2013

Restoration of suffrage for California's ex-felons: Will they vote?

Genevieve Anne West

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RESTORATION OF SUFFRAGE FOR CALIFORNIA'S EX-FELONS: WILL THEY VOTE?

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Genevieve Anne West
June 2013
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June 2013

Approved by:

[Handwritten names and dates obscured]

Dr. Carolyn Eggleston, Program Administrator, Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator
The purpose of the study was to examine the knowledge of parolees regarding their voting rights. Further, the purpose of the study was to determine if ex-parolees will vote once educated about their voting rights. In California individuals that have been released from parole are eligible to vote. This study surveyed 25 participants that graduated the Cal State Reentry Initiative and discharged parole. This study presents the quantified statistical results obtained from the data collected. The study some ex-parolees are not educated about their voting rights and do not read the section on their discharge card about re-enfranchisement. Once provided information about voting rights, the majority of the participants indicated that they will vote in future elections.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible if it were not for the willingness of the previously incarcerated to participate in this study. It is because of them -- my people, the prisoners -- and for them, that I write this today.

I would like to acknowledge the support my research advisor has given to me throughout this journey. Thank you Dr. Stanley Taylor.

Dr. Ray Liles you are an incredible social worker. You have modeled the way professionals are to act. I appreciate your help and input in this research project. Your insight and assistance helped me tremendously. I hope to be a professor like you one day. You are a role model to me.

Dr. Carolyn Eggleston, Elaine Zucco and the CSRI staff, thank you for showing me how to truly serve others. I sincerely appreciate your dedication and willingness to see this project through. You all are remarkable individuals. I admire you in many ways.

Dr. Rosemary McCaslin, you sparked the desire inside of me to conduct research. Thank you for providing the help I needed to formulate this project. Thank you for
encouraging me to go “full board”, and standing beside me
along the way.

Rachel Strydom, LCSW, my mentor, when I think of
you, I think of the famous quote by Wilferd Peterson:
“Walk with the dreamers, the believers, the courageous,
the cheerful, the planners, the doers, the successful
people with their heads in the clouds and their feet on
the ground. Let their spirit ignite a fire within you to
leave this world better than when you found it.” Rachel,
you are the dreamer, the believer, and the courageous.
You are the cheerful, the planner and the doer. You are a
successful person with your head in the clouds, and your
feet on the ground. You will leave this world, MUCH
better than when you found it. Your spirit has ignited a
fire within me. You have helped change my life. You
exemplify social work!
DEDICATION

First, I would like to acknowledge my personal savior and Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not for him reaching into the miry clay, I would not be where I am today.

Richard, my husband, my supporter, and the believer in my dreams. Thank you for loving me unconditionally, supporting me whole-heartedly, and sacrificing so I may achieve. You complete me. WE did it!

Mom and Dad you have taught me to work hard, love others, and dream big. A midst the storms and victories you have always been my number one fans. I love you.

Brother, and sister (in-law), thank you for the example you are to my life and always standing for righteousness. And thank you for my two babies.

You all have contributed to this project. I dedicate this to you.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Voting is a civil right given to the citizens of the United States. The only time this right is ever relinquished in California is if one is in prison, on parole, or serving at least one year in the county jail for a felony. The purpose of this study is to assess the knowledge of ex-parolees regarding their right to vote now released from parole. It will also explore the effects of disenfranchisement on parolees. It will discover the special interest social workers have to advocate for individuals that face social disparities such as voting.

Problem Statement

There are over 5.1 million people in America that have a criminal conviction and as a result, at some time of their lives, have been restricted from participating in the activities of democracy (American Civil Liberties Union, 2008). In the election year of 2000, 4,686,539 Americans were restricted from voting (Manza & Uggen, 2000). This is equivalent to one in every 41 Americans (Manza & Uggen, 2006).
California has one of the biggest prison populations in the United States (California Department of Corrections, 2010). At the end of 2009, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, there were 160,539 felons released from state prison on parole. In July 2010, there were 165,187 people in prison in California. Together, during the year of 2010, there were 325,726 individuals under state supervision. In perspective, the city of Ontario, California has a population of 163,924. Thus, there was twice the population of a whole city in prison or on parole in 2010 in California.

