

Claremont Colleges

Scholarship @ Claremont

Scripps Senior Theses

Scripps Student Scholarship

2020

Rural Prison Politics: The Impact of Correctional Facilities on Community Voting Behavior in California

Corey Smith

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarship.claremont.edu/scripps_theses



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#)

**RURAL PRISON POLITICS: THE IMPACT OF CORRECTIONAL
FACILITIES ON COMMUNITY VOTING BEHAVIOR IN CALIFORNIA**

By

COREY GLENN SMITH

**SUBMITTED TO SCRIPPS COLLEGE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS**

PROFESSOR VANESSA TYSON

PROFESSOR DAVID ANDREWS

DECEMBER 13, 2019

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my thesis readers, Professors Vanessa Tyson, and David Andrews, for their continued support and guidance throughout this process. In addition, I would like to thank Professors Thomas Kim and Mark Golub for always inspiring me and pushing me to think more critically. I hope this thesis can contribute to the growing scholarship on the negative impacts of the Prison Industrial Complex on our state.

Thank you to my parents and brothers for their continued encouragement and assistance. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to attend Scripps, for which I am deeply grateful.

And of course, thank you to my incredible friends and housemates in Claremont who have given me infinite love and support throughout this whole process and beyond. I feel extremely lucky to share this community with each and every one of you.

I. Introduction

Economic development during the late 20th century left agricultural and manufacturing based regions of the United States struggling to maintain a reliable sense of financial prosperity. Rural areas experienced devastating losses of economic stability due to shifts in the economy. After World War II, small towns relied on their involvement and investments in the industrialized sectors to maintain a steady stream of revenue. This prosperity, however, could not keep small-town America afloat due to the increasing reliance on a globalized marketplace and the gradual shift to a more factory-based, urban economy. With time, rural municipalities across the United States began seeking alternative means to inject financial capital to their local economies. The lack of local financial opportunities prompted small-town America to open its doors to the burgeoning prison system and the capital it could provide.

The steady and dramatic increases in incarceration during the “War on Drugs” developed a “correctional crisis” introducing an increasing demand for prison expansion in the United States. During the 1980s, the prison population skyrocketed as a result of the Reagan Administration’s “War on Drugs” and increases in tough on crime rhetoric. In 1980, The United States incarcerated approximately 500,000 individuals (Ebenstein 2018, 6). The prison population reached over 1.1 million in 1990 and steadily rose to more than 1.9 million in 2000 (Ebenstein 2018, 6). At the end of 2015, over 6.7 individuals were under some form of correctional control with 2.2 million incarcerated in federal, state, or local prisons and jails (US Department of Justice 2016).

These two phenomena – the gradual economic decline of small-town America and an extensive increase in prison populations across the nation – combined together to

create a situation in which struggling rural towns, to remain economically stable, became potential new building sites for prisons. State governments marketed prisons to these communities as a means for economic expansion and an advantageous way to address persistent poverty and out-migration. The prison-siting phenomenon created a system in which the economic expansion of rural towns relies on the continued imprisonment of individuals, regardless of the societal impacts of mass incarceration. There is considerable scholarly focus on incarceration-related issues, including the reinstatement of racial caste systems associated with incarceration and the faults of the justice system (Alexander 2011), but less research on the impact of prisons on the ideological leanings of their host communities. I intend to examine and analyze the political leanings of the communities that house a prison throughout my thesis. Scholars associated with issues surrounding prison populations, such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore, have remarked on the lack of a proper empirical method to analyze the impact of prisons on their host communities. Research on the impacts on rural communities remains minimal despite the fact that almost 70% of the new facilities built in the prison boom of the past 40 years are located in rural areas.

Throughout my thesis, I examine the ways in which the creation and implementation of a prison impacts local political behavior and public opinion. In completing my initial research, reflected in the literature review presented in this report, a town's proximity to prison is a significant indicator of the local population's perception of prison and the economic benefits it can provide. Whether or not those perceptions are good or bad varied based on location and study. My thesis seeks to answer a particular question: How does the building and operation of state correctional

facilities impact the political behavior of those living in the surrounding community? Specifically, I am curious if having a prison in town impacts the ways that local residents view the “prison industrial complex”. I initially hypothesized that the presence of a prison would negatively impact the opinions of mass incarceration, believing that such close proximity to a prison would make residents see all the faults and failures of mass incarceration firsthand. Instead, I learned that local opinions remain focused on economic benefits of prison construction and maintenance or remained surprisingly ambivalent to the issues surrounding mass incarceration (Engel 2007 & Martin 2000). The answers to my hypothesis will be helpful to better assess potential methods to mobilize rural voters to take a more concentrated role in the development of state-wide prison reform initiatives.

First, I discuss the relevant background information surrounding the United States prison system and the current state of the “prison industrial complex”. Following this, through an extensive literature review, I evaluate the current research on the impact of correctional facilities on their host communities. Section four explains my causal model and hypothesis and section five will introduce my research design and case studies. I follow the research design with a discussion of the limitations of using census data in this thesis and the strengths and weaknesses in my overall methodology. I conclude with a discussion of my data results and their significance.

II. Background: The Prison Boom & The Prison Industrial Complex

The term prison boom refers to the period in American history, beginning in the 1970s, when the number of prison facilities constructed tripled. In June of 1971,

President Richard Nixon declared a formal “War on Drugs”, dramatically increasing the size and scope of Federal drug agencies and instituting policies like mandatory sentencing. Upon the election of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, however, the United States saw dramatic increases in its incarcerated populations. Since the Reagan administration, the number of Americans incarcerated for non-violent drug offenses has risen from 40,900 in 1980 to 452,900 in 2017 (Sentencing Project 2018). This startling increase in incarceration rates led to massive prison developments throughout rural America.

Certain key terms require definition and description. The *Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)*, “describe(s) the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems” (Critical Resistance 2019). The PIC also incorporates the mutually reinforcing networks of probation, policing, court proceedings, and private entities that profit from transporting, feeding, utilizing prisoners as a cheap labor force, and detention camps. *Prison Placement* is the process associated with the political economics of prison construction within a town or metropolitan area, with particular attention paid to the role of civic leaders and local political elite in obtaining the facility. *Prison Proliferation* is the vast construction of prison facilities throughout the United States since the 1970s, especially in rural and nonmetropolitan areas. Lastly, *Prison Siting* is the process associated with the economics of prison building, with attention to the role of state agencies involved in selecting specific towns.

The increase in mass incarceration remains a crisis in contemporary America. Currently, the criminal justice system recreates racial caste structures supposedly ended

with repeal of “Jim Crow” laws. A noteworthy observation common across many analyses of incarceration rates are that the percentage in which crimes are committed crime has little to do with the skyrocketing of incarceration rates over the last 50 years (Alexander 2011, 12). While crime rates have fluctuated over the past 40 years, incarceration rates have remained at an all-time high. In *The New Jim Crow*, Alexander writes that, “rates of imprisonment -especially black imprisonment- have soared regardless of whether crime has been rising or falling in any given community or the nation as a whole” (Alexander 2011, 12). The War on Drugs and tough on crime movements policies initiated by the political leaders of the 1970s, 80s, and 90s are responsible for this startling inflation in incarceration rates. According to Mauer and King of the Sentencing Project, drug convictions have increased more than 1000% since the drug war began, an increase that conveys no relationship to patterns of drug use or sales (2007). These high rates of incarceration disproportionately impact black and brown men at alarming rates. In 2016, black Americans comprised 27% of all individuals arrested in the United States – double their share of the total population (Sentencing Project 2018). Due to these high rates of incarceration, millions of formerly incarcerated individuals, disproportionately black and brown men, are denied voting rights. In 2016, the United States disenfranchised a record 6.1 million Americans due to a felony conviction (Uggen, Larson, & Shannon 2016).

The rates of incarceration cannot be solely attributed to policies and laws developed by conservative lawmakers. One must also take into consideration the conceptualizations of racism by liberal-leaning lawmakers during the Civil Rights Movement (Murakawa 2014, 3). The rise in crime in the 1960s was not uniquely

racialized by conservatives to conflate the issues associated with civil rights with black criminality. Rather, white liberals responded to racial violence within the civil rights movement with assurances of the development of the carceral state (Murakawa 2014). The liberal notions of increases in crime as due to lack of opportunity and an adaptation to white racism not only reinforced condescending and distorted views of black Americans, but also prompted massive development of the punitive carceral state. According to Murakawa, democratic efforts to professionalize the United States' justice system as a response to inherent racial bias in policing actually contributed to said biased policing and imprisonment practices (Murakawa 2014). For example, the Clinton Administration's 1996 Omnibus Crime Bill, which expanded the death penalty and minimum sentences, was disproportionately applied to racial minorities within the justice system. Many of the so-called 'liberal' policies regarding community policing and sentencing guidelines have led to supplementary incarceration rates for longer periods of time handed down from judge to defendant.

