wrongful incarceration up to 15 years
VT	\$30,000 to \$60,000 per year of wrongful incarceration, with actual amount to be determined by the court
VA	The equivalent of 90% of the VA per capita personal income for up to 20 years plus a tuition award worth \$10,000 in the VA community college system.
WV	Compensation available; amount not specified
WI	\$5,000 per year of wrongful incarceration up to a maximum of \$25,000

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE STIMULUS

STARKE, FL—

An inmate was released at 09:30 Monday from Union Correctional Institution **[after he served prison time for a crime he did not commit.]**

Frank L. Jeffries, 38, walked free after **[serving his sentence for (crime)] OR [his conviction for (crime) was overturned.]**

On a crisp January night several years ago, a Citrus county woman **[insert crime summary]**

Robbery crime summary: was robbed after a man forcibly entered her apartment while she was sleeping. The victim awoke while the perpetrator was rifling through her nightstand drawers. She attempted to slap the intruder, scratching his arm in the process. A DVD player, \$84 in cash, and three credit cards were stolen from the apartment.

OR

Assault crime summary: was assaulted after a man forcibly entered her apartment while she was sleeping. The victim awoke while the perpetrator was rifling through her nightstand drawers. She attempted to slap the intruder, scratching his arm in the process. He hit her with a lamp and repeatedly smashed her head against the nightstand, leaving her bleeding profusely from her scalp.

OR

Sexual battery crime summary: was sexually battered after a man forcibly entered her apartment while she was sleeping. The victim awoke while the perpetrator was rifling through her nightstand drawers. She attempted to slap the intruder, scratching his arm in the process. She was raped and anally penetrated with a hairbrush the perpetrator retrieved from her nightstand.

OR

Murder crime summary: was murdered after a man forcibly entered her apartment while she was sleeping. The victim awoke while the perpetrator was rifling through her nightstand drawers. She attempted to slap the intruder, scratching his arm in the process. She was stabbed seven times with a hunting knife and left in her bed, the covers pulled up over her face.

The apartment doorman heard screaming and called 911. While on the phone, he saw a man rush out the front door and jump in a blue four-door van.

Three hours later, Frank L. Jeffries, 38, was arrested by Citrus County sheriff's office deputies for the robbery of 27-year-old Theresa Marvin.

[Last May, DNA evidence surfaced that proved Jeffries could not have been the perpetrator.]

[A swab of the victim's fingernails yielded skin cells from a male with O-positive blood type. Jeffries blood type is also O-positive. However, a DNA test was never conducted during the original trial.]

An eyewitness identification by the victim's doorman, combined with the blood typing, were the key pieces of evidence that led to Jeffries' conviction, said Hank Loomis, a Citrus County sheriff's deputy.

[The real perpetrator has not yet been apprehended.]

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Part I

Instructions: Please circle only one answer for the question below.

1. Is Frank L. Jeffries guilty or not guilty of the crime he was in prison for? (circle one answer):

Guilty (1)

Not Guilty (2)

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Frank L. Jeffries is not guilty of the crime he went to prison for:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Frank L. Jeffries did not deserve to be in prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Frank L. Jeffries will not commit a crime in the future:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Frank L. Jeffries will be arrested in the future:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Frank L. Jeffries will return to prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Frank L. Jeffries is no more dangerous than the average person:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I am suspicious of Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Frank L. Jeffries deserves to have the same rights and privileges that I have:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. It is Frank L. Jeffries' fault that he went to prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Frank L. Jeffries was convicted because he has criminal tendencies:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Frank L. Jeffries is a victim of a flawed criminal justice system:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Frank L. Jeffries caused his own conviction:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Frank L. Jeffries's conviction was a result of the circumstances he was in at the time of the initial investigation:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part II

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly disagree 3	Neither agree nor disagree 4	Slightly agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
15. Frank L. Jeffries is incompetent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Frank L. Jeffries is competitive:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Frank L. Jeffries is dependent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Frank L. Jeffries is confident:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Frank L. Jeffries is not intelligent:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part III

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly disagree 3	Neither agree nor disagree 4	Slightly agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
20. Frank L. Jeffries is intolerant:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Frank L. Jeffries is warm:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Frank L. Jeffries is good-natured:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Frank L. Jeffries is dishonest:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part IV

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly disagree 3	Neither agree nor disagree 4	Slightly agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
24. I would be willing to be friends with Frank L. Jeffries	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. I would be willing to invite Frank L. Jeffries over to my house for dinner:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I would not be willing to spend time alone with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I would be willing to share a cab with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. I would be willing to let my sister or daughter go on a date with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

29. I would be willing to let my kids play with Frank L. Jeffries' kids	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries babysit my little brother:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries be my child's schoolteacher:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. I would be willing to be roommates with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. I would be willing to live next door to Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. I would not be willing to live in the same apartment complex as Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. I would not be willing to live in the same neighborhood as Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. I would be willing to work in the same office as Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. I would not be willing to share a cubicle with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. I would be willing to collaborate on a project with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. I would not be willing to let Frank L. Jeffries be my boss:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

40. I would not be willing to rent an apartment to Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. I would not be willing to hire Frank L. Jeffries for a job:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. I would be willing to lend money to Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. I would be willing to be business partners with Frank L. Jeffries:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part V

Instructions: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Slightly disagree 3	Neither agree nor disagree 4	Slightly agree 5	Agree 6	Strongly agree 7
44. The government should not help Frank L. Jeffries find a job:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. The government should help Frank L. Jeffries get his criminal record expunged:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. Frank L. Jeffries should not get government-subsidized mental health treatment:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
47. The government should help Frank L. Jeffries find a place to live:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. Frank L. Jeffries should get government-sponsored family counseling:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

