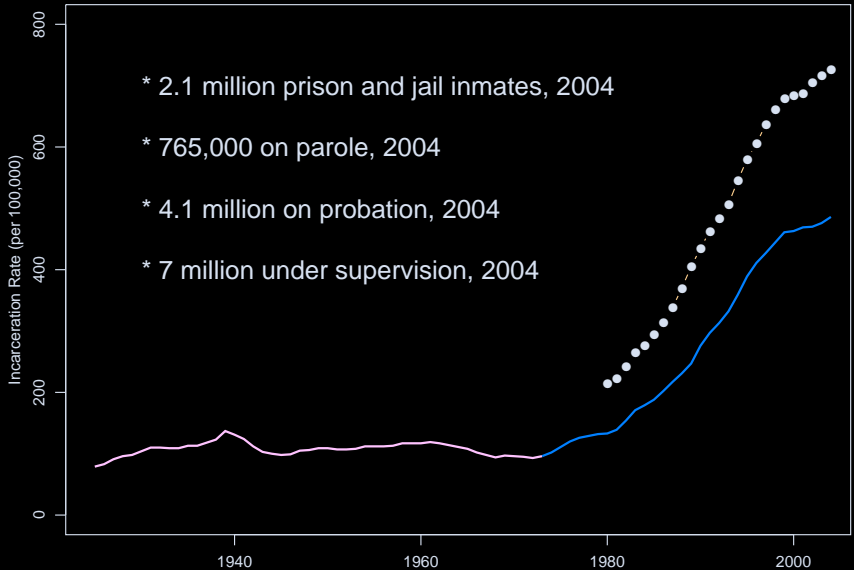


Promoting Employment After Prison

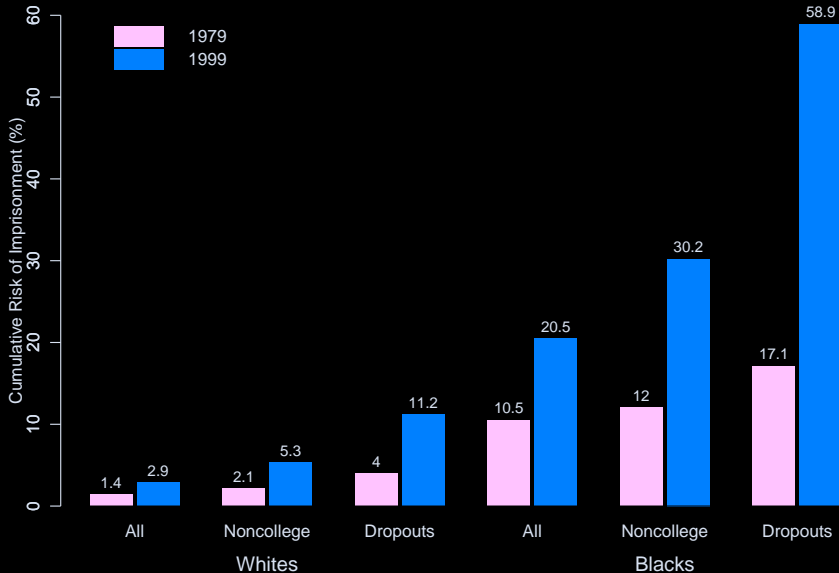
Bruce Western
Harvard University

December, 2007

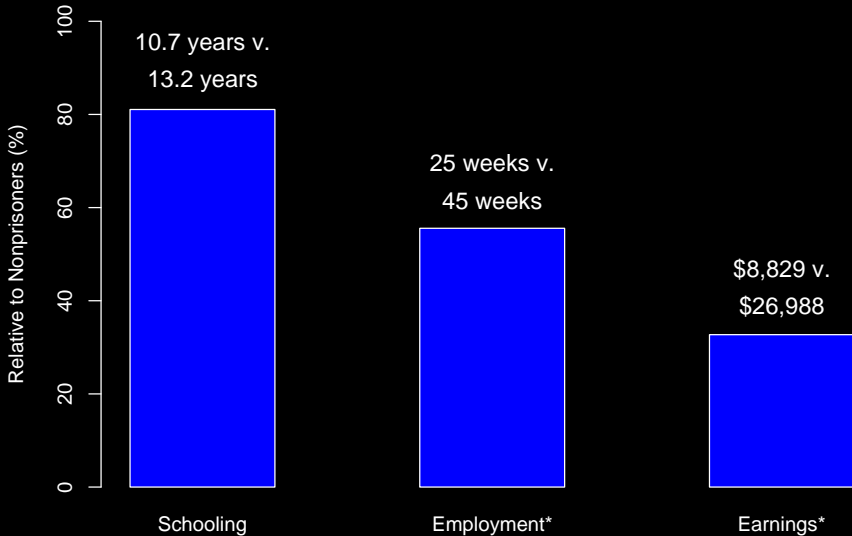
U.S. Incarceration Rates, 1925-2004



Men's Risk of Imprisonment by 30-34



Economic Status of Ex-Prisoners, 30–34



* Adjusted for schooling and AFQT

Part I: Transitional Programs

- ▶ Full-time low-skill work, to build work routines (similar to Doe Fund, CEO, or NSW)
- ▶ Housing immediately after release
- ▶ Drug treatment, which can be supported in the housing facilities

Need two more parts to go to scale. . .

Part II: Elimination of Collateral Consequences

- ▶ Federal law currently denies benefits for housing, education, and welfare for felony and drug offenders
- ▶ No evidence that benefit denial serves public safety
- ▶ Housing benefits, in particular can assist reintegration

Part III: Incentives for Employers

- ▶ Work Opportunity Tax Credit provides employers with tax credit for new hires of ex-felons up to a year from release
- ▶ Federal bonding provides \$5000 insurance against theft or embezzlement by employers with criminal records

Costs and Benefits

- ▶ General idea: move correctional costs from custody (expensive) to community supervision and intensive programming (cheap)
- ▶ Transitional services cost \$10,500 per parolee, yielding total cost of \$7.4 billion
- ▶ Over half paid for by reducing parole revocation
- ▶ Difficult to justify programs on purely cost-benefit basis, but cheaper than incarceration with little loss of public safety