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Attitudes Toward Prisoners: An Introductory Study

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Abstract

The United States has the largest prison population in the world and it just seems to keep growing (Tsai & Scommegna 2012). The current research focuses on attitudes toward prisoners and how that may influence someone's likelihood of returning to prison. Attitudes toward prisoners was measured using the Attitudes Toward Prisoners scale (ATP). The research hypotheses are as follows: 1) females and people of color will have higher original ATP scores than males and whites; 2) people who have experienced discrimination and/or have some connection to the prison system will have higher original ATP scores than those who have not; 3) that people who viewed the Bryan Stevenson Common Book Convocation will have higher original ATP scores than those who did not view the convocation; 4) the scores for the Tendency to Forgive scale (TTF) and for the ATP will be positively related (when one score is higher, the other score will also be higher); 5) watching the humanizing videos will increase the scores when taking the second ATP. There was a relationship between race, gender, discrimination, and viewing the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation, but none of those relationships were significant. However, watching the humanizing videos and having an acquaintance in prison were significant predictors of ATP scores.

Attitudes Toward Prisoners: An Introductory Study

The United States has the largest prison population in the world and it just seems to keep growing (Tsai & Scommegna 2012). There have been many theories as to why our prison population is increasing, but for the purposes of this study, the focus will be on the public's attitude toward prisoners. According to research, if the public has a more negative view of prisoners then this results in major barriers to a prisoner's reintegration into society. Therefore, learning about the attitudes toward prisoners could help with reintegration policies. Research also suggests that we should learn more about college student's attitudes toward prisoners, because they will be the future policy makers (Mackey et al. 2006).

The current research is comparing demographic factors, such as race, gender, and class year to students' attitudes toward prisoners. Attitudes toward prisoners will be measured using the Attitudes Toward Prisoners scale (ATP) (Melvin, Gramling, Gardner 1985). In addition, this research looks at discrimination. It asks participants to recount their experiences with discrimination to see if that might have any influence on their attitudes. Also, the participants will be given a forgiveness survey to see if their levels of forgiveness are related to their attitudes toward prisoners. Forgiveness will be measured using the Tendency to Forgive scale (TTF) (Brown, 2003). A line of questioning specific for Otterbein students was also included, focusing on the influence of the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation and whether or not going to the convocation influenced attitudes. This last manipulation was conducted to determine if a one-time experience could change attitudes toward prisoners. If so, this finding would have implications for influencing attitudes without instituting lengthy educational programs.

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The research hypotheses are as follows: 1) females and people of color will have higher original ATP scores than males and whites , 2) people who have experienced discrimination and/or have some connection to the prison system will have higher original ATP scores than those who have not, 3) people who viewed the Bryan Stevenson Common Book Convocation will have higher original ATP scores than those who did not view the convocation, 4) scores for TTF and for the ATP will be positively related (when one score is higher, the other score will also be higher), and 5) watching the humanizing videos will increase the scores when taking the second ATP.

Attitudes toward Prisoners

Attitudes toward prisoners has been studied in different ways. Glaser (1969) studied the attitudes of correctional officers and predicted that more positive attitudes in correctional officers was one of the major factors of a prisoner's successful reintegration. In addition, Jocobi (1975) and Niederdoffer (1969) studied police officers and found that they are more likely to have negative attitudes toward prisoners. This research has been used to point out the importance of investigating the public's attitudes toward prisoners. Just like correctional officers and law enforcement, students are likely to demonstrate negative attitudes towards prisoners. Not many studies have been conducted that examine differences in attitudes toward prisoners, but there are three studies that were found. All three studies predicted that students would have more negative attitudes toward prisoners. These studies were conducted by: Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985), Ortet-Fabregat, Perez, and Lewis (1993), and Kjelsberg et al. (2007).

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Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985) stressed the importance of the public, criminal justice personnel, and policy makers having more positive attitudes toward prisoners. They developed the Attitudes Toward Prisoners scale (ATP), which is a 36 item scale to measure the public's attitudes toward prisoners. A Likert scale is used for the responses: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Undecided, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. With 1 representing the most negative attitudes and 5 representing the most positive attitudes (Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner 1985).

Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985) sampled a total of 409 people, with six different sample groups. The first group was a prison reform/rehabilitation group consisting of 19 people who were participating in project and activities that involve prison reform or rehabilitation. The second group was composed of 157 inmates. The third group consisted of 90 students. The fourth group was composed of 64 community members. The fifth group was law enforcement: 23 law enforcement personnel from the FBI, Treasury Department, and the Tuscaloosa City Police department. The last group consisted of 56 correctional officers from the Mississippi State Penitentiary. The higher the average ATP score of the group means the group is demonstrating more positive attitudes. As predicted the prisoners' group demonstrated the highest mean score (109.5), with the prison reform/rehabilitation group having the second highest average (108.3). Contrary to the researchers' hypothesis, correctional officers demonstrated more positive attitudes toward prisoners (90.7) than the student group (90.5), however this difference was not significant (Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner 1985).