In California, felons can vote! This study will seek an answer to the question: how many ex-parolees know about their voting rights? Further, after becoming educated about their rights, will ex-parolees vote? If not, why not?

Collateral consequences, although not intended to be a punishment, potentially disconnect an individual from society (Manza & Uggen, 2006). Collateral consequences suffocate an individual's ability to function at the same level as others. Finding a job, safe housing, or attending school requires much more effort put forth than
the average person. Collateral consequences increase the rate of recidivism because these barriers wedge themselves between felon and society. Given these barriers, individuals in California are much more likely to return to prison. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (2010) has discovered that seven out of every ten prisoners released from prison return to prison within three years. It is estimated that nearly 67% of the recently released in California will again be returned to confinement (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2010).

Voting laws vary from state to state (Hull, 2006). The variances in voting laws contribute to the lack of knowledge individuals have concerning their rights. One would think, that because voting is a national right, there would be a national standard. This is not the case.

Social workers that provide direct service to clients and social workers that are involved in macro practice are interested in this issue. First, social workers as individuals advocate, empower and mobilize people that face societal oppression. The role of a social worker includes educating individuals about rights. Next, the social work community is invested in
societal empowerment. Social workers advocate for equal rights and expose discrimination. Social work believes in the dignity and worth of a person, and equality for all (NASW, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to survey the knowledge of ex-parolees regarding their voting rights. This study purposively discovered the ideas and perceptions of voting by previously imprisoned individuals. Based on the quantified results of the survey, ex-parolees' knowledge of their voting rights is shown.

Prisoners are underrepresented. There is limited research about this population in southern California. There is even more limited research and publications about the voting rights of this oppressed population. The limited research that is available are from the following disciplines: political science, criminal justice, education, and sociology.

Even though many disciplines have expressed interest in advocating for this population, the amount of professions that are fully dedicated to empowering felons
with their civil rights are limited. The duty of a social worker is to advocate for the "vulnerable, oppressed and those living in poverty" (NASW, 2008). Undoubtedly, felons fit into the population social workers empower.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

According to the Code of Ethics ethical standard 6.02, "social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public shaping social policies and institutions" (NASW, 2008). In addition, section 6.04 requires social workers to be involved with "social and political action.... to ensure that all people have equal access to...resources, employment, services and opportunities," and "expand equal choice and opportunity for all people" (NASW, 2008).

This project provided valuable information to social work professionals regarding the knowledge of ex-parolees and their voting rights. The results of this study could help social workers of all specializations, policy reformists, and social activists.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction
Within the entanglement of felon disenfranchisement are many different entities that comprise, and oppose the separation between person and state. Throughout the literature review, the progression of disenfranchisement and the consequences brought about by this oppression are explained. People of color suffer further because minorities are overrepresented in prison, and underrepresented at the voting polls. The literature also accounts for the role of social workers and their charge to advocate for marginalized populations. Other grassroot organizations share similar interests and have enlisted in this endeavor of equal voting rights for all.

History of Disenfranchisement
Barring criminals from voting dates back to medieval European history (Fellner & Mauer, 1998). Disenfranchisement happens when an individual becomes disconnected from society as a result of their voting rights becoming relinquished (Mauer, 2002 & Ewald, 2002).
Disenfranchisement is intended to act as a deterrent to crime. In medieval history it was an ultimate and extreme consequence. In ancient Greece, according to Alec Ewald (2002), criminals faced certain sanctions including the inability to appear in court, cast a vote, make public speeches, and join the armed forces. The Roman Empire practiced similarly because they also banned individuals from voting as part of the sentence of a crime. In the Renaissance era, individuals that were guilty of "outlawry" were also bared from voting (Itzkowitz & Oldak, 1973, p. 721-722). As history progressed and England emerged as a country, the government adopted the same disenfranchisement practices as Greece and Rome. English citizens that were convicted of crimes lost all legal and civil rights (Ewald, 2002).

When the English colonists settled in America they brought with them ideologies of their government (Ewald, 2002). Individuals with property and higher civic status were provided more rights. Individuals with less status had fewer rights (Ewald, 2002). Criminals had nearly no rights at all (Ewald, 2002).