III. Literature Review

Correctional facilities have become a surprising source of economic growth and subsistence for rural communities. By examining and analyzing numerous studies on prison siting and placements, it is clear to me that the choices surrounding the placement of said correctional facilities have had mixed impacts on communities. The literature discussed in this section helps to illuminate the diverse standpoints on the impact of prisons on the economic and societal identities of the towns where they are located.

Martin's article, "Community Perceptions About Prison Construction: Why Not in My Backyard?" (2000), explores community members' perceptions of prisons. His study utilized the Community Attitude Survey (CAS), a pre and post-assessment of the attitudes and perceptions of community and county residents about the impacts that the new prison will have (and have already had) on their respective lives. In the currently limited available material on the subject, researchers have used a variety of social and personal indicators to assess a prison's influence on their host communities. Martin examines an analysis that identified four differing categories of perceived concerns: family safety, the future financial value of the neighborhood, perceived quality of life, and neighborhood instability. Data sourced in Martin's analyses implies that those originally opposed to prison construction shifted towards more neutral positions as the perceived economic benefits from said construction began to materialize. Martin argues that assessments of prison impact should evaluate both objective factors (i.e. economic indicators) and subjective factors (i.e. attitudes, opinions, and perceptions) that may sway community members to adopting a noncombative political stance towards prison construction. Martin's study suggests that perceptions are less negative than expected from previous literature and popular discourse surrounding the PIC and Prison Placement.

A 2005 study also conducted by Martin called, "Public Response to Prison Siting: Perceptions of Impact on Crime and Safety" had three major findings. He concluded that prison opposition runs highest in the immediate area of a proposed correctional facility and declines substantially with lessened proximity (Martin 2005). In addition, Martin demonstrated the distinct lack of scholarship on the impact of 'prison visitors'

within prison siting literature. He argues that in cases of public resistance to prison siting, fear of visitors and the impact they could have on the community may be one of the driving forces behind opposition.

In a dissertation titled “When a Prison Comes to Town: Siting, Location, and Perceived Impacts of Correctional Facilities in the Midwest” (2007), Engel explores the impact of prisons on the communities that host them. Engel surveyed residents of six Midwestern communities that house a correctional facility to understand unfulfilled expectations. For many communities, the guarantees of constructing a prison in their town, such as increased jobs for example, have shifted the perception of these facilities to be something fought for rather than against. In terms of residents’ opinions of the prisons themselves and the perceived benefits that were supposed to come alongside the prison, most were generally disappointed in the lack of an economic boom as a byproduct of construction. Yet, the majority of respondents to Engel’s survey did not feel uncomfortable living with the nearby prison either.

Furthermore, Engel provides an extensive review of the literature on the Not in My Backyard phenomena (NIMBY). The NIMBY phenomena refers to one’s opposition to the positioning of a project considered undesirable by their own standards/ideology in their neighborhood or town. First adopted by lower-middle-income communities fighting for a greater emphasis on environmental justice issues in the 1970s, the term NIMBY has two distinct uses (Rodriguez 2017). The first refers to one’s stance against the construction of facilities and/or large-scale projects in a town while the secondary use centers around the implication of an absence of social conscience regarding the location of social-service facilities. NIMBY was first used academically in an article

discussing the resistance to liquid waste management proposals in Ontario (Farkas 1982). NIMBY rhetoric has the potential to transform from semi-well-intentioned complaints to statements saturated with implicit racism.

NIMBY ideologies masks racial superiority within the framework of ‘protecting’ one’s community. Said arguments are inherently racialized due to the stark contrasts between those housed within the prisons and those living in and around their neighboring communities. Within NIMBY debates, residents perceive certain facilities as a threat to their material welfare. Their reactions wholly reproduce an aura of white privilege. It is essential to question: protection from who and for whom? NIMBY rhetoric is dangerous in its subtle coded racial biases and ability to mask classist, racist, and/or xenophobia ideologies in the form of protest. Outside of prison siting, NIMBY dialogue is detrimental to the siting and operation of human service facilities such as homeless shelters and housing for people with developmental disabilities, for example. Through his surveys of eight different Midwestern towns, Engel demonstrated that prisons were not inherently undesired facilities that spurred a typical “Not in My Backyard response”.

Engel’s findings demonstrate a general trust for the local facility, and that many favored the prison to begin with. In Stanley, OK, a respondent wrote that, “[The prison] makes the community look more impressive, industrious,” and an Appleton, WI, farmer stated, “the prison put us on the map” (Engel 2007, 199). A retiree responded that “[He didn’t] care for the image it gives to people coming into Hillsboro – the fences, razor wire fences, the thought that people who have murdered children are living down the road” (Engel 2007, 200). Engel’s survey displayed that the dissatisfaction of residents

in Tecumseh, MI, the town with the most discontented residents, was not rooted in resentment of the prison itself, but rather in the lack of benefits that the prison afforded to the town, mirroring many of the same conclusions Gilmore came to in her research. Engel concludes by stating that, “it may be discomfoting to people opposed to the notion of more prisons, or maintaining those prisons already in existence, that residents of the Midwestern towns studied here generally did not oppose the prison in the first place. Thus, a potential source of resistance to prison expansion is no longer there” (Engel 2007, 220).

Gilmore’s *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007) examines the issue of mass incarceration specifically in California, arguing that the weakening of labor policies, shifting patterns of capital investment and the collapse of radical struggles have been key factors for the increased growth and influence of the PIC. Gilmore challenges many commonly held assumptions about who directly benefits and suffers from prison construction and expansion. Gilmore concludes that out of all the jobs offered by newly built prisons, less than 20% go to residents of the host communities. While over time that percentage increases, it remains below 40% for all of California’s new rural prison towns. By focusing on the specific percentage of those accepting jobs directly related to prison placement and their commuting distance, Gilmore demonstrates that many of the marketing strategies by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), such as the promise of increased job markets and job security, are not necessarily true and require further scrutiny.

In the fourth chapter of *Golden Gulag*, Gilmore discusses Corcoran, a town in California with a population of 24,000. Prior to the construction and opening of the state prison in Corcoran, residents mistakenly believed that the prison would undoubtedly jumpstart the town's sluggish economic growth. However, this was not the case. In the aftermath of the prison's opening, around 20% of the town formed an anti-prison coalition objecting to the building of a prison on the grounds that it would change the nature of their town (Gilmore 2007, 152). The coalition was afraid that incarcerated individuals would be able to devise elaborate escape attempts and enter their homes or that "the prison would bring along with its extramural trouble in the form of prisoners' families" (Gilmore 2007, 153). Gilmore's research into this coalition aligns with Martin's 2005 study on the impact of 'prison visitors' in public opinion of prison siting. These concerns suggest a negative association with both incarcerated individuals inside the prison and the placement of a prison within the boundaries of Corcoran. This unveils a distinct paradox surrounding the contrasting motivations of accepting a prison as a means to financial wealth and the adverse opinions of those individuals who will eventually populate the prison.

In the Corcoran case study, the CDC promised to employ hundreds of Corcoran residents to fill the necessary positions in maintain the prison constructed there. Yet in reality, "fewer than 10 percent of the jobs at the prison were filled by Corcoran residents; 40 percent went to residents within a stretched local labor market (75-mile radius) and 60 percent went to people from elsewhere" (Gilmore 2007, 159). The rural landscape allows for higher rates of commuting due to easily traversable terrain and the proliferation of amenities in neighboring urban areas. It is essential to recognize that

throughout the discussions surrounding the economic benefits of a community, policy makers and residents reduce individuals to carceral objects and numbers on pages rather than real people. In creating more and more prisons, the Department of Corrections is making rural economies reliant on the incarceration of other California residents, most often black and brown men. Gilmore's study aligns with my hypothesis of community members galvanizing against reform initiatives as a means to maintain populations of prisons full in order to hopefully secure some economic gains for the town as a whole.

“The Development of Last Resort: The Impact of New State Prisons on Small Town Economies” by Besser and Hanson (2014) examines the economic and demographic impact of new state prisons on small-town economies by utilizing census data collected in 1990 and 2000, respectively. While not as focused on the impact of prisons on public opinion, Besser and Hanson offer an interesting conclusion on the economic impacts of prisons. Their research attempted to deflate the fallacy that prisons represent a logical economic solution to distressed rural economies. Once controlling for the 1990 economic and demographic factors, region, prison age and prison population, their data concluded that new state prison towns experienced less economic growth than non-prison towns. Through their analysis, they examined whether cities affected by prison placement experienced the economic gains they expected would be concurrent with the construction and maintenance of a correctional facility. We must acknowledge the defects in relying solely on census data when researching towns that host a correctional facility. The Census Bureau counts incarcerated individuals in these towns as local residents during data collection. These incarcerated individuals have little to no income

and thus significantly pollute the data surrounding average income levels and percentages below the national poverty line.

