Prisoner Reentry and the Problems of Employment

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Rates of Violent and Property Victimization and Incarceration, 1973-2000
Offense Type for Felony Convictions in State Courts, 1998

- Violent Offenses: 17.8%
- Property Offenses: 30.5%
- Drug Offenses: 33.9%
- Other Offenses: 14.4%
- Weapon Offenses: 3.4%
Prisoner Reentry

- Of the 2 million individuals currently incarcerated, more than 95% will be released
- Over half a million individuals are released from prison each year
- Nearly 35,000 individuals were released from Illinois prisons in 2003
The Case of Employment

- **Legal restrictions on ex-offenders**
  - occupational licensure
  - public sector employment

- **Criminal stigma**
  - employers are reluctant to hire individuals with criminal pasts
Matched Pair Test of Employment Discrimination

White
- C
- N
- 150 audits

Black
- C
- N
- 200 audits
Figure 6. The Effect of a Criminal Record for Black and White Job Applicants

- **Black**
  - Criminal Record: 5
  - No Record: 14

- **White**
  - Criminal Record: 17
  - No Record: 34
Policy Implications

- Availability of criminal background information
  - Private services
  - Expungement
  - Certificates of rehabilitation

- Assistance in transition from prison to home
  - Education and training
  - Intermediaries
  - Support and supervision
Number of drug-related admission to U.S. prisons

Source: Rand Drug Policy Research Center, June 2001
Figure 2.6. Annual Number of Drug Offenders Admitted to State and Federal Prisons, 1980-1997
Percent of State and Federal prisoners, by their most serious offense, 1980-93

Percent of prison inmates

- Violent: 45%
- Property: 26%
- Drug: 22%
- Public-order: 7%

Figure 3
Casualties of the War on Drugs

- The percentage of inmates in state prison for drug crimes rose from 6% in 1980 to 22% in 1993.
- Those in federal prisons rose from 25% in 1980 to nearly more than 60% in 1993.
- By 1990, a higher number of new prison admissions were for drug crimes than for violent crimes.
- The chances of incarceration following a drug conviction increased by more than 500 percent between 1980 and 1992.
- The average length of sentences nearly doubled.
Figure 5.4. Percent "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to Hire Applicants with a Criminal Record, by Context of Sanction

- Drug felony, prison sentence: 61.8%
- Drug felony, drug treatment: 73.2%
- Drug felony, intervening work experience: 70.2%
Figure 5.3. Percent "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to Hire Applicants with a Criminal Record, by Offense Type

- Drug offender: 61.8%
- Property offender: 31.0%
- Violent offender: 23.6%
“The Truly Disenfranchised”

Jeff Manza

IPR Acting Director and Faculty Fellow, Associate Professor of Sociology
Summary of State Disenfranchisement Regimes

- **No restrictions (2):**
  Maine, Vermont

- **Inmates only (14):**
  Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts*, Michigan, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah

- **Inmates, Parolees (5):**
  California, Colorado, Connecticut*, Kansas, New York

- **Inmates, Parolees, Probationers (15):**
  Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico*, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, Wisconsin

- **Inmates, Parolees, Probationers, Some or all Ex-felons (14):**

*NOTE: Starred states indicate greater complexity and/or recent change*
DISENFRANCHISEMENT IN 2000

• 4.7 million disenfranchised felons in the U.S. (2.3% of the voting age population)

• 1.9 million African Americans (8% of the African American VAP)

• Ex-felon estimates based on state-level exit data, adjusted for mortality and recidivism to avoid double-counting

• Jail inmates (excepted convicted felons) not included in total
Prisoner Voting Rights Around the World

Europe:

- **No Restrictions**: Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine

- **Selective Restrictions**: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Malta, Norway, San Marino

- **Total Ban on Current Prisoners**: Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Romania, Russia, United Kingdom

Elsewhere:

- **No Restrictions**: South Africa, Canada

- **Selective Restrictions**: Australia, New Zealand
States that Disfranchise

1. 14th and 15th Amendments (1868, 1870)
2. 19th Amendment (1920)
3. Civil Rights Act (1964) and Voting Rights Act (1965)
## Estimated Turnout and Party Preference of Disenfranchised Felons (National Results)

### Presidential Elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>% Dem.</th>
<th>Senate Elections</th>
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PUBLIC OPINION

Does the public support felon disenfranchisement?

• Two master trends:
  * rising support for civil liberties and civil rights
  * public support for harsh criminal justice policies
V. Percentage Supporting Enfranchisement of Probationers, Parolees, and Prisoners

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<th>Category of Current Felons</th>
<th>Percentage Supporting Enfranchisement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Probationers1 (N = 206)</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<td>Probationers2 (N = 228)</td>
<td>67%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parolees (N = 240)</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<td>Prisoners (N = 235)</td>
<td>33%</td>
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Percentage Supporting Enfranchisement of Generic and Specific Categories of Ex-felons

- Generic (N = 232): 80%
- White-Collar (N = 239): 63%
- Violent Crime (N = 247): 66%
- Sex Crime (N = 234): 52%

Category of Ex-Felons
INTERVIEW #1

- I think that just getting back in the community and being a contributing member is difficult enough.... And saying, “Yeah, we don’t value your vote either because you’re a convicted felon from how many years back,” okay? ... But I, hopefully, have learned, have paid for that and would like to someday feel like a, quote, “normal citizen,” a contributing member of society, and you know that’s hard when every election you’re constantly being reminded, “oh yeah, that’s right, I’m ashamed.” ... It’s just like a little salt in the wound. You’ve already got that wound and it’s trying to heal and it’s trying to heal, and you’re trying to be a good taxpayer and be a homeowner. ... Just one little vote, right? But that means a lot to me. ... it’s just loss after loss after loss. And this is just another one. Another to add to the pile. ... You can’t really feel like a part of your government because they’re still going like this, “Oh, you’re bad. Remember what you did way back then? Nope, you can’t vote.” (female prisoner, age 49).