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Abstract

Prior studies have explored the racial tension between Black men and police officers due to the racial injustices they face during police encounters. Racial stigmas also contribute to the negative experiences Black men often have during police interactions, in which notions of Black men as “criminals” or “violent individuals” can shape police officers’ perception of them. However, this study examines the significant impact internalized racial stigmas during police encounters have on Black men’s identity. Through interviews conducted with Black men enrolled in an alternative-to-incarceration program, this study provides insight on how racial stigmas impact Black men’s perception of themselves and their sense of masculinity when internalized, and the role police encounters play in these perceptions. Overall, this study demonstrates the influential powers both police encounters with NYPD officers and racial stigmas possess and their ability to shape Black men’s identity in the context of Black masculinity.