Additionally, Besser and Hanson examined the impression of prison employment providing a stable and secure job market for host towns. Incarceration rates have recently begun to plateau (Gramlich 2018) and, due to this, have delayed the construction of new prisons. Formerly seen as ‘recession-proof’ jobs, prison employment is now subject to the same layoffs as public, private, and non-profit sector jobs. Besser and Hanson’s study reveals that small towns that built new state prisons in the 1990s experienced “higher poverty levels, higher unemployment rates, fewer total jobs, lower household wages, fewer housing units, and lower median value of housing units, when 1990 population and economic indicators, region, and prison age are controlled, than towns without a new state prison.” (Besser and Hanson 2004, 19). This offers a solid counter-narrative to the one that is often perpetuated by correctional departments attempting to market their facilities as economic drivers to potential host towns. This study illuminates faults within the economics of prison placement, calling into question the very reason for a town to house a correctional facility.

Both Gilmore and Besser and Hanson challenge the notions of who benefits from prison expansion and the PIC, demonstrating the lack of economic prosperity aligned with the building of a prison. In addition, Engel emphasizes that negative views associated with prison siting are heavily rooted in disappointment in lack of economic benefits. All three studies illuminate that heightened economic factors have a distinct and notable effect on community perceptions of prisons.

Big House on the Prairie follows John Eason's 2017 research on the rural prison industry. Conducting a case study of Forrest City, Arkansas, Eason studied the social, political, and economic shifts which motivated the United States to triple the construction of prisons over the course of 30 years. Eason argues that one must explain that the prison boom through the perspective of the rural southern towns most directly affected by their placement. *Big House on the Prairie* seeks to answer two broad questions: 1. What is the source of prison demand that propelled the prison boom and 2. How do prisons directly impact rural towns?

Chapter six of *Big House on the Prairie*, titled "The Prison in my Backyard: Reconsidering Impact", delves into the impact of prison siting on towns through the example of Forrest City, AR. Eason strives to make it clear that "understanding locals' perceptions of prison matters because community climate shapes future relationships between the institution and the community" (Eason 2017, 114). It is absolutely essential to recognize that positionality within society (i.e. race, class, and gender) impacts an individual resident's political ideology. Eason explains that, "while most people did not find the prison problematic, some believed the prison did not hire enough locals... When pressed, [local's] comments focused on the role of the warden in determining impact, the role of the prisoners in shaping the town's demographics, and reservations not so much about whether the prison provided a positive impact, but the degree to which it did" (Eason 2017, 119). In Forrest City, constructing a prison was viewed as a desperate option to help uplift a depressed economy. This enforces the established framework of prison placement as a viable means to improve quality of life affects how the locals perceive impact.

Additionally, Eason argues that prison placement in rural towns provides various perceived benefits for the community, independent of whether those benefits are substantial or long-term. In contrast with other literature available on prison impact, locals in Forrest City did not perceive the prison as a burden or nuisance. In fact, their chief disappointments lay in the fact that the prison did not live up to the ideals of its perceived ability to inherently fix their economic issues. Direct access to prison labor also impacts voting behavior. If residents directly benefit from the free (or almost free) labor costs of incarcerated individuals, they might be more likely to vote against any proposed reform initiatives to reduce the prison population.

There exists a distinct discrepancy in findings concerning the potential impacts of correctional facilities on their host communities. Gilmore's research singles out the perceived feelings of disappointment regarding promised economic growth whereas Randy Martin's research unpacked a surprising lack of strong feelings about the presence of a correctional facility; a direct contradiction to my initial hypothesis. Most of the studies demonstrated that economic factors have an extremely substantial impact on community perceptions of prisons. This literature review examined public opinions around correctional facilities but not how these opinions shape future political behavior and their associated actions. There is a distinct gap in the research that could have valuable implications for future research and public policy development.

IV. Causal Model and Hypothesis

This thesis examines and explores the relationships between prison construction, (the independent variable) and the voting behavior of those within proximity to an

existing prison (the dependent variable). ‘Prison reform’ in the context of this thesis, refers to any and all reform measures having to do with the prison industrial complex i.e. sentencing reform, bail reform, and/or prison condition policies. I initially hypothesized that the presence of a prison within a small rural American town would negatively impact the opinions of mass incarceration for residents, leading to a shift in political ideologies. I believed that such proximity would accentuate the numerous faults and failures of mass incarceration to the local community. Instead, previous research showed a complete contradiction of my initial hypothesis. Opinions within the host communities remained focused primarily on the promised economic mobility of residents (Eason 2017).

In more than half the articles I examined, the authors discussed the economic impacts of prison siting. Said economic research is extraordinarily prevalent to examinations of prison proliferation due to the heightened economic factors of the operations of prisons within rural economies. My revised hypothesis is that, due to the aforementioned economic influences, communities with correctional facilities are more likely to vote against prison reform as a means to maintain high numbers of incarceration, ultimately leading to sustained prison economies providing limited amounts of capital to these rural communities. These highlighted economic factors refer to the high levels of employment of community members within the correctional facilities. Several community members might be economically dependent on the continued incarceration of individuals in the correctional facility in their town. If this is the case: why would they ever vote on reforms to reduce incarceration numbers? For some, the benefits of prison economies might far outweigh the moral qualms of housing

a prison in their community. Thus, motivations or a lack thereof to vote progressively on prison reform measures could be based solely in economic incentives. Regardless of housing a prison in town, it is unlikely that residents will interact with incarcerated individuals unless they work within the facility itself. Without interactions with or information on incarceration, there is little to no guarantee that residents would ever consider voting in favor of for progressive prison policies if they had not done so in the past.

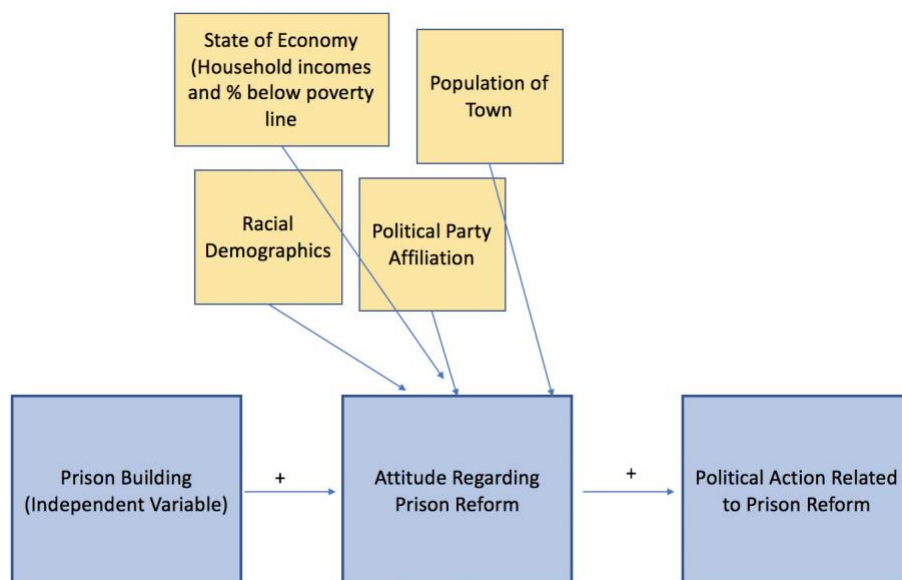


Figure 1

Figure 1 displays my initial causal model. The yellow boxes at the top of this diagram represent control variables: the state of the town’s economy, population, racial demographics, and political party affiliation. The blue boxes in this model represent my predicted relationship between prison building and political action related to prison reform. In my primary research for the literature review, I expected these factors to be noteworthy predictors of community attitudes regarding prisons. For example, if a

prison positively impacts a town's economy, residents would be much more likely to view said prison in a positive manner. I measure economy through the median income and the percentage of the population under the poverty line, a definition appropriated from census data. In addition, I measured race through the racial demographics listed on the census - with a specific focus on the percentages of white, black, and Hispanic or Latino of varying racial categories. I measure Political party affiliation via a community's state and federal representation: state senators, state assembly members, and congressional representatives. There is an initial expectation that towns with higher levels of poverty and unemployment are more likely to have had construction of a prison during the prison boom in the 1980s. Figure 2, is my revised causal model taking these factors into consideration.