Ortet-Fabregat, Perez, and Lewis (1993) studied attitudes toward prisoners in Spain. Along with the ATP the researchers also implemented the Wilson-Patterson Attitudes Inventory

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(WPAI), to test how conservative or liberal a person is on controversial social issues. The higher the score on the WPAI the more likely the participant is to exhibit more conservative attitudes. The researchers formed one student group consisting of 191 students, and four criminal justice system professional groups. One being a prisoner rehabilitation group, consisting of 47 people, a defense attorneys' group, consisting of 31 people, a law enforcement officers' group, consisting of 65 people, and a correctional officers' group, consisting of 62 people. As the researchers' expected, there was a statistically significant negative relationship between ATP scores and WPAI scores (Ortet-Fabregat, Perez, and Lewis 1993). Although the current research does not utilize the WPAI scale, the participants were asked about political party affiliation to see if conservativeness is a factor that contributes to attitudes toward prisoners, even though this is not included in the main hypotheses. Similar to Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985), Ortet-Fabregat et al. (1993) found that the prison rehabilitation had the highest mean ATP scores. University students and law enforcement officers had similar low mean ATP scores, or more negative attitudes toward prisoners (Ortet-Fabregat, Perez, and Lewis 1993).

Kjelsberg, Skoglund, and Rustad (2007) studied attitudes toward prisoners in Norway among three different groups: prison inmates, prison employees, and college students. The researchers also used the ATP and their results were consistent with the prior research of Melvin et al. (1985) and Ortet-Fabregat et al. (1993). They hypothesized that students would exhibit the most negative attitudes toward prisoners, prison employees would show intermediate attitudes, and the prisoners would demonstrate the most positive attitudes. As predicted, the college student group demonstrated the most negative attitudes with a mean ATP score of 91, compared to the mean score of the prisoner group ($M= 106$) and the mean

score of the prison employee group ($M= 93$) (Kjelsberg, Skoglund, and Rustad 2007). All three of these studies show that students tend to have more negative attitudes toward prisoners but there is a lack of research on attitudes toward prisoners.

The problem with these articles is that there are not explanations why college students seem to share these negative attitudes. The negative attitudes of law enforcement officers and correctional officers are explained because of the nature of their jobs, they are trained to be tough with criminals and to make them pay for their crimes. The positive attitudes of prison reform groups are explained by the nature of what the organizations want to do, reform prison and punishment. However, the explanation of negative attitudes of college students is not mentioned. It could be the influence of the media, which will be discussed later, or it could be some influence of college itself. The current research will not try and answer this question, but it would be an interesting direction for future research. The literature review of this study will also be focusing on attitudes toward punishment, to get more of an idea why college students have these negative attitudes.

Attitudes toward Punishment (Demographic Variables)

College students' attitudes toward punishment could have an impact future policies, so this area of research has been growing. Lambert (2005) examined college students' attitudes toward punishment with a hypothesis of race being a predictor of one's level of punitiveness. They studied 302 undergraduate students that were selected from two Midwestern public universities. Race, age, gender, academic, level, and conservative/liberal ideology were independent variables, and race was coded as either white or minority. As predicted, there was

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a difference of views between white and minority students, and the difference was statistically significant. Fifty percent of white students supported the death penalty, while 29% of minority students supported the death penalty. In addition, 67% of minority students said that treatment is one of the primary goals of the criminal justice system, while 50% of white students also held this belief (Lambert 2005). This significance could be attributed to a finding by Unnever and Cullen (2007). They found that one-third of the racial differences in attitudes towards capital punishment can be attributed to white racism. White racism is simply prejudices and stereotypes about African Americans that underline society (Unnever & Cullen 2007). This could also be applied to the criminal justice system in general, if African Americans feel like they are being discriminated against in a certain institution they may denounce the system all together and feel sorry for those that are trapped in it.

The only other significant predictor of college students' level of punitiveness was conservative/liberal ideology, participants who identified themselves as having more conservative political views were statistically more likely to demonstrate more punitive attitudes than those who identified as having more liberal political views (Lambert 2005). This might be because those who tend to have more conservative views, tend to support the "get tough on crime" rhetoric. Mackey and Courtright (2000) examined college students' attitudes toward punishment with a hypothesis that criminal justice students are more likely to demonstrate punitive attitudes than non-criminal justice students. The sample included 633 students from Northeastern universities and the participants were asked to answer a 30 item scale that was designed to measure college students' support for rehabilitation and punishment (Mackey & Courtright 2000).

Along with the primary variable major, gender, race, age, grade level, political ideology, and the size of the town where the participant grew up were also independent variables. Older and female students were less likely to be punitive than younger and male students, although these differences were not significant. Differences between criminal justice students and the non-criminal justice students were present. The criminal justice students were more likely to be punitive than non-criminal justice students. Class year was also a significant predictor of punitiveness, with seniors and juniors being less likely to demonstrate punitive attitudes than freshmen (Mackey & Courtright 2000).

The class year results from Mackey and Courtright (2000) are consistent with the idea of the “liberalizing effect” that has been noted by researchers such as Bohm and Vogel (1994), Lane (1997), and McCorkle (1993). The liberalizing effect refers to the impact that a college education has on students’ punitiveness, that is as students’ proceed through their education they tend to exhibit more liberal beliefs. The current research chose to examine class year to determine if the liberalizing effect is present in the Otterbein community. In addition, although the current research mostly consists of nursing majors because of the convenience of the sample, difference in ATP scores between different majors will be analyzed to see if major is a predictor of attitudes toward prisoners in the current sample.