It was a common practice that voting eligibility was based on a series of tests. One of the protocols for
voting eligibility was a review of one's criminal records (Hancock, 1996). Originally Alabama, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Virginia were the only states with laws specifically prohibiting criminals from voting. From 1831 through 1866, more states began to follow. These states are: California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin (Hancock, 1996).

In 1868, the Fourteenth Amendment was created. The purpose of the Voting Act of 1868 was to maintain equal voting rights for all citizens (Hull, 2006). The Equal Protection Act had adverse consequences as the second section of the bill gave States the rights to withhold voting from criminals (Hull, 2006). In 1974, Richard v. Brown was introduced to the Supreme Court. The decision of this case gave the States the ability to constitutionally segregate felons from voting. As we have it today, a person's ability to vote, in some states, is contingent on criminal convictions.
Disenfranchisement as a Matter of Race Inequality

The organization "The Sentencing Project of Washington D.C." believes disenfranchisement laws disproportionately affect minorities and their communities. The project maintains that African Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population, yet 37% of felons in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Justice (2003), the rate of incarceration for African American men is seven times than that of white males. The U.S. Department of Justice (2003) also asserts that African American males have a 28.5% chance of becoming incarcerated at some point in their life. These statistics show that because there is a large portion of felons that are African American, there is automatically an underrepresentation of this population at the voting polls. Uggen and Manza (2006) maintain that 38% of individuals who are not able to vote are African American.

Disenfranchisement laws also impact Latinos. Latinos comprise 13% of the U.S. population and 16% of the state, federal prison and jail population (Beck, Harrison, & Karberg, 2002). The Mexican American Legal Defense and
Education Fund (MALDEF) found that Latinos are severely affected by disenfranchisement laws, however the extent of the harm and effect is not known due to the lack of research that has been completed (Demeo & Ochoa, 2003).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

The social contract theory is based on principles formulated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. These social constructs influence the theoretical framework of democracy (Hull, 2006). The basic tenant of the social contract theory is that individuals whom live within a community agree to give up a portion of their individuality and freedom in exchange for a government that will protect them (Hull, 2006). The theory includes consequences for individuals that break the contract. These consequences include losing their power, which is directly related to their ability to participate in decision-making, specifically democracy (Hull, 2006). However, according to the social contract theory, the consequence is to be fitting of the crime. Elizabeth Hull (2006, p. 52), proposes this question in regards to the social contract theory fitting disenfranchisement: “how many citizens would in fact sign
a contract knowing that a single transgression could deny them any future say in their own governance?"

Collateral Consequences

Disenfranchisement is a collateral consequence. Collateral consequences are the long-term consequences of conviction beyond the sentence itself (Hull, 2006). Collateral consequences include "disenfranchisement, deportation, loss of professional license, felon registration, inability to serve on a jury, not able to run for public office, restrictions on traveling and joining the military, restrictive parental rights, not possessing firearms and the loss of one’s protection against search and seizure" (American Bar Association, 2004) Jeremy Travis (2002) relates collateral consequences to invisible punishments.

During the twentieth century, the goal of punishment was to produce an end result of rehabilitation (Pinard, 2010). Time in prison is supposed to have an effect on the offender enough to create change. And change is supposed to cause the individual to reintegrate successfully when released from prison.
Benefits of Enfranchisement

Disenfranchisement increases offenders' feelings of "alienation, stigmatization, and humiliation" (Siegel, 2011, p. 90). On the opposing side, suffrage facilitates positive reintegration (Dhami, 2005). Empowering ex-parolees with voting fosters unity between felons and the community. Uggen, Manza, and Thompson (2006) state that it is difficult to perform the duties of citizenship (work, pay taxes) while being denied other rights.

Enfranchisement is about much more than voting in itself. Hull (2006, p. 45) asserts that that "regaining the vote has enormous symbolic importance because it signifies that one is again entitled to the same rights and privileges that other members of the community enjoy".