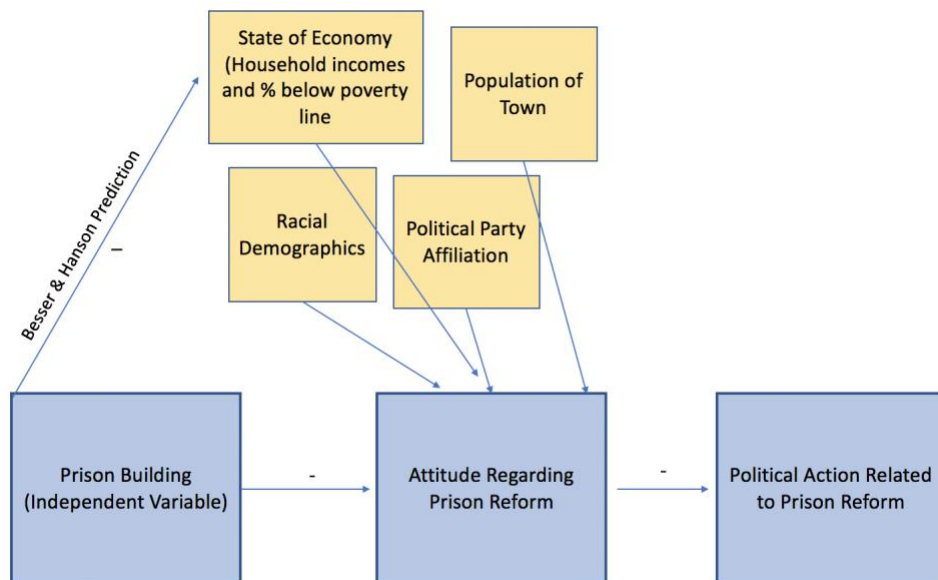


Figure 2

V. Research Design and Case Studies

To better understand the changes in political behavior, I compared the voting data of different rural California towns with and without prisons. My measurement of political behavior lies in the ways that these towns voted on various propositions that have to do with prisons. In Appendix A, there is a chart of many of the propositions in California since 1978 that have to do with corrections. Propositions like Prop 1 (1982) and Prop 17 (1984) are a select few of the many propositions that granted California permission to sell bonds to fund state correctional facilities. In order to situate the prison as a treatment in the experiment, the propositions had to be before the building of and after the placement and subsequent operations of the prison. The two propositions used to measure political behavior are Proposition 7 in 1978 and Proposition 47 in 2014. Proposition 7 (1978), also known as the Death Penalty Act, was a ballot proposition approved by the state of California that increased penalties for first and second-degree murder by expanding the special circumstances for life imprisonment or a death sentence. For this proposition, I am measuring progressiveness as a “no” vote. Proposition 47 (2014), titled Criminal Sentences, Misdemeanor Penalties, Initiative Statute, was a referendum passed by the voting population of the state of California in 2014. Proposition 47 reduced nonviolent and non-serious crimes to misdemeanors. Under this proposition, Judges will convict fewer and fewer Californians with the possibility of up to 1 million individuals having old nonviolent felony charges wiped from their records (Ross 2015). For this proposition, I am measuring progressiveness with a “yes” vote. In looking at these two propositions, it will be clear how the majority of residents perceive prison reform initiatives.

In choosing case studies, it was essential to have a broad geographic range of towns. The towns analyzed include: Crescent City, Ione, Chowchilla, Wasco, and Calipatria, all circled on the map of California prisons below. In comparing the towns to their matches, I control for population size, economy, racial demographics, and political representation. These are the most substantial factors when looking to match these towns with towns that do not have a prison. These factors will control for differences that would offset my data analysis. There is a comparison chart of all towns in Appendix B.

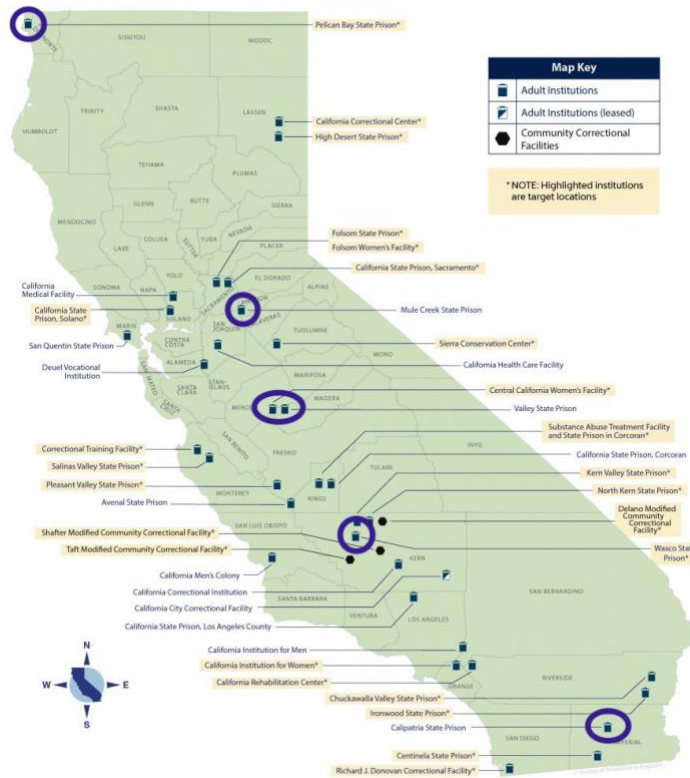


Figure 3

Map of all California State Correction Facilities. The blue circles denote the institutions and towns in my study. (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation 2019)

Crescent City houses Pelican Bay State Prison, the only supermax facility in California. Pelican Bay State Prison was built in 1989. The population of Crescent City

in the 2010 census was 7,643, including the 3,552 individuals in Pelican Bay, accounting for 46.5% of the population. The median household income was \$20,133 with 33.7% of families below the poverty line. In 2010, Crescent City was 66.1% white, 11.9% black and 30.6% Hispanic or Latino of any race. The control town matched with Crescent City is Fort Bragg, another northern coastal city with a population of 7,273. Fort Bragg's population is 78.8% white, 7% black, and 31.8% Hispanic or Latino of any race. In addition, the median income was 28,539 with 12% of the families below the poverty line. State Senator Mike McGuire (D-2), Assembly member Jim Wood (D-2), and Congressman Jared Huffman (D-2) represent both cities. Ione, a northwestern city, houses Mule Creek State Prison, the only California state prison exclusively for Sensitive Needs Yards individuals (SNY). Mule Creek State Prison was built in 1987. The population of Ione in 2010 was 7,198 with 4,160 incarcerated, over half the city's population. The median household income was \$40,625 with 9.3% of families below the poverty line. In 2010, Ione's population was 73.6% white, 10.4% black, and 25.1% Hispanic or Latino of any race. Ione's matched town is Jackson, with a population of 4,651. In 2010, Jackson's population was 87.9% white, 0.7% black, and 11.2% Hispanic or Latino of any race. State Senator Andreas Borgeas (R-8), State Assembly member Frank Bigelow (R-5), and Republican Congressman Tom McClintock (R-4) represent both cities.

Chowchilla, in central California, is home to two California correctional facilities: Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) and Valley State Prison, built in 1990 and 1995 respectively. CCWF is the largest female correctional facility in the United States. The population of Chowchilla in the 2010 census was 18,720 including

the 7,403 incarcerated individuals (39.5%). The median household income was \$30,729 with 16.5% of families under the poverty line. In addition, in 2010, the population of Chowchilla was 61.6% White, 2% black, and 37.8% Hispanic or Latino of any race. State Senator Anna Caballero (D-12), State Assembly member Frank Bigelow (D-5), and Congressman Jim Costa (D-20) represent Chowchilla. The control town for Chowchilla is Firebaugh, with a population of 7,549. In 2010, Firebaugh's population was 62.5% white, .9% black, and 91.2% Hispanic or Latino of any race. The median household income in 2010 was 31,533 with 20% of families under the poverty line. State Senator Anna Caballero (D-12), Assembly member Joaquin Arambula (D-36), and Congressman Jim Costa (D-20) represent Firebaugh.