Race, gender, education level, and political affiliation have been studied as factors that influence people’s attitudes toward punishment (Park 2009). The current research is examining these factors because if they can have an influence on attitudes toward punishment then they might have the same influence on attitudes toward prisoners. With gender, the results are inconsistent on whether or not it predicts a greater or lower amount of punitiveness. Applegate

et al (2002) investigated gender differences in views toward crime and correctional policies with a random sample of 559 Ohio residents. They predicted that women were less likely to be punitive than men, this hypothesis was supported by the results of the mail survey with women being more likely to support rehabilitation and were less favorable of punishment (Applegate et al 2002).

Langworthy and Whitehead (1986) stated that women would be more punitive because of their fear of victimization. They thought this could be explained by the vulnerability hypothesis, which states that women and the elderly are afraid because of what could happen to them. They found that people that identified as being afraid of being victims did have more punitive attitudes, but that did not correspond with gender. That is not all females were afraid of being victimized so they were actually less punitive than men (Langworthy & Whitehead 1986).

In regards to college students, Lambert (2004) found that female students were more likely to support rehabilitation when compared to male students, the results were statistically significant. However, in Lambert (2005) gender was found to not be a significant predictor of support for punitive punishment. Many other studies have been conducted that show mixed results on the influence of gender on punitiveness. Including Hensley et al (2003) which found that female college students were more likely to support rehabilitation and Mackey and Courtright (2000) who found no significant differences between male and female college students. However, Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985) and Oster-Fabregat et al. (1993), the original studies on attitudes toward prisoners, found that women were less likely to demonstrate negative attitudes toward prisoners. The current research predicts that gender will be a

significant predictor of attitudes toward prisoners although the research on punitive attitudes is varied because the original attitudes toward prisoners' research shows this relationship.

Race has also been identified as a factor that might influence attitudes toward punishment. Just like with gender, the research is divided on whether or not race is a significant predictor of attitudes. Tsoudis' (2000) surveyed 200 Midwestern university students and found that race was not a significant factor of punitiveness. However, Cohn et al. (1991) found through studying the 1987 National Opinion Research Center General Social Survey and a telephone survey that non-whites were statistically more likely to be supportive of rehabilitation and less punitive, although the difference was small. In addition, Lambert (2004) found that racial differences were significant in all 15 items of the researcher's attitudes toward punishment survey. Non-whites were more likely to support rehabilitation, less likely to support the death penalty, and were less punitive (Lambert 2004). The current research predicts that race will be a significant predictor of attitudes toward prisoners because of the research is divided but it seems to lean more toward race being a significant factor.

Education level has also been identified as a significant predictor of punitiveness, although unlike gender and race, the majority of the research shows that the more education someone has, the less punitive they are (Park 2009). Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) focused on asking the public's support for the three strikes policy, which states that three felony convictions will lead to life in prison. With a telephone survey of 166 of randomly selected residents of the East Bay area of Northern California they found that people with higher education levels tend to be less punitive (Tyler & Boeckmann 1997). With respect to college students, research tends to agree with the liberalizing effect that was mentioned earlier. This effect was confirmed in

Farnworth et al. (1998) who examined 683 college students' attitudes toward the death penalty, criminal sanctions, and the war on drugs. They found as they progressed through their education, students' punitive attitudes decrease and the difference was statistically significant (Farnworth, et al. 1998). As mentioned before, the current research is accounting for education level by asking the participants their class year in pursuing an undergraduate degree, however, education level is not included in the main hypotheses.

Finally, political affiliation has been tested to be a significant predictor of attitudes towards punishment. Measuring political affiliation has been done in two ways: one being asking political party and the other is measuring one's political conservatism. Some researchers assessed political conservatism through scales, including Ortet-Fabregat et al. (1993). Just like for gender and race, the results for the significance of this attribute is varied. Farnworth et al. (1998) and McCorkle (1993) did not find a significant relationship between political views and punitiveness. However, the majority of research suggests that political views is a significant predictor of punitiveness. Baron and Hartnagel (1996) found that respondents who have more politically conservative views tend to have more negative attitudes toward prison amenities.

Political views are also significant predictors for students' attitudes toward punishment. Hensley et al. (2003) investigated the college students' support of in-prison programs, services, and amenities. A student who had more liberal views was more likely to support all kinds of services compared to the politically conservative students (Hensley et al. 2003). In many other studies they found that more liberal students were the more likely they were to support rehabilitation when compared to the conservative students (Mackey and Courtright 2000, Mackey et al. 2006). In the current research political party will be observed by asking the

participant which political party they affiliate with (Democrat, Republican, Independent, and Other).

The current research also asked the participants to say if they have had any experience with the criminal justice system, whether that be knowing an offender, working in or around the system, or knowing someone who works in or around the criminal justice system. This line of questioning is important because one's acquaintance is rarely taken into account as a significant predictor of attitudes toward punishment. Applegate et al. (2000) explored whether contact with criminals influenced the participants' level of punitiveness. The data indicated that the more contact the respondent had with criminals, the less likely they were to have punitive attitudes. In addition, the more contact the participant had with criminals, the more likely they were to support rehabilitation, however this was not statistically significant (Applegate et al. 2000).

Gideon (2008) also looked at the influence that one's acquaintance with offenders on support for rehabilitation. The researcher found that a participant that has more knowledge about an inmate or is a personal acquaintance with an offender, they are more likely to support rehabilitation than those who do not have this acquaintance (Gideon 2008). Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann (2002) studied how the media and news can influence the public's ideas about punitiveness and racial differences. They spoke about how people who tend to be proximate to people of color tend to hold more positive views of people of color because, "Positive interactions between individuals who consider themselves equal and mutually non-threatening lead to a decrease in anxiety about outgroups" (Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann 2002). In addition, they spoke of how the media can influence people, who are not necessarily proximate, with the focus on crime reporting and portraying all crimes as violent (Gilliam, Valentino, and Beckmann 2002).