49. Frank L. Jeffries should not receive legal assistance from the government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. Frank L. Jeffries should receive monetary compensation for the years he spent in prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. Frank L. Jeffries deserves restitution for the years he spend behind bars:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. The government does not owe Frank L. Jeffries anything for the years he spend in prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. Frank L. Jeffries should not get money to start his life outside of prison:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Instructions: Please circle only one answer for the question below

54. How much money should Frank L. Jeffries receive from the government for each year he spent in prison?

No money	\$4,999 or less per year	\$5,000-\$15,000 per year	\$15,000-\$30,000 per year	\$30,000-\$60,000 per year	\$60,000-\$100,000 per year	More than \$100,000 per year
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part VI

Instructions: Please answer the following demographic questions. Please circle only one answer for each question. If you do not know or would rather not answer, leave the question blank and continue on to the next question.

55. How old are you? (Write your age in years) _____ (enter age)

56. What is your gender? (please circle one answer): Female (1) Male (0)

57. What racial group do you identify with? (Please circle one answer)

- A. White/ Caucasian (1)
- B. Black/African-America (2)
- C. Asian/Pacific Islander (3)
- D. Native American/American Indian (4)
- E. Mixed-race (5)
- F. Other (please indicate)_____ (6)

58. Do you consider yourself Hispanic or Latino/Latina? (Please circle one answer)
Yes (1) No (0)
59. What is your current marital status? (Please circle one answer)
A. Married (1)
B. Domestic partnership (2)
C. Divorced (3)
D. Widowed (4)
E. Single and never married (5)
60. What is your class standing? (Please circle one answer)
A. Freshman/First Year (1)
B. Sophomore/Second Year (2)
C. Junior/ Third Year (3)
D. Senior/Fourth Year (4)
E. Undergraduate more than 4 years (5)
F. Graduate student (6)
61. What is your major? (Please write on the line below)

62. Have you ever been the victim of a crime?
(Please circle yes or no. **If NO, skip to question 65**)
Yes (1) No (0)
63. Was the perpetrator of the crime against you apprehended? (Please circle)
A. Yes (1)
B. No (0)
C. I don't know (99)
64. Was the perpetrator of the crime against you tried in a court of law? (Please circle)
A. Yes (1)
B. No (0)
C. I don't know (99)
65. Have you ever committed a felony (a crime punishable by a year or more in prison)?
(Please circle yes or no)
Yes (1) No (0)
66. Have you ever committed a misdemeanor (a crime punishable by less than a year in jail)?
(Please circle yes or no)
Yes (1) No (0)
67. Have you ever been arrested for a crime? (Please circle one answer)
A. Yes, a felony (1)
B. Yes, a misdemeanor (2)
C. Yes, both a felony and a misdemeanor (3)
C. No (0)

77. According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted of sexual battery:	1	0
78. According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was originally convicted of murder:	1	0
79. According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was released from prison because he served his entire sentence:	1	0
80. According to the article, Frank L. Jeffries was release from prison because new evidence proved his innocence:	1	0
81. According to the article, DNA evidence confirmed Frank L. Jeffries' guilt:	1	0
82. According to the article, DNA evidence proved Frank L. Jeffries' innocence:	1	0

This is the end of the survey. Please raise your hand to indicate to the experimenter that you are done.

APPENDIX D INFORMED CONSENT

PLEASE READ THIS CONSENT DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU DECIDE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Protocol Title: An investigation of attitudes toward persons released from prison.

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to examine public attitudes toward persons released from prison.

What you will be asked to do in the study: Should you agree to participate, you will be asked to read a news article about an individual who was recently released from prison. You will then be asked to complete a survey about your feelings toward the subject of the article.

Time required: 45 minutes

Risks and Benefits: We do not anticipate that you will benefit directly by participating in this experiment, nor will you be exposed to any risk.

Compensation: You will receive course credit for participation in this study [You will receive extra credit in an amount not to exceed 1% of your final grade]

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number, and your survey answers will not be connected to your name or to this consent form. Thus, your participation is completely anonymous.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Right to withdraw from the study: You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Adina M. Thompson, Graduate Student, University of Florida Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law, PO Box 117330 Gainesville, FL 32611; Adinamt@ufl.edu

Lora Levett, PhD, Assistant Professor, University of Florida Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law, PO Box 117330 Gainesville, FL 32611; LLevett@ufl.edu

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; phone 392-0433.

Agreement: I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the procedure and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Debriefing Statement

In this study, we are investigating whether stigma is levied against people who are exonerated (those who are originally found guilty of a crime and later determined to be innocent). The news article you read was fictional, and its content varied based on the condition you were assigned to. We varied two characteristics of the news articles: The crime in question (robbery, assault, sexual battery or murder) and the subject's guilt (truly guilty or exonerated). So, you read an article with one of the combinations of conditions (e.g., robbery and an exonerated person).

We have two hypotheses:

1. Both people who are exonerated and people who are guilty will be stigmatized in the areas of employment, housing, and personal relationships.
2. The severity of the crime in question will have an impact on the level of stigma.

Thank you for participating in this study. Your credit should be awarded shortly. If you have any questions, or are interested in the results of this study, please email Adina Thompson at Adinamt@ufl.edu

Thank you for your time.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Adina graduated Magna cum Laude from UF in 2003 and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism. Adina is also a licensed emergency medical technician and a Haven Hospice vigil volunteer. In her spare time, she enjoys reading non-fiction books, trying new foods, and traveling to South Florida to visit with her parents and younger brother.