Wasco, a city in the San Joaquin Valley, houses Wasco State Prison. Wasco State Prison was built in 1991. The population in Wasco in 2010 was 25,213 with 4,520 of those individuals incarcerated, 18% of the population. The median household income in 2010 was 28,997 with 24.3% of the families below the poverty line. Wasco's 2010 population was 49.2% white, 7.6% black and 76% Hispanic or Latino of any race. Wasco's matched town is Arvin with a population of 19,304. In 2010, Arvin's population was 53.1% white, 1% black, and 96.6% Hispanic or Latino of any race. State Senator Melissa Hurtado (D-14), Assembly member Rudy Salas (D-32), and Congressman TJ Cox (D-21) represent both cities. Calipatria, a city in the Imperial Valley of Southern California is home to Calipatria State Prison. Calipatria State Prison was built in 1992. Calipatria has a population of 7,705 with 4,164 (54%) of that number being incarcerated individuals. The median household income in 2010 was \$60,962 with 2.4% of families under the poverty line. Calipatria's matched town is Holtville,

which has a population of 5,939. Holtville's population is 61.5% white, 0.6% black, and 81.8% Hispanic or Latino of any race. State Senator Ben Hueso (D-40), State Assembly member Eduardo Garcia (D-56), and Congressman Juan Vargas (D-51) represent both cities.

I carefully selected these towns based on their potential to display changes in political behavior. They represent a broad geographic range, spanning from the top of the state to the bottom. All of the towns have populations under 50,000, and all but two have populations under 10,000, qualifying them as non-urban areas. In an ideal study, all the towns and cities housing a correctional facility would be placed into a random generator to account for the bias in selecting certain towns. This ideal was unmanageable in this study due to a distinct lack of voting data from certain Californian cities.

Following this page, is a visual representation of the research design. The pre-test column is measured through the voting behavior on Proposition 7 in 1978 and the post-test column is measured through the voting behavior of Proposition 47 in 2014. The last column is the most noteworthy. The results are measured in percentages of progressivity. The final number is the change in progressivity, measured in a percentage.

Experimental and Control Group	Pre-Test (Proposition 7 in 1978)	Treatment (building of a correctional facility)	Post-Test (Proposition 47 in 2014)	Results (% change in progressivity)
Prison Town (Crescent City, Ione, Chowchilla, Wasco, Calipatria)	O1	X	O2	O2-O1=De
Non-Prison Town (Fort Bragg, Jackson, Arvin, Holtville)	O3		O4	O4-O3=Dc

VI. Limitations of Census Data and The Extrapolation of Multiple Dynamics

There are significant limitations in the use of census data when analyzing prison towns. The census tallies incarcerated individuals as legitimate residents in the city in which the correctional facility is located. This skews the publicly available data available regarding the demographics and population of the town. Prison populations are constantly shifting and changing with the arrival and departure of new inmates and staff members. In Ione, California, over 50% of the town's population is incarcerated in Mule Creek State Prison. This will create a significant statistical bias on any data regarding the town itself. There is a distinct lack of information regarding why those incarcerated are only counted in the population or if all of their demographics (i.e. race,

socio-economic status) are also reported in the census. This skews the matching of prison and non-prison towns in this study.

The Census Act of 1790, also referred to as the Enumeration Act, established the “usual residence” rule to enable the Census Bureau to determine where people live for purposes of counting the population. When Congress passed the Census Act of 1790, the population count was only relevant in determining the state population to allocate congressional representation. At the time, the prison population of the United States was relatively small, a drastic comparison when examining today’s incarceration rates. With the unparalleled growth of incarceration in the last 50 years, reliance on census data has grown increasingly more complicated. The inclusion of incarcerated individuals for state and local legislative redistricting fails to acknowledge that most of the individuals counted are from far away locales, where they are likely to return post-incarceration. A prison cell should not qualify as a residence - a prison itself seems permanent, but the individuals living inside of it are not. In “The Geography of Mass Incarceration: Prison Gerrymandering and the Dilution of Prisoners’ Political Representation”, Ebenstein explains that, “by relocating a concentration of disenfranchised citizens from primarily urban areas to rural areas where they do not have a representative accountable to their interests, the combination of felony disenfranchisement and prison districting severely disrupts representational democracy” (Ebenstein 2018, 335). The Census Bureau’s decision to continue counting incarcerated individuals as residents of the towns in which they are incarcerated fundamentally disrupts the ideals of American democracy that the census itself is based on.

Furthermore, felony disenfranchisement disproportionately impacts black and brown communities when compared to white communities. This practice of counting incarcerated individuals, stripped of their ability to vote, augments the population count where the prison is located. For example, Ione's incarcerated population is over half of the city's population (52.5%). This simultaneously increases the voting strength of these towns while diluting the voting strength of the home communities of the incarcerated. As demonstrated in the comparison charts in Appendix B, a majority of prison towns are often in more rural and predominantly white areas. This is a stark contrast to the disproportionately high numbers of incarcerated individuals who people of color. This shift in power from urban to rural areas alters legislative appointment and apportionment of political power.

In addition to faults in the census data, there is a distinct issue in the attempt to extrapolate the dynamics happening simultaneously and subconsciously regarding political behavior. It is extremely difficult to create studies that can successfully and accurately measure racial animus and racial polarization and its impact on voting behavior. Race has always been extremely prevalent in American politics since the creation of this nation. In contemporary politics, Democratic and Republican voters do not merely disagree about what the government should do concerning racially charged issues, they now inhabit increasingly detached realities about race in America. The growing alignment between racial attitudes and public opinion has polarized the electorate and made American politics increasingly malicious.

Because current systems of incarceration are so distinctly tied to racism and racial capitalism, attitudes about prison are saturated with attitudes regarding race. It is

difficult to *actually* extrapolate partisanship, racial resentment, crime attitudes, and prison attitudes. How can we separate tough on crime conservatism, racial resentment, and ideologies of positive prison impact? National voting experts, scholars and the United States Supreme Court have all struggled with the question: What does racial resentment look like and how can we use data to inform this? How can researchers truly measure implicit attitudes regarding race? The most feasible option is the use of a survey in measuring political opinions, but without a robust survey system, it is extremely difficult to deduce this information. In addition, it is challenging to know if survey respondents are being truthful regarding their ideas (i.e. lying about racist attitudes). There is not enough information from census and polling data to really offer a causal dynamic regarding racial animus and politics. This research attempts to align with the current and ongoing discussion of measuring racial animus in politics.

VII. Strengths and Flaws in Methodology

There are significant flaws in the methodology of this study. If the results demonstrate that the individuals in towns changed voting habits, it is not undoubtedly because of the treatment. The classic research design contains four components: comparison, manipulation, control, and generalization. These allow researchers to draw conclusions concerning the causality and generalizability of the study. Comparison is necessary to offset covariation.

To measure covariation, one must evaluate the results regarding the dependent variable before and after the independent variable or compare the group exposed to the independent variable with one that is not. In this study, I offset covariation with the matching of the towns that house correctional facilities and those that do not.

Manipulation is vital in order to offset time order concerns. It is necessary to show that the change occurred only after the introduction of the independent variable. The building dates of the prisons in the case study towns differ, but none are before 1978. Therefore, by using Proposition 7 in 1978 and Proposition 47 in 2014, this study accounts for time order. Although accounting for time order, the 36 years between the two propositions allows for possible complications with the data. There could be a purely generational difference in the voting habits of the individuals living there. Discussions of prison reform are far more prevalent in today's political climate, with politicians calling attention to their plans to help diminish mass incarceration. In addition, there is no way to account for the in and out-migration of residents. It is possible that those who voted in 1978 have moved out and those voting in 2014 have just moved in.

Furthermore, California has continued to get more and more progressive with time which could possibly lead to more progressive votes regardless of the treatment. There are also countless other elements that affect voting behavior like racial prejudice and overall negative opinions of individuals who are incarcerated that, as stated above, are extremely difficult to measure. Moreover, even with discounting for all the issues within this research design, it is possible that people and attitudes simply change over time. Racial dynamics have drastically changed in California since 1978. In 1970, a majority of the counties in California were predominantly white (Reyes 2001), whereas in as of July 2018, only 36.8% of California was white, alone, not Hispanic or Latino (Census Bureau).

The third criterion of a classic research design is control. This requires the ruling out of other factors that could impact the observed association between variables. These factors could invalidate the supposition that the variables are causally related. It is possible that historical factors or maturation could impact voting behavior. The way in which this study attempts to control for other factors is in the matching of prison and non-prison towns. The matching of the towns based on extrinsic variables establishes that any differences found between the control and experimental groups cannot be due to the matched variables. A drawback of this matching plan is the lack of randomization within cases. I purposely selected every town based on location, demographics, and availability of data. In addition, because of the skewed nature of the census reports on racial demographics within towns containing a prison, the towns are not true matches. This could alter the success of the matching design, which would present issues for the control factors. The final component of the classic research design is the ability to generalize the results of the study. If the results prove to be internally valid, it could just be because of the specific sample. The research design lacks the ability to truly demonstrate a shift in voting behavior.