The restoration of voting rights is not going to affect the individual that is still involved in criminal behavior. But, the restoration of voting rights can potentially contribute to the growth of ex-parolees who have become contributing members of society and wish to further exercise their civic responsibilities of voting.
Attitudes on Disenfranchisement in the United States

Manza, Brooks, and Uggen (2004) conducted a study regarding public attitudes toward felon disenfranchisement in the United States. The first survey was conducted by telephone with a random sample of 1,000 people, each over 18 years old. The survey questioned whether or not probationers, parolees, or prisoners should be able to vote. Sixty percent of the surveyed population believed probationers should be able to vote, 60% believed parolees should be able to vote, and only 31% believed presently incarcerated prisoners should be able to vote. The second group was asked about the voting rights of those that had specific types of violations. The crimes were broken into four different sub-types. The sub-types were based on crime. The crimes are: "baseline" (no reference to specific crime), "white-collar ex-felon" (e.g.: illegal trading of stocks), "violent ex-felons" (convicted of violent crime), and "sex crime ex-felons" (convicted of sex crime). The baseline ex-felon received most support; 80% of the surveyed individuals endorsed their rights. Sixty-three percent believed white-collar offenders should have voting rights restored, 66%
supported violent offenders, and 52% supported sex-offenders. The study shows "with regard to ongoing political debates, the findings suggest little support for the assumption that the American public consistently supports the disenfranchisement of felons and ex-felons who are not currently incarcerated" (Manza, Brooks, & Uggen, 2004, p. 293).

Where Can Felons Vote?

The inconsistency among states regarding the voting rights of felons greatly influences the knowledge of felons regarding their own rights. There is not a universal voting law. According to The Sentencing Project, Iowa, Florida, Kentucky and Virginia have permanent disenfranchisement. Once a conviction is imposed, an individual's voting rights are lost forever. Arizona, Delaware, Mississippi, Nevada, Tennessee, and Wyoming have laws requiring individuals to apply to have voting rights restored. Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin have laws that allow suffrage to
be granted on completion of parole or probation. California, Colorado, Connecticut, New York, and South Dakota allow individuals to vote while incarcerated in county jails, on probation, or discharged from parole. In these states, all felons can vote once they are released from supervision. The District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Utah have allowed voting rights to be restored automatically once released from prison. Maine and Vermont have no disenfranchisement laws.

Enfranchising California

In 1972, California Rural Legal Assistance and The League of Women Voters petitioned the government regarding the issue of the Fourteenth Amendment and disenfranchisement laws. The case Brown v. Ramirez (1974) originated in California. This case has significant impact on felon voting laws. The ruling on this case made it acceptable to deny felons suffrage in California. Two days after the decision was reached, California Assemblyman Julian Dixon sponsored Assembly Bill 1128, that eventually turn into Proposition 10. In 1974,
Proposition 10 brought felon disenfranchisement to the voting ballot. It passed, and led the way for criminal rights in California. Proposition 10 exemplifies how California has started the process of moving away from a criminal justice system based on punitive crime policies (Campbell, 2007).

Key Players and Reform Groups in the Fight for Enfranchisement

After the election year of 2000, disenfranchisement became an area of exploration within the national media. Publications such as The Washington Post, the Christian Science Monitor, the St. Petersburg Times, the Minneapolis Star Tribune, the New York Times, and USA Today have published editorials supporting the idea of political advocacy for ex-felons (Hull, 2006).

Special interest and reform groups partnered with the idea of empowerment and began to organize for equality. This movement flourished on a national and local level. The Sentencing Project, Human Rights Watch, American Bar Association, and The American Law Institute have denounced the idea of maintaining a barrier between felons and voting rights (Hull, 2006).
Because disenfranchisement disproportionately affects people of color, specific organizations have undertaken the charge. These organizations include American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Association of Community Organizations for Reform (ACORN), The Lawyer’s Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Hull, 2006).

In California, local grassroot organizations have continued to demonstrate a willingness to participate in advocating on behalf of ex-felons and ex-parolees. These organizations include All of Us or None, Equal Voting Rights for All, Friends Outside, Su Voto Es Su Voz, Cal State Reentry Initiative and a New Way of Life.

Summary

Collateral consequences disconnect an individual from society. The loss of voting rights is a collateral consequence that many felons face in the United States. The idea of barring individuals from voting as a result of criminal conviction is deeply rooted in world history. Fortunately, in California, ex-parolees are able to vote!
Enfranchisement fosters growth between individual and society and contributes to positive reintegration.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, the methods of research is explained. The research question and the purpose is furthered. The sampling methods is explored. The modality of data analysis is given.