This could be applied to attitudes toward punishment because of how the portrayals of criminals in the media can make one be more punitive. The current research wishes to examine this factor with college students to increase the research on the subject and to learn more about a general population.

Discrimination and Bryan Stevenson

Two subjects are unique to the current research: looking at discrimination as a predictor for attitudes and examining whether the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation is a predictor for attitudes. If there is research regarding discrimination as a predictor of attitudes, it was not found by the researcher. What we do know about discrimination, is how many people of color are affected by the criminal justice system when compared to whites. African Americans are 5.1 times more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system than whites (Nellis, 2016). This fact may lead to people of color to be more in favor of a rehabilitative system of justice rather than the punitive system we have now. One of the areas in the criminal justice system where people of color are disproportionately involved is with the death penalty.

Baldus and Woodworth (2004) studied race and the difference in sentencing between blacks and whites. They found that on average, the odds of the average black defendant receiving the death penalty were 3.8 times higher than the odds of a non-black defendant who committed a similar crime. Bessler (2017) says that racial and gender bias when it comes to the death penalty is clear, especially in terms of interracial crimes. While only 20 people have been executed for crimes that involve a white offender and a black victim, 282 people have been executed for crimes involving a black defendant and a white victim (Bessler 2017).

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The current research is looking for a connection between personal experiences of discrimination and attitudes towards prisoners because seeing discrimination happening in the criminal justice system may cause people to relate their personal experiences to the experiences of others. Although, research has not really been done on this topic, this will be an interesting and unique addition to this research. Another aspect of the research that was unique is the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation, which is a phenomenon exclusive to the Otterbein community. Bryan Stevenson came to Otterbein to discuss his work as a lawyer with death row inmates. This experience might have had an influence on the viewers because of the personal stories that was told in the presentation. Seeing the negative side of the criminal justice system up close and personal and hearing of people who have been effected by the discrimination of the criminal justice system might have humanized criminals who we tend to think are so immoral. However it is possible that this one-time event could change people's attitudes. According to Zana and Rempel (1988), presenting new information can change attitudes if it includes messages that are high in affect and emotion (Zana & Rempel 1988). During the convocation, Stevenson told many emotional stories about people who were wrongly incarcerated and of people who were mistreated by the criminal justice system.

Method

Participants

For this study, a total of 65 Otterbein students were surveyed who were selected through the psychology research website Sona Systems. Of these 65 participants, only 55 data sets were complete and were able to be used for analysis. 10 of the original 65 participants either did not give consent, did not complete the second half of the survey, or they only completed the demographic question section so they were left out of the analysis. Of the 55 participants left, 51 were female and 4 were male. In addition, 41 participants were white and 14 were people of color. In terms of class year, there were 31 first years, 9 sophomores, 8 juniors, and 7 seniors. There was also a variety of majors represented in the data, the most represented groups being nursing majors ($N=27$), psychology majors ($N=5$), and allied health majors ($N=5$).

Method

The participants of this study were given a series of questionnaires. The first questionnaire was composed of demographic questions, such as race, gender, political party, class year, and major. The demographic questions also included questions about individual experiences of the participant. One being whether or not they knew a friend or relative in prison, another being whether or not they were acquainted with anyone in prison other than friends or family, and if they had any experience working or interning in the criminal justice system. Also included with the demographic questions was a question on whether or not the participant has faced discrimination in their lives and whether or not they attended the Bryan Stevenson

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common book convocation. Along with the individual experience questions there was an open ended question to describe the participants' interaction with the criminal justice system, to recount their experiences with discrimination, and to say what they learned from the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation.

After the demographic questions the participant were asked to take the Attitudes Towards Prisoners scale (ATP). This scale was developed by Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner (1985) it consists of 36 questions that are answered on a Likert scale of (1) disagree strongly to (5) agree strongly. It is designed to measure the participants' attitudes by asking questions about the qualities of prisoners like "all prisoners are immoral". With questions 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 24, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, and 35 being reverse scored. With higher scores indicating more positive and accepting attitudes toward prisoners (Melvin, Gramling, & Gardner 1985). After taking the ATP, participants were given the Tendency to Forgive scale (TTF). The TTF is a four item questionnaire designed to gather how likely the participant is to forgive someone if they were wronged by them. These four items are answered on a Likert scale of (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree with questions 2 and 3 being reversed scored (Brown 2003).

Finally, participants were asked to watch three videos in which prisoners are humanized and presented as actual people. The first video was a Diane Sawyer interview with women that were being held in a women's prison. The interview shows stories about the women, like one woman who suffered a terrible car crash, got addicted to pain medication, and got sent to prison because of her addiction. The other two videos were videos of men who spent time in prison who were encouraging people to stop their criminal ways because of how one decision changed their

lives. After watching the videos, the participants were asked to retake the ATP and the TTF to see if attaching stories and humanizing inmates may influence the participants' attitudes.