The matching of the treatment and control towns remains a large factor in the flawed nature of this methodology. Each town has its own personal history and, as much as the control factors can mitigate certain differences, it would be difficult to find perfect matches. It is possible that the financial crisis of 2008 gravely impacted some towns and not others. In addition, there is a lack of 1970 census data for the towns. The towns are well-matched via the 2010 census, but there could have been drastic shifts in demographics from 1970, not accounted for in this study.

	PRISON TOWN			CONTROL			Assessment of research hypothesis
	Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	difference over time with treatment (O2-O1)		Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	Difference overtime without treatment (O4-O3)
Total Ballots Cast	693	1,347		Total Ballots Cast	1116	1,457	
Votes for YES	479	572		Votes for YES	708	638	
Votes for NO	126	725		Votes for NO	203	754	
%progressive	18%	42%	24%	%progressive	18%	44%	26%

	CALIPATRIA			HOLTVILLE			Assessment of research hypothesis
	Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	difference over time with treatment (O2-O1)		Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	Difference overtime without treatment (O4-O3)
Total Ballots Cast	308	331		Total Ballots Cast	791	851	
Votes for YES	228	151		Votes for YES	419	677	
Votes for NO	80	167		Votes for NO	325	174	
%progressive	26%	46%	20%	%progressive	41%	80%	38%

	WASCO			ARVIN			Assessment of research hypothesis
	Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	difference over time with treatment (O2-O1)		Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	Difference overtime without treatment (O4-O3)
Total Ballots Cast	1798	1,899		Total Ballots Cast	933	577	
Votes for YES	1217	691		Votes for YES	565	333	
Votes for NO	322	1208		Votes for NO	215	244	
%progressive	18%	36%	18%	%progressive	23%	58%	35%

	CHOWCHILLA			FIREBAUGH			Assessment of research hypothesis
	Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	difference over time with treatment (O2-O1)		Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	Difference overtime without treatment (O4-O3)
Total Ballots Cast	879	1,964		Total Ballots Cast	551	702	
Votes for YES	653	821		Votes for YES	276	333	
Votes for NO	226	1085		Votes for NO	162	369	
%progressive	26%	42%	16%	%progressive	29%	47%	18%

	CRESCENT CITY			FORT BRAGG			Assessment of research hypothesis
	Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	difference over time with treatment (O2-O1)		Proposition 7 (1978)	Proposition 47 (2014)	Difference overtime without treatment (O4-O3)
Total Ballots Cast	748	851		Total Ballots Cast	997	1,697	
Votes for YES	526	465		Votes for YES	430	1178	
Votes for NO	222	332		Votes for NO	567	407	
%progressive	30%	55%	25%	%progressive	57%	69%	13%

VIII. Results

The electoral results are directly pulled from various county's statements of the vote for the general election in 1978 and 2014. The statements of the vote contain the total numbers of votes, "yes" votes, and "no" votes by city, allowing me to extract these numbers for each of the 10 towns listed within the diagram. On the far left is data regarding the town that houses a correctional facility, and the control town appearing parallel. The final column is the assessment of the data in regard to the research hypothesis.

For the first matched towns, Ione and Jackson, the percentages of progressivity were almost identical. In both towns, 18% of residents voted against Proposition 7, representing a progressive vote. For proposition 47, 42% of Ione's residents voted progressive compared to 44% of Jackson residents. Because the numbers are so similar, the treatment of the building and operation of the prison is not associated with a change in progressivity. This means that, in this case, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. For the towns of Wasco and Arvin, there is a distinct difference in voting behavior. Wasco resident's shift in progressivity is 18% whereas Arvin resident's shift is 35%. While both are approximately 20% progressive in their voting behavior around Proposition 7 in 1978, there is an ideological shift in the voting behavior of the city of Arvin for Proposition 47 in 2014. Arvin residents voted 58% progressive as opposed to Wasco's 36%. In this case, the treatment is associated with less progressivity, aligning with my hypothesis. In addition, the towns of Calipatria and Holtville align with my hypothesis as well. Holtville residents' change in progressivity is almost two times more than Calipatria's change in progressivity. The residents in Calipatria voted 26%

progressive in 1978 and 46% progressive in 2014, resulting in a 20% change in progressivity. On the contrary, the residents of Holtville voted 41% progressive in 1978 and 80% progressive in 2014, resulting in a 38% change in progressivity. This stark contrast reveals that the treatment in Calipatria is associated with less progressivity.

However, the cities of Crescent City and Fort Bragg suggest the opposite. Fort Bragg remained progressive for both Proposition 7 and Proposition 47, with 57% and 69% respectively. In contrast, Crescent city went from 30% progressive in 1978 to 55% progressive in 2014. The treatment is associated with more progressivity in this case. This aligns with my initial hypothesis. Finally, the cities of Chowchilla and Firebaugh had similar percentages of progressivity. The residents of Chowchilla voted 26% progressive in 1978 and 42% progressive in 2014, demonstrating a 16% change in progressivity. Similarly, the residents of Firebaugh voted 29% progressive in 1978 and 47% progressive in 2014, resulting in an 18% change in progressivity. In this case, the treatment is associated with no change in levels of progressivity, meaning I cannot reject the null hypothesis.

Two of the towns point towards a decrease in progressivity once receiving the treatment, one towards an increase in progressivity and two associated with no change, leaving the results inconclusive. Within the research design, population, racial demographics, economics, and representation are all accounted for. This use of control variables was an attempt to isolate the treatment in order to understand if it impacted voting behavior. In actuality, many other factors could impact how residents voted on these propositions. Local histories and interpersonal relationships to incarceration can impact voting behavior. For example, Wasco and Arvin are both towns heavily

dependent on agriculture and close to Bakersfield. The control factors line up except for a stark contrast in the racial demographics. While Wasco, the prison town, was 76% Hispanic or Latino of any race in 2010, Arvin, the control town, was 92.6% Hispanic or Latino of any race. It is possible that this difference impacted the voting behavior of these towns, accounting for why Arvin was 17% more progressive than Wasco. In addition, Crescent City and Fort Bragg are not perfect matches. In their match, the treatment was associated with more progressivity, with Crescent City being 12% more progressive. In 2010, 33.7% of families in Crescent City were below the poverty line in comparison with only 11.9% of families in Fort Bragg being under the poverty line. This could have impacted the ways in which they voted. Furthermore, the prison in Crescent City is a supermax facility, meaning that it has the most secure levels of security in any correctional facility. In Pelican Bay, almost 40% of incarcerated individuals are serving life sentences. Proposition 47 in 2014 changed a select amount of low-level, non-violent crimes from felony charges to misdemeanors. This shift in policy is unlikely to affect the individuals housed in Pelican Bay considering its supermax status. Therefore, it is possible that residents of Crescent City voted more progressive because this policy was unlikely to impact the prison in their town and their own prison economies.

The control city of Holtville displayed a 38% change in progressivity as compared to Calipatria's 20% change in progressivity. This demonstrates that the residents of Holtville voted almost two times more progressive than residents of Calipatria. In this case, the treatment was associated with less progressivity. In August of 2005, there was a violent uprising at Calipatria State Prison in which a guard killed 1

individual and 41 incarcerated individuals and guards sustained injuries. It is possible that this riot impacted the voting behavior of residents, skewing their views on incarceration. It is also possible that this did not impact behavior at all, the data does not explain the impact of local histories. Furthermore, the towns of Ione, Jackson, Chowchilla, and Firebaugh showed that the treatment was associated with no change in voting behavior.

The results of this study are inconclusive meaning that my data proved with little evidence that the null hypothesis is false. The final hypothesis in this study was that individuals living in communities with a correctional facility would vote less progressive for measures regarding prison reform. There is no credible evidence that the building and operation of a prison negatively or positively impact the voting behavior of individuals living in the same community. Furthermore, this solidifies that there cannot be confidence in the research hypothesis. It is notable that the results are inconclusive. There is no conclusion that the presence of a prison impacts the ways in which communities vote. A number of influences outside of the control factors in this study can influence voting behavior. In addition, personal histories with incarceration and prevalent dynamics such as racial animus could impact and heavily bias the ways in which individuals vote.

IX. Conclusion

My thesis aimed to illuminate my perceived discrepancies in voting behaviors of those living in communities that house a prison. Many studies I examined focused on this topic used survey data and interviews to assess public perceptions. These

methodologies have unfortunately resulted in conflicting conclusions. Martin, for example, demonstrated a lack of perceived impact of correctional facilities, whereas, Gilmore showed a strong resistance to the building of a correctional facility in Corcoran, CA. In addition, in most cases, like Engel's research, resistance or disappointment with the prison was rooted in economic concerns. For this study, voting behavior was the dependent variable used to assess perceptions of the incarceration system in California.