Study Design

The research question "do ex-parolees know that they are able to vote?" guides the study design. The research question explores the knowledge of ex-parolees, and their willingness to participate in democracy. This quantitative study seeks to find out how many ex-parolees know about their voting rights, and will vote. Additionally, there was one open-ended question that allowed for feedback about the participant’s thoughts of voting.

Sampling

The sample was composed of 25 adults ranging between 24 and 62 years old. Represented in the sample were the following ethnicities: African American, Hispanic, White
and Other. Both females and males participated in the survey. The qualifications for individuals to participate in this study were the participants had to have discharged parole and graduated from Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative focuses on providing services to serious, violent and sexual offenders to increase community safety and decrease recidivism. Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative is located in San Bernardino, California.

Data Collection and Instruments

This researcher designed the one instrument provided to the participants. Both nominal and ordinal levels of measurement were used. The survey contained ten questions. Seven of the ten questions related directly to voting. The other three questions were related to participant demographics.

Procedures

The data was gathered from phone interviews of graduates from Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. A list of telephone numbers was provided to
the investigator. Every individual on the list was called.

Before the survey was administered, an informed consent was provided to potential participants. If the individual was willing to participate, the researcher provided the survey. After the survey, the individual was provided the opportunity to retrieve additional information about voting rights from the Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative.

Protection of Human Subjects

To protect the identity of the research participants this researcher collected the data. There is no identifying information attached to the surveys. The completed surveys and analyzed data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed within five years after the completion of this study.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data retrieved from the surveys was analyzed and the variables counted were demographics, and voting patterns. SPSS calculated the measures of central tendencies, standard deviation, and frequencies. A chi
squared was used to determine the statistical associations of the variables.

Summary

This chapter explained how the implementation of an anonymous survey measured the knowledge of ex-parolees regarding their voting rights. It identified the sample, collection procedures, the protections of human subjects, and the use of SPSS to analyze the quantified data.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Analysis of the data is shown in this chapter. Descriptive statistics of 25 participants are provided. A presentation of the findings includes the mean, standard deviation, and frequencies of variables. The results of chi-squared tests are presented.

Presentation of the Findings

Twenty-five subjects participated in this study. One participant chose not to answer the question regarding age. Out of the 24 provided responses to the question "how old are you?" the range of ages are between 24 and 62 years. Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation. The mean age of the participants is 42.70 years. The standard deviation is 10.58.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Age

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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>42.7083</td>
<td>10.57676</td>
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Table 2 shows the gender of the participants. This study had 21 male participants (84%), and three (12%) females. One (4%) participant did not identify his/her gender (Table 2).

Table 2. Demographic Table of the Gender of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>87.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the ethnicities of the participants. Four participants (16%) identified their ethnicity as Caucasian. Seven participants (28%) identified their ethnicity as Hispanic. Nine participants (36%) identified their ethnicity as African American. One participant (4%) identified their ethnicity as "other". Four participants (16%) did not identify their ethnicity.
Table 3. Demographic Table of the Sample Percentage and Frequency of Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>95.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 provides details on how many prison terms each participant had completed. The frequency of individuals that had served one prison term is 11 (44%). The frequency of individuals that had served two prison terms is seven (28%). One individual (4%) had served three prison terms. One individual (4%) had served four times. The frequency of individuals that had served four prison terms is two (8%). The frequency of individuals that has served five prison terms is two (8%). The frequency of individuals that had served six prison terms is 2 (8%). One individual (4%) chose not to answer. The
mean number of prison terms served is 2.25. The standard deviation is 1.67.

Table 4. Frequency and Percent of Prison Terms Completed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>79.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing System</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the answer to the question "Have you ever voted in a city county, state, or federal election?" Eighteen of the respondents (72%) stated they had not. Seven (28%) said they had voted in a city, county, state or federal election in their lifetime.
Table 5. Frequency and Percent of Sample that Have Voted in an Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked the question, "Did you know that after you were released from parole you were able to register to vote?", fourteen (56%) respondents did not know (Table 6). Eleven (44%) respondents did know they were able to register to vote.