Results

Hypothesis 1: People of color and Women

The first hypothesis of this study was that people of color and women would have higher original ATP scores. To compare these the researcher conducted two 2 X 2 split between within ANOVA. The first, comparing the between subjects variable 2 (race: white vs. people of color) X the within subjects variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs. post-video). People of color did preform higher on the original ATP ($M=3.65$, $SD= 0.44$) than whites ($M= 3.55$, $SD= 0.45$), however this difference was not significant, $F (1, 53) = 0.76$, $p>0.05$ ($MSe= 0.11$). The differences between people of color and whites evened out with the second ATP. With the mean for people of color being 3.84 ($SD= 0.47$) and the mean for whites being 3.84 as well ($SD= 0.40$). There was no significant interaction between time of ATP and race, $F (1, 53) = 1.48$, $p>0.05$ ($MSe= 0.11$). These results are shown in Appendix 4.

The second ANOVA was conducted with the between subject variable 2 (gender: male vs female) X the within subject variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs. post-video). Women did score higher on the original ATP ($M= 3.59$, $SD= 0.45$) when compared to men ($M= 3.42$, $SD= 0.37$). However, this difference was not significant, $F (1, 53) = 0.28$, $p>0.05$ ($MSe= 0.12$). Similarly to the race analysis, the mean for gender on the second ATP for women being 3.85 ($SD= 0.42$) and the mean score for males being 3.71 ($SD= 0.28$). There was also no significant

interaction between gender and time of ATP, $F(1, 53) = 0.06, p > 0.05$ ($MSe = 0.12$). This data is shown in Appendix 4.

Hypothesis 2: Discrimination and Relation to Criminal Justice System

The second hypothesis of this study was that people who experienced discrimination and who have some experience with the criminal justice system would have higher ATP scores than people who have not had these experiences. Again the researcher analyzed this data with multiple 2 X 2 split between and within ANOVA. The first ANOVA compared the between subjects variable 2 (discrimination: yes vs. no) X the within subjects variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs. post-video). People who have faced discrimination did score higher on the original ATP ($M = 3.67, SD = 0.51$) when compared to the people who have not faced discrimination ($M = 3.52, SD = 0.39$). However this difference was statistically significant, $F(1, 53) = 0.68, p > 0.05$ ($MSe = 0.27$). There was also no significant interaction between discrimination and time of ATP, $F(1, 53) = 0.30, p > 0.05$ ($MSe = 0.27$).

The second split ANOVA was run to compare the between subjects variable 2 (relative in prison: yes vs. no) X the within subjects variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs. post-video). People who reported having a relative or friend in prison scored higher on the original ATP ($M = 3.67, SD = 0.44$) compared to those who do not have a relative or know someone in prison ($M = 3.51, SD = 0.44$). However, this difference was not significant, $F(1, 53) = 1.06, p > 0.05$ ($MSe = 0.39$). There was also no significant interaction between having a relative or friend in prison with time of ATP, $F(1, 53) = 0.04, p > 0.05$ ($MSe = 0.39$). In addition, the researcher conducted another split ANOVA to compare the between subjects variable 2 (acquaintance in prison: yes vs. no) X

the within subjects variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs. post-video). People who have an acquaintance in prison (someone who is not a close friend or family member) scored higher on the original ATP score ($M= 3.76$, $SD= 0.47$) when compared to those who do not have an acquaintance in prison ($M= 3.52$, $SD= 0.43$). This difference was significant, $F(1, 53) = 3.51$, $p < 0.05$ ($MSe= 0.53$). In addition, there was a significant interaction between acquaintance of a prisoner and time of ATP, such that the people who did not have an acquaintance in prison significantly improved from the original ATP to the second ATP, $F(1, 53) = 6.55$, $p < 0.05$ ($MSe= 0.53$). Finally, the researcher tried to compare working in the criminal justice to original ATP score, however we had no participants who had experience working or interning in the criminal justice system. This is represented in Appendix 4 and there is also a graph that shows these results, labelled as *Figure 1*.

Hypothesis 3: Bryan Stevenson

The third hypothesis for this study is that people who attended the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation will report higher original ATP scores. For this, the researcher once again used a split between and within ANOVA to analyze the data. Comparing the between subjects variable 2 (Bryan Stevenson: yes vs. no) X the within subjects variable 2 (time of ATP: pre-video vs post-video). People who attended the Bryan Stevenson convocation did have higher original ATP scores ($M= 3.62$, $SD= 0.43$) compared to those who did not attend the convocation ($M= 3.53$, $SD= 0.46$). However, this difference was not significant, $F(1, 53) = 3.58$, $p = 0.06$ ($MSe= 0.11$). There was also no significant interaction between having gone to the convocation and the time of ATP, $F(1, 53) = 3.85$, $p = 0.06$ ($MSe= 0.11$).

Hypothesis 4: TTF and ATP

The fourth hypothesis was to see if the scores for the TTF and ATP were positively related, that is as one gets higher than so does the other. To test this the researcher ran a bivariate correlation. This test showed that the TTF did increase after watching the videos. The original TTF mean was 3.62 ($SD= 1.88$) and the second TTF mean being 3.80 ($SD= 1.17$). This difference was significant, $p<0.05$. However, contrary to the hypothesis TTF scores and ATP scores were negatively related for both pre and post video scales. The Pearson correlation for the original ATP and original TTF being -0.06 and the Pearson correlation for the second ATP and TTF being -0.01. However, this relationship was not statistically significant relationship, $p>0.05$.