I chose to use five different case studies with control matches to assess these perceptions. I analyzed ten cities' distinct voting behavior through the voting data on Proposition 7 in 1978 and Proposition 47 in 2014. Finally, I interpreted the data gathered to display the percent changes in progressivity over time. Progressivity is operationalized in this way to better understand the differences in progressivity between the control and treatment cities. By looking at the percent difference over time with and without treatment, I was able to gauge if the treatment of the building and operations of a prison impacted the percent of progressive votes towards both propositions. In analyzing these percentages, it is clear that the results are inconclusive. Two of the towns examined displayed a decrease in progressivity once receiving the treatment, another towards an increase in progressivity, and two additional towns associated with no change. Regardless of the results, this study is still substantial and an important springboard for future policy conversations and research efforts.

It is imperative that more research focusing on the impact of prisons on respective rural communities be encouraged, especially as dialogues surrounding abolition become more prominent throughout today's political discourses. Furthermore,

it is essential for studies to recognize the issues rooted in the flaws in solely utilizing census data to make future determinations. Policymakers are corrupting the essence of American democratic processes by redrawing legislative districts around large prisons, shifting political power towards those with a vested interest in increasing incarceration rates throughout the nation. Until there are changes to the data collection methods of the census regarding its counting of incarcerated individuals, studies similar to mine will remain skewed and inconclusive. There is a distinct lack of information on prison gerrymandering that individuals could solve through community engagement and activism. Research into the impact of correctional facilities on host communities is still salient. As the rhetoric of abolition begins to gain traction, studies about prison communities will remain important in demonstrating how prisons impact everyone in our state. Research examining the impact of housing a correctional facility on the voting habits of Californians could be useful for political organizations hoping to better mobilize these communities to vote on more progressive measures focused on prison reform. If studies could eventually confirm that voting behavior surrounding criminal justice initiatives was rooted in economic motivation, activists and lawmakers could mobilize around other sustainable, rural industries to lessen the economic burden swaying votes.

In the future, this particular research design needs momentous changes in order to unearth significant results. There are numerous flaws in the methodology of this study that need revisions to obtain more substantial results. All the towns in California with a correctional facility should go into a random generator coded with multiple options for control towns to offset bias in town selection. Furthermore, individuals

aiming to study similar issues must account for and offset the issues within and solely using publicly available census data. Until there are meaningful changes in the census, this research design might not be able to be entirely significant or yield better results in the future. Likewise, if replicated, this study should expand to include all communities with correctional facilities in California in order to get as much data as possible.

In conducting this study, my final hypothesis was neither confirmed nor denied. My hypothesis stated that due to the heightened economic factors, communities with correctional facilities are more likely to vote against prison reform as a means to maintain high numbers of incarceration within their facility, ultimately leading to sustained prison economies. The data I uncovered neither confirms nor rejects my hypothesis; there is no proven relationship between my independent and dependent variables. Clearly, there are other factors that impact the ways in which individuals vote on prison reform policies, like personal histories with incarceration and personal values. My research design was defective in assessing the hypothesis. It needed to have broader scope and reach in order to accurately assess the impact of correctional facilities on political behavior. Nevertheless, my hypothesis remains the same. However, in order to fully test it, I must augment my research design. Not only would it require broader scope but would benefit from additional qualitative research. Examining the voting behavior in two distinct propositions does not truly demonstrate political ideologies. The addition of qualitative research methods could possibly confirm or deny the hypothesis if researchers tailed questions around issues regarding job security and personal ties to the correctional facility itself.

Nonetheless, the current system of prison building and operations in rural towns makes the economic stability and success contingent on the incarceration of individuals, usually from metropolitan areas of the state. This is vital research as California correctional policies begin to tackle issues within the prison industrial complex. There is a distinct lack of ability for scholars to measure and extrapolate multiple dynamics like tough on crime conservatism and racial resentment in researching these topics. This is the first step in expanding studies on public perceptions and interactions with the carceral state. We must engage those who work within and directly benefit from the prison system itself to begin the process of dismantling it.

Bibliography

- Abramsky, Sasha. *Hard Time Blues: How Politics Built a Prison Nation*. 1st edition. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2002.
- Alexander, Michelle. "The New Jim Crow." *Ohio State Journal of Criminal Law* 9:1 (2011): 20.
- Besser, Terry L. "The Development of Last Resort: The Impact of New State Prisons on Small Town Economies," n.d., 27.
- The Sentencing Project. "Big Prisons, Small Towns: Prison Economics in Rural America." Accessed March 24, 2019. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/big-prisons-small-towns-prison-economics-in-rural-america/>.
- Blankenship, Susan E., and Ernest J. Yanarella. "Prison Recruitment as a Policy Tool of Local Economic Development: A Critical Evaluation." *Contemporary Justice Review* 7, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 183–98. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1028258042000221184>.
- Bookspan, Shelley. *A Germ of Goodness: The California State Prison System, 1851-1944*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991.
- "Bureau of Justice Statistics - Key Facts at a Glance." Accessed October 28, 2019. https://www.bjs.gov/glance_redirect.cfm#corrections.
- "Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) - National Prisoner Statistics (NPS) Program." Accessed February 17, 2019. <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=dcdetail&iid=269>.
- Carlson, Katherine A. "Prison Impacts: A Review of the Literature," n.d., 25.
- . "Prison Impacts: A Review of The Research," n.d., 25.
- Council, National Research. *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences*. Edited by Jeremy Travis, Bruce Western, and Steve Redburn. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.17226/18613>.
- "Data.Census.Gov." Accessed February 18, 2019. [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/results/tables?q=prison%20g:0400000US06&g=0400000US06&tab=DECENNIALSEF12010.PCT20&ps=table*currentPage@1\\$app*page@1\\$app*from@RESULTS_ALL\\$banner*show@false](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/results/tables?q=prison%20g:0400000US06&g=0400000US06&tab=DECENNIALSEF12010.PCT20&ps=table*currentPage@1$app*page@1$app*from@RESULTS_ALL$banner*show@false).
- Eason, John. "Mapping Prison Proliferation: Region, Rurality, Race and Disadvantage in Prison Placement." *Social Science Research* 39, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 1015–28. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2010.03.001>.
- Eason, John M. *Big House on the Prairie*. University of Chicago Press, 2017. <https://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/B/bo25227153.html>.
- . "Reclaiming the Prison Boom: Considering Prison Proliferation in the Era of Mass Imprisonment." *Sociology Compass* 10, no. 4 (2016): 261–71. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12357>.
- Ebenstein, Julie A. "The Geography of Mass Incarceration: Prison Gerrymandering and the Dilution of Prisoners' Political Representation," n.d., 51.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. *Golden Gulag*. University of California Press. Accessed February 17, 2019. <https://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520242012>.
- Gramlich, John. "U.S. Incarceration Rate Is at Its Lowest in 20 Years." *Pew Research Center* (blog). Accessed December 10, 2019. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/02/americas-incarceration-rate-is-at-a-two-decade-low/>.
- Gutierrez, David. "Mass Incarceration In Rural Communities: Out of Sight, Out of Mind | Harvard Political Review." *Harvard Political Review* (blog). Accessed February 17, 2019. <http://harvardpolitics.com/united-states/48325/>.
- Hallinan, Joseph T. *Going Up the River: Travels in a Prison Nation*. 60684th edition. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003.
- Hinkes-Jones, Llewellyn. "Are America's Prison Towns Doomed?" CityLab. Accessed February 14, 2019. <http://www.theatlanticcities.com/jobs-and-economy/2012/02/are-americas-prison-towns-doomed/1177/>.
- Independent Lens. "How Do Prisons Affect the Places We Live?" Accessed January 31, 2019. <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/blog/prison-economy-how-do-prisons-affect-the-places-we-live/>.
- Huling, Tracy. "Building a Prison Economy in Rural America." PrisonPolicy.org. Accessed February 17, 2019. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/building.html>.
- Human Rights Watch. "United States - Punishment and Prejudice: Racial Disparities in the War on Drugs." Accessed October 28, 2019. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/usa/Rcedrg00-04.htm#P289_60230.