Table 6. Frequency and Percent of Sample that Know About Their Voting Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked the question, "Did you read the section on your discharge card about your voting rights?", 21
(84%) respondents had not read the section on their discharge card (Table 7). Four (16%) respondents read the section on their discharge card about their voting rights.

Table 7. Frequency and Percent of Sample that Read Voting Rights on Discharge Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked the question, "Do you know how to register to vote in a city, county, state or federal election?", eleven (44%) responded that they do not know how to register (Table 8). Fourteen (56%) respondents said they do know how to register to vote in a city, county, state or federal election.
Table 8. Frequency and Percent of Sample that Know how to Vote in a City, County, State or Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked, "Will you vote in a city, county, state or federal election?", seven (28%) respondents said they will not vote (Table 9). Eighteen (72%) responded that they will vote. The respondents that stated they will not vote were asked the following open ended question as a follow up: "If you will not vote, why not?" The responses were: "corrupt and dishonest politicians" (Survey 1, April 2013), "I don't believe in it" (Survey 2, April 2013), "I don't care that much" (Survey 3, April 2013), "no one to vote for" (Survey 4, April 2013), "I realize it is important, but I will most likely be doing other things" (Survey 5, April 2013), and the "wrong person wins" (Survey 6, April 2013).
Table 9. Frequency and Percent of Sample that Will Vote in a City, County, State, or Federal Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi-squared test determined there is no significance between the group of individuals who said they had never voted and the group that said they would vote in the future.

A chi-squared test determined there is no significance between individuals who indicated they had read their voting rights on their discharge card, and their desire to vote in the future.

A chi-squared test determined there is no significance between ethnicity and voting. However, out of the three defined ethnic groups the following patterns emerged from the respondents: three Caucasians said they will vote in the future, one will not; six Hispanics said they will vote in the future, one will not; seven African
Americans said they will vote in the future, two will not.

Summary

More than half of the respondents indicated they did not know about their voting rights after being discharged from parole. The results demonstrated that ex-parolees often do not read the section on their discharge card about their voting rights. The majority of the respondents indicated they do know how to register to vote for a city, county, state or federal election. The majority of the respondents say they will vote in a city, county, state or federal election in the future. There was no significance between having read the rights on the discharge card, and voting in the future. There is no significance between ethnicity and voting.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter includes a discussion about the survey results. The limitations of the research are discussed. Included are implications for forensic social work and future research.

Discussion

The findings of the study support the question guiding the research project: how many ex-parolees know about their voting rights? Further, after becoming educated about their rights, will ex-parolees vote? The frequencies found from analyzing the data demonstrate that some ex-parolees are not educated about their voting rights, and thus have not voted after becoming discharged from parole. Out of 25 respondents, fourteen did not know that after discharged from parole voting rights were reinstated. However, the data gathered from the instrument showed the majority of respondents intend to vote now educated about this right. Eighteen respondents intend to vote in a city, county, state or federal election.
An idea for further research is to add more questions to a survey. Follow up, open-ended questions would provide further data and give the researcher more insight. Follow up questions could include, "Why did you not read the section on your discharge card about your voting rights?", "Has anyone in your family ever voted?", "How did you learn about your voting rights?", "What is the highest grade of school that you have completed?"

Another idea for further research would be to conduct a similar survey during an election season. The survey could have two parts. First, a survey could gather general data about the knowledge of voting rights, and seek to educate the participants about re-enfranchisement. The next part of the survey could be administered after the participant has voted. It could gather information about how the participant felt after voting. The results of this survey could potentially show how empowering voting could be to this marginalized population.

Another idea for further research is to conduct a longitudinal study. The longitudinal study could form two groups. One group could be composed of individuals who have never voted. One group could be composed of
individuals who, after discharged from parole, vote. The study could examine the recidivism rates of both groups and could possibly show the group that voted had lower rates of recidivism.

Limitations

This study had limitations that could affect the data that was analyzed and given. First, the small sample size of 25 participants is not a large enough sample to represent the number of individuals that have been discharged from parole in California. In addition to the small sample pool, not all individuals answered each question. Therefore, certain responses have even less than 25 responses. This limitation makes for an even smaller sample.