Hypothesis 5: Humanizing Videos

The last hypothesis for this study, but maybe the most important, is that the humanizing videos would cause the participants second ATP scores to increase. This difference was examined in every split ANOVA that was conducted in this study. In all of the instances ATP scores increased after watching the humanizing videos. The total mean for the original ATP being 3.58 ($SD= 0.44$) and the total mean for the second ATP being 3.84 ($SD= 0.41$). The difference between these two times was significant, $F(1, 53) = 45.82$, $p<0.05$. This significance is illustrated in Appendix 4 and in *Figure 2*.

Secondary Variables

The researcher also compared means of some secondary variables like major, political party, and class year. However, because these variables were not central to the main hypotheses they were not tested for significance, the means were just compared. In terms of political party, 20 participants defined themselves as being Democrats, 20 identified as Republicans, 11 identified as Independent, and 4 identified as Other. The Democrat category had the highest original ATP score ($M= 3.72$, $SD= 0.57$) and the highest secondary ATP score ($M=4.00$, $SD= 0.42$). In addition, every groups' ATP scores increased after watching the humanizing videos.

In terms of major, there was a large variety of majors that included one or two participants for each group, because the one or two group samples cannot be representative of a population, the researcher decided to focus on the three most represented groups. These groups were nursing majors ($N=27$), psychology majors ($N= 5$), and allied health majors ($N=5$). Of the three groups, psychology majors had the highest original ATP scores with a mean of 3.69 ($SD= 0.52$), compared to the mean of allied health majors ($M= 3.35$, $SD= 0.40$), and compared to nursing majors ($M= 3.62$, $SD= 0.39$). Once again, all three groups showed an increase in ATP scores after watching the humanizing videos.

Finally, for this study the participant consisted of 31 first years, 9 sophomores, 8 juniors, and 7 seniors. Of these groups two were tied for having the highest original ATP score, first years ($M= 3.62$, $SD= 0.41$) and seniors ($M= 3.62$, $SD= 0.52$). Once again all groups had an

increase in ATP scores after watching the videos although the differences seem to be smaller in this groups.

Qualitative Analysis

Most people who answered the qualitative question about knowing anyone who is related to the criminal justice system answered that they had a family member who worked as a sheriff or who worked as a correctional officer. However, not enough people had this experience to warrant a test of significance, only 10 of the 55 participants answered this question and of those only 5 were actual experiences rather than the answer “none” or “N/A”. In addition, the question about describing discrimination was also interesting but there was simply not enough responses. 25 of the 55 participants explained instances of discrimination but most did not have enough detail to analyze for feeling. For example, there was an answer that simply stated “Don’t get me started” or an answer that stated “It’s called being a women”. Those responses were interesting and valid but they do not show enough personal experience. Then some participants responded with experiences that were personal, but they were not that in depth. One example being, “A rude customer was angry about her order and began making snare remarks about my black features”.

However, there were 3 paragraph like responses. One was a white women who said that on multiple occasions she had been randomly slapped by African Americans for what her people did to their people. She also stated that African Americans would get angry at her if she had her hair braided or that Asians have called her stupid before because she is white. I do not know the truthfulness of these statements, but it does not matter if the experiences were real

or not. What matters is the influence that these experiences have had on her attitudes and although her statement goes against what the researcher personally believes, there is no reason to assume that she is lying.

The other two paragraph responses were “traditional” discrimination experiences. One participant was recalled in great detail how they and their dad were at a convenience store and the clerk refused to sell to them because they were Mexican. What is amazing is the detail in which the participant recalled their father’s reaction. The participant also stated that they have faced countless instances of discrimination, but this time from when they were 10 years old, stuck out the most to them. In the last paragraph response, the participant talks about an experience in a university residence hall. They spoke of being called out when they were the only person of color in the room.

Some themes that were found in these paragraph responses was the detail in what they remembered. In the first response, the participant remembered many separate occasions when they faced discrimination from African Americans. In the second response, the participant recalled the exact words that her father spoke to her after she had faced this act of discrimination. Finally, in the third response they recalled how someone singled them out because of their race. In addition, most of the qualitative response to the discrimination question focused on minorities being discriminated against, the exception being the detailed paragraph about a white person being discriminated against by African Americans.

The researcher also asked the participants to recount what they might have learned from watching the Bryan Stevenson common book convocation. Most people said that they

learned a lot and that this experiences was eye-opening for them. One participant said “The Bryan Stevenson speech and reading experience was one that I will remember for the rest of my life...” Another participant said, “I was shocked to learn that so many people are wrongly imprisoned due to carelessness and lack of compassion from people in positions of power”. Most of the responses were like this, saying what they learned and how this speech opened their eyes. Some themes from these response were people being shocked by the number of wrongful incarcerations, they recalled the four tasks the Stevenson spoke of, and they spoke of the book and how they gained a lot from his experiences. Finally, another point that stood out in the qualitative responses was how it made people realize that people should not be defined by the worst thing that they have ever done.

However, some people stated they learned nothing new from this experience. One participant stated, “Nothing I didn’t already know. Honestly I viewed it as another story of how my people are being oppressed. We constantly have to work to bridge the divide to make someone else realize that we deserve equity”. The other criticisms were about the talk itself, rather than what he presented. In regards to the open ended questions that were asked in this study, a future direction of research could be to focus on qualitative responses such as these and comparing them to someone’s beliefs about the criminal justice system or prisoners.