- Hyperakt. "People in Prison in 2018." Text/html. Vera, December 6, 2019. <https://www.vera.org/publications/people-in-prison-in-2018>.
- . "Understanding Jail Growth in Rural America." Text/html. Vera, June 16, 2017. <https://www.vera.org/blog/understanding-jail-growth-in-rural-america>.
- Jacobson, Michael P. "Crisis and Opportunity in California's Prison System." *Berkeley Journal of Criminal Law* 13 (2008): 319–26.
- King, Ryan Scott, Marc Mauer, and Tracy Huling. "An Analysis of the Economics of Prison Siting in Rural Communities." *Criminology & Public Policy; Hoboken* 3, no. 3 (July 2004): 453–80.
- Lichter, Daniel T., and David L. Brown. "Rural America in an Urban Society: Changing Spatial and Social Boundaries." *Annual Review of Sociology*, no. 37 (2011): 565–92. <http://dx.doi.org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150208>.
- Lofstrom, Magnus, and Steven Raphael. "Prison Downsizing and Public Safety: Evidence from California Downsizing Prisons: Policy Essays." *Criminology and Public Policy* 15 (2016): 349–66.
- MARTIN, RANDY. "Community Perceptions About Prison Construction: Why Not in My Backyard?" *The Prison Journal* 80, no. 3 (September 1, 2000): 265–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885500080003003>.
- Martin, Randy, and David L. Myers. "Public Response to Prison Siting: Perceptions of Impact on Crime and Safety." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 32, no. 2 (April 2005): 143–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854804272890>.
- . "Public Response to Prison Siting: Perceptions of Impact on Crime and Safety." *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 32, no. 2 (April 1, 2005): 143–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854804272890>.
- Moran, Dominique, and Yvonne Jewkes. "Linking the carceral and the punitive state: A review of research on prison architecture, design, technology and the lived experience of carceral space." *Annales de géographie* n° 702-703, no. 2 (June 24, 2015): 163–84.
- Morenoff, Jeffrey D., and David J. Harding. "Incarceration, Prisoner Reentry, and Communities." *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (July 2014): 411–29. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071811-145511>.
- Muradyan, David. "California's Response to Its Prison Overcrowding Crisis Review of Selected 2007 California Legislation: Government." *McGeorge Law Review* 39 (2008): 482–502.
- Murakawa, Naomi. *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Myers, David L., and Randy Martin. "Community Member Reactions to Prison Siting: Perceptions of Prison Impact on Economic Factors." *Criminal Justice Review* 29, no. 1 (May 1, 2004): 115–44. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073401680402900108>.
- Page, Joshua. *The Toughest Beat: Politics, Punishment, and the Prison Officers Union in California*. New York, N.Y., United States: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Perdue, Robert Todd, and Kenneth Sanchagrin. "Imprisoning Appalachia: The Socio-Economic Impacts of Prison Development." *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 210–23. <https://doi.org/10.5406/jappastud.22.2.0210>.
- Petersilia, Joan. "California Prison Downsizing and Its Impact on Local Criminal Justice Systems Symposium: Smart on Crime." *Harvard Law & Policy Review* 8 (2014): 327–58.
- . "California's Prison Policy: Causes, Costs, and Consequences." *Prison Journal* 72 (1992): 8–36.
- Porter, Eduardo. "The Hard Truths of Trying to 'Save' the Rural Economy." *The New York Times*, December 14, 2018, sec. Sunday Review. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/14/opinion/rural-america-trump-decline.html>, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/14/opinion/rural-america-trump-decline.html>.
- Press, Daniel R. Patmore/Associated. "So You Think a New Prison Will Save Your Town?" The Marshall Project, June 15, 2016. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2016/06/14/so-you-think-a-new-prison-will-save-your-town>.
- Prison Policy Initiative. "County Racial/Ethnic Overrepresentation." Accessed September 23, 2019. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/racialgeography/counties.html>.
- ResearchGate. "Prison Proliferation Project." Accessed March 25, 2019. <https://www.researchgate.net/project/Prison-Proliferation-Project>.
- Rasheed, Ashleigh T. "Impacts of Prisons in Rural Communities: Economic and Social Factors," n.d., 66.
- Reyes, Belinda I., Jennifer Cheng, and Public Policy Institute of California, eds. *A Portrait of Race and Ethnicity in California: An Assessment of Social and Economic Well-Being*. San Francisco: Public Policy Institute of California, 2001.

- Reynolds, Morgan O. "The Economics of Prison Industries: The Products of Our Prison." *Vital Speeches of the Day*; Chicago, November 1, 1996.
- Rodriguez, Cindy. "The Origin and Iterations of 'Not in My Backyard' | WNYC | New York Public Radio, Podcasts, Live Streaming Radio, News." WNYC. Accessed November 22, 2019. <https://www.wnyc.org/story/not-my-backyard-its-origin-and-iterations/>.
- Ross, Robert K. "Op-Ed: Four Ways to Make Black, Brown and All Lives Matter." Los Angeles Times, January 16, 2015. <https://www.latimes.com/nation/la-oe-0116-ross-california-reform-20150116-story.html>.
- Sentencing Project. "Criminal Justice Facts." The Sentencing Project. Accessed December 7, 2019. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>.
- "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences" at NAP.Edu. Accessed March 27, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.17226/18613>.
- Thorpe, Rebecca U. "Perverse Politics: The Persistence of Mass Imprisonment in the Twenty-First Century." *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 3 (September 2015): 618–37. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592715001218>.
- . "Perverse Politics: The Persistence of Mass Imprisonment in the Twenty-First Century." *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 3 (September 2015): 618–37. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592715001218>.
- Tootle, Deborah M. "The Role of Prisons In Rural Development: Do They Contribute to Local Economies?," n.d., 19.
- "WHEN THE PRISION COMES TO TOWN.Pdf." Accessed February 18, 2019. <http://dl.geodownload.ir/payan%20nameh/khareji/WHEN%20THE%20PRISION%20COMES%20TO%20TOWN.pdf>.
- Whitfield, Dexter. "Economic Impact of Prisons in Rural Areas," n.d., 26.
- Wilton, Robert D. "Colouring Special Needs: Locating Whiteness in NIMBY Conflicts." *Social & Cultural Geography* 3, no. 3 (January 2002): 303–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1464936022000003541>.

Appendix A: Propositions in California Regarding Corrections since 1978

Proposition	Year	What it did	Approved?
7	1978	Increased penalties for first- and second- degree murder and expanded circumstances for life imprisonment	Yes
17	1972	Reintroduced the death penalty after People v. Anderson (1972) abolished it	Yes
1	1982	Authorized the State of California to issue and sell \$495 million in state general obligation bonds to finance the construction, renovation, remodeling, and maintenance of state correctional facilities.	Yes
17	1984	Authorized \$300 million for construction, renovation, remodeling, and maintenance of state correctional facilities.	Yes
54	1985	Permitted the State of California to sell \$500 million in general obligation bonds to obtain funds with which to build youth and adult prisons.	Yes
89	1988	Gave the governor the authority to approve, modify, and reverse any decision by the parole authority regarding the parole of individual's sentences to an indeterminate term for committing murder.	Yes
80	1988	Bond issue of \$817 million to provide funds to expand capacity in the California prison system, including county jails and Youth Authority facilities.	Yes
139	1990	Proposition 139 amended the California Constitution to allow state and local inmates to perform work for private organizations.	Yes
184	1994	Three Strikes Law	Yes
21	2000	Increased a variety of criminal penalties for crimes committed by youth and incorporated many youth offenders into the adult criminal justice system.	Yes

36	2000	Changed state law to allow individuals convicted of non-violent drug possession offenses to receive a probationary sentence instead of incarceration.	Yes
66	2004	Proposed amendment to three-strikes law, required the third felony charge to be especially violent and/or serious to mandate a 25-years-to-life sentence.	No
5	2008	Expanded drug treatment diversion programs and parole rehabilitation programs, modified parole supervision procedures, allowed incarcerated people to earn additional time off their prison sentences for participation in rehabilitation programs, reduced certain penalties for marijuana possession.	No
36	2012	Adjusted the three strikes law – life sentence imposed only when the new felony conviction is serious or violent.	Yes
47	2014	Reduced nonviolent and non-serious crimes to misdemeanors.	Yes
57	2016	Increased parole and good behavior opportunities for individuals convicted of nonviolent crimes and allowing judges, not prosecutors, to decide whether to try certain juveniles as adults in court.	Yes

Appendix B: Information on Case Studies

2010	Population (non-institutionalized)	Racial demographics	Economy (median income and % under the poverty line)	Representation
Crescent City	5,404	66.1% White, 11.9% African American, 30.6% Hispanic, or Latino	\$20,133 33.7% of families and 34.6% of individuals below the poverty line	Democrat Mike McGuire, Democrat Jim Wood, Democrat Jared Huffman.
Fort Bragg	7,273	74.8% White, .7% African American, 31.8% Hispanic or Latino	\$28,539 11.9% of families and 20.4% of individuals were below the poverty line	Democrat Mike McGuire, Democrat Jim Wood, Democrat Jared Huffman.

2010	Population (non-institutionalized)	