A limitation to this study was the lack of statistical significance between variables. This may have been due to the relatively small sample size and the fact that the discharged parolees in the sample were all from the same intervention program. It may be that a larger sample more representative of the overall population of discharged parolees in California would detect relationships between the variable that were studied.
All of the participants of this study graduated Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative educates individuals about issues such as voting rights. Because the respondents that participated in this study have received education, they may be more likely to know about their voting rights. It may be that if a sample of discharged parolees was collected from individuals that were not involved in such a program the number of respondents that know about their voting rights would be significantly lower.

This researcher was required to receive permission from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in order to survey current students of Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. This researcher did not receive approval for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to conduct research with the current participants at Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. This is a limitation because this researcher had access to fewer participants.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

This research provides recommendations for social work practice, policy and research. The lack of knowledge
this marginalized population has about their inherent civil rights suggests much more needs to be done in regards to education, empowerment and advocating.

First, it is recommended that social workers educate individuals about their voting rights. The responses to the survey question “Did you read the section on your discharge card about your voting rights?”, suggests that writing about the reinstated right on the discharge card is not an effective way of educating ex-parolees.

Next, the collateral consequences ex-parolees face could be disempowering. However, one collateral consequence that is restored after discharge from parole is voting. Social workers must take advantage of the opportunity they have with clients to empower them about their civil rights which include the right to vote. Social workers may want to consider becoming involved with such programs such as Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. The focus of Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative is to empower and educate parolees about their rights, and ability to assimilate into society. Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative inhibits the core values of social work.
Next, social workers must continue to advocate on a macro level for the rights of the formerly incarcerated. According to the NASW Code of Ethics (2008) the social work professional reaches out to those who are "vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty." The formerly incarcerated are a part of this group. During this study, it became apparent that there is a lack of social work research and publications regarding the rights of the formerly incarcerated and how social workers may assist in advocating for this population. Social workers may want to consider further research regarding felon disenfranchisement and the affects it has on an individual. Social workers may want to consider advocating for social policy change regarding disenfranchisement of currently incarcerated individuals. Social workers may want to initiate a movement focused on restoring the civil rights of ex-parolees outside of California.

Conclusions

This research project demonstrates that disenfranchisement continues to clench the lives of individuals even after being released from parole and
voting rights reinstated. Disenfranchisement is rooted within world history. Today, many years later after disenfranchisement began, it continues to affect the lives of many individuals.

In California ex-parolees can vote! The question guiding this study, "Do ex-parolees know about their voting rights?" was answered by surveying 25 participants. It was discovered that 72% of the participants did not know about re-enfranchisement. It was also discovered that the section on the discharge card explaining reinstated voting rights was not read by most (84%) of the participants. The study showed that 72% of participants will vote in a city, county, state, or federal in the future.

Some of the limitations of this study included a small sample size and California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation not giving permission to conduct research with current parolees at Cal State San Bernardino Reentry Initiative. Approval from California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation would have resulted in a larger sample size. A larger sample size could have produced more significant relationships between variables.
Further research could discover more specific details regarding ex-parolees and voting. This researcher suggests that additional questions could be added to a survey. The questions could include family voting history, ideas for educating ex-parolees about voting rights, and reasons why individuals have not read their discharge card. The data collected from these questions could provide implications for further social work practice.

This researcher suggests that social workers should seek to educate, empower and advocate for the rights of the previously incarcerated. First, an implication for micro social work practice is to educate individuals about their voting rights. Next, social workers should empower individuals with this civil right. And last, social workers should advocate on a macro level for re-enfranchisement rights including policy reform and community organizing.
APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMED CONSENT

Hello, my name is Genevieve West a student at California State University, San Bernardino. Your number was provided to me by Cal State Reentry Initiative because you have graduated the program and are off parole. I am calling you regarding your possible participation in a study. The purpose of the study is to survey the knowledge of ex-parolees about their voting rights. This study is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Stanley Taylor, Assistant Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. There are ten questions involved in the survey. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you would like to participate in this study you are able to answer as many questions as you want. You may stop answering the questions at anytime. Your name or any other identifying information will NOT be put on the survey. After the survey is completed, it will be stored in a locked filing cabinet inside of an office for further protection. The survey will take no longer than five minutes to complete. There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study. A benefit of this study is to identify the needs of ex-parolees. If you have any questions about the research or your rights as a subject in this study you can contact Dr. Stanley Taylor, Assistant Professor at California State University, San Bernardino. He can be contacted at (909)537-5584. The results of this study will be available for review December, 2013. The results can be viewed at the Library of California State University, San Bernardino and Cal State Reentry Initiative in San Bernardino, California.