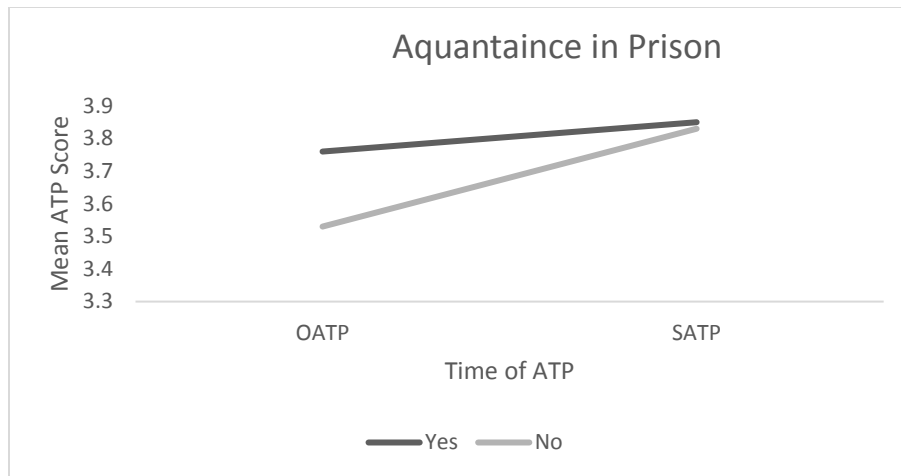


Figure 1. Relationship between first and second ATP scores and whether or not the participant had an acquaintance in prison.

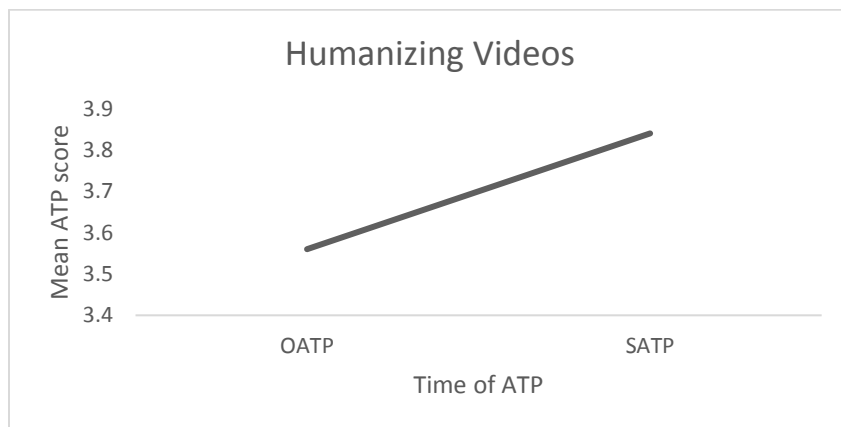


Figure 2. Influence of the humanizing videos between time 1 and time 2 of ATP.

Discussion

Although this study did not find statistical significance for most of the hypotheses, one can still learn a lot from this study. One learning moment is that the humanizing videos did increase the participants ATP scores and it was significant, so maybe if society focuses on the human aspects of prisoners instead of the inhuman, or “evil”, aspect, the public’s attitudes

toward prisoners will become more positive. Another observation involves the limitations of this study and how significance might have been found if these limitations did not exist. One limitation is the size of the sample. Maybe if there was a larger sample size, then some of the relationships that were found could have shown statistical significance. In addition, perhaps if the sample size were more representative, significance would have been found. For example, the sample was overwhelmingly white and overwhelmingly female so there was not enough representation of the other groups. This study might need to be conducted again, in a variety of institutions to get the results that were predicted.

Another limitation, was the length of the survey. Some participants did not fill out the second half of the survey after watching the videos, so their results were not used in the analysis. The results from the second section might not be genuine, some participants might have gotten tired. It is possible that they did not fill out the second half honestly because of this. In future research, the researcher could try and give the surveys in person, maybe seeing the researcher would be some type of motivation. Or someone could try and develop another ATP scale, but make it less questions so that it could be used in different survey situations.

Another limitation, was the use of the 4-item TTF scale. This scale showed low but significant reliability ($\alpha=0.79$) and showed the exact opposite of the results that were predicted. More research needs to be done comparing attitudes toward prisoners and forgiveness, using a variety of different scales to see which one might be the best predictor of attitudes. Future research would also need to focus on the experience with the criminal justice system. In this study, we simply did not have enough people who know a family member/work with the criminal justice system to get clear data. A method for future research could be that the

research has two clear groups, with equal people in each who have had experience or who have not had experience with the criminal justice system.

The last limitation that is going to be mentioned for this study was the time frame, because of the need for a shift of direction at the beginning of this semester. If this project had been worked on for years like it was supposed to, instead of months, the qualitative responses could have been tested for significance, the survey could have been given in person, and there could have been a larger, more representative sample. This was a huge limitation, although it was not entirely the fault of the researcher.

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Appendix 1

Demographic Survey

1. What is your current class year? (Please choose one response)

_____ First Year

_____ Sophomore

_____ Junior

_____ Senior

2. What is your gender?

_____ Male

_____ Female

_____ Other

3. What race do you consider yourself? (Please choose one response)

_____ White

_____ African American

_____ Asian

_____ Other

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4. What is your current major? (Please write one primary major)

5. With which political party do you identify? (Please choose one response)

_____ Republican

_____ Democrat

_____ Independent

_____ Other

6. Do you have any family members, friends, or relatives who are/were in prison?

_____ Yes

_____ No

7. Do you personally know of anyone in prison excluding family members, friends, and/or relatives?

_____ Yes

_____ No

8. Have you ever worked or interned in a correction institution (ex: prison, halfway houses, etc.)?

_____ Yes

_____ No

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9. If you have any other experience in the prison system or in corrections, please describe that experience below.

10. Have you ever faced an act of discrimination because of your race, gender, religion, etc?

___ Yes

___ No

If so, please describe your experience (if you have more than one experience please choose the one that impacted you the most).

11. Did you attend the Bryan Stevenson Common Book Convocation?

___ Yes

___ No

If yes please describe that experience below. Did you learn anything? Did anything in particular strike you as important?

Appendix 2

Attitudes Toward Prisoners Scale (ATP) (Melvin, Gramling, and Gardner 1985)

The statements listed below describe different attitudes toward prisoners in jails and prisons in the United States. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. You are asked to express your feelings about each statement by indicating whether you (1) Disagree Strongly, (2) Disagree, (3) Undecided, (4) Agree, or (5) Agree Strongly. Indicate your opinion by writing the number that best describes your personal attitude in the left hand margin. Please answer every item.

Rating Scale

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Agree
Strongly				Strongly

___ * ___ 1. Prisoners are different from most people.

_____ 2. Only a few prisoners are really dangerous.

___ * ___ 3. Prisoners never change.

_____ 4. Most prisoners are victims of circumstance and deserve to be helped.

_____ 5. Prisoners have feelings like the rest of us.

___ * ___ 6. It is not wise to trust a prisoner too far.

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- _____ 7. I think I would like a lot of prisoners.
- _____ 8. Bad prison conditions just make a prisoner more bitter.
- ___ * ___ 9. Give a prisoner an inch and they will take a mile.
- ___ * ___ 10. Most prisoners are stupid.
- _____ 11. Prisoners need affection and praise just like anybody else.
- ___ * ___ 12. You should not expect too much from a prisoner.
- ___ * ___ 13. Trying to rehabilitate prisoners is a waste of time and money.
- ___ * ___ 14. You never know when a prisoner is telling the truth.
- _____ 15. Prisoners are no better or worse than other people.
- ___ * ___ 16. You have to be constantly on your guard with prisoners.
- ___ * ___ 17. In general, prisoners think and act alike.
- _____ 18. If you give a prisoner your respect, they'll give you the same.
- ___ * ___ 19. Prisoners only think about themselves.
- _____ 20. There are some prisoners I would trust with my life.
- _____ 21. Prisoners will take to reason.
- ___ * ___ 22. Most prisoners are too lazy to earn an honest living.
- _____ 23. I wouldn't mind living next door to an ex-prisoner.

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- ___ * ___ 24. Prisoners are just plain mean at heart.
- ___ * ___ 25. Prisoners are always trying to get something out of somebody.
- _____ 26. The values of most prisoners are about the same as the rest of us.
- ___ * ___ 27. I would never want one of my children dating an ex-prisoner.
- _____ 28. Most prisoners have the capacity for love.
- ___ * ___ 29. Prisoners are just plain immoral.
- ___ * ___ 30. Prisoners should be under strict, harsh discipline.
- ___ * ___ 31. In general, prisoners are basically bad people.
- _____ 32. Most prisoners can be rehabilitated.
- _____ 33. Some prisoners are pretty nice people.
- _____ 34. I would like associating with some prisoners.
- ___ * ___ 35. Prisoners respect only brute force.
- _____ 36. If a person does well in prison, they should be let out on parole.

Appendix 3

Tendency to Forgive scale (TTF) (Brown 2003)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly	Disagree	Somewhat	Neutral		Somewhat	Agree
Strongly						
Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Agree

_____ 1. I tend to get over it quickly when someone hurts my feelings.

___*___ 2. If someone wrongs me, I often think about it a lot afterward.

___*___ 3. I have a tendency to harbor grudges.

_____ 4. When people wrong me, my approach is just to forgive or forget.

Appendix 4**Descriptive Statistics**

	Race	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OATPAV	white	3.5542	.44799	41
	people of color	3.6548	.44186	14
	Total	3.5798	.44454	55
SATPAV	white	3.8386	.39971	41
	people of color	3.8373	.46911	14
	Total	3.8383	.41392	55

Comparing means of whites and people of color with original and second ATP scores.

Descriptive Statistics

	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OATPAV	male	3.4167	.37474	4
	female	3.5926	.45023	51
	Total	3.5798	.44454	55
SATPAV	male	3.7083	.27639	4
	female	3.8485	.42308	51
	Total	3.8383	.41392	55

Comparing means of males and people of females with original and second ATP scores.

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Descriptive Statistics

	AcqPrison	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OATPAV	yes	3.7564	.46855	13
	no	3.5251	.42787	42
	Total	3.5798	.44454	55
SATPAV	yes	3.8547	.48248	13
	no	3.8332	.39675	42
	Total	3.8383	.41392	55

Comparing means of people who do and do not have acquaintances in prison with original and second ATP scores.

Descriptive Statistics

	Discrimination	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
OATPAV	yes	3.6654	.51108	22
	no	3.5227	.39200	33
	Total	3.5798	.44454	55
SATPAV	yes	3.8990	.49308	22
	no	3.7978	.35404	33
	Total	3.8383	.41392	55

Comparing means of people who have and have not faced discrimination with original and second ATP scores. Shows the increase of total means from the original ATP to the secondary ATP.