Would you like to participate in this study?

Yes.... If yes then proceed to survey.
No..... If no then hang up.
APPENDIX B

SURVEY
Survey

Please circle the answer that you most agree with.

1. Have you ever voted in a city, county, state or federal election in your lifetime?  
   Yes  No

2. Did you know that after you were released from parole you were able to register to vote?  
   Yes  No

3. Did you read the section on your discharge card about your voting rights?  
   Yes  No

4. How many prison terms have you done? __________

5. Do you know how to register to vote in a city, county, state or federal election?  
   Yes  No

6. Will you vote in a city, county, state or federal election?  
   Yes  No

7. If not, why not? _________________________________

Ethnicity: ______________________
Gender: _______________________
Age: _________________________

Developed by Genevieve Anne West
APPENDIX C

INFORMATIVE STATEMENT
Informative statement

Thank you for participating in the survey conducted by Genevieve West, a student of Dr. Stanley Taylor, Assistant Professor at California State University, San Bernardino.

If you are interested in any aspect of this research study or have any questions, you can contact Dr. Stanley Taylor by telephone (909)537-5584, or by email staylor@csusb.edu.

The results of this study will be available for review December 2013. The results can be viewed at the library of California State University, San Bernardino or at Cal State Reentry Initiative, San Bernardino, California.

If you would like further information on how to register to vote please visit Cal State Reentry Initiative where there will be a flyer with details on how to register to vote.
APPENDIX D

INFORMATION ON VOTER REGISTRATION
Flyer

Requirements to Register to Vote

To register and vote, you Must:

- Be a citizen of the United States of America;
- Be a resident of California;
- Be at least 18 years of age or older on or before the next election;
- Not be in prison, on parole or under post-release community supervision as a result of a felony conviction;
- Not be serving a sentence in county jail for the conviction of a low-level felony as defined by the Criminal Justice Realignment Act of 2011 (CJRA);
- Not be on probation as an alternative to serving the concluding portion of a sentence in county jail for the conviction of a CJRA-defined low-level felony;
- Not have been declared mentally incompetent by a court of law; and
- Not be serving a state prison term in a county jail under contract between state and local officials.

You CAN register and vote if you:

- Are in a local jail as a result of a misdemeanor conviction;
- Are in a county jail as a condition of probation when entry of judgment and sentencing have been suspended following a felony conviction.
- Are awaiting trial or are currently on trial and have not yet been convicted of a crime;
- Have completed parole or post-release community supervision for a felony conviction; or
- Are on probation, unless the probation is an alternative to serving the concluding portion of a sentence in county jail for the conviction of a CJRA-defined low-level felony.

How to Register to Vote

You are entitled to receive a voter registration form while in jail, but you must request that the Secretary of State’s office or your local county elections office mail a form to you. You must return your signed voter registration form to your local county elections office no less than fifteen (15) days before an election to be eligible to vote in that election. Voter registration forms and voting materials are available in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Vote by Mail

You must be registered to vote before applying for a vote-by-mail ballot. Incarcerated Californians may fill out a vote-by-mail ballot application and return the signed application to your local county elections office at least seven (7) days before Election Day.

Released From Custody

If you requested a vote-by-mail ballot but are released from custody before you receive your ballot, you can still vote. Just go to the polling place for your residence address or any polling place in your county of residence and vote by provisional ballot.

If you change your name, residence address, mailing address, or party preference you must complete and submit a new voter registration form to your county elections office.

Registration forms are available at most post offices, public libraries, city and county offices, the Secretary of State’s office, and online at www.sos.ca.gov
REFERENCES


Ramirez v. Brown, 12 Cal. 3d 912 (Supreme Court of California November 1974, 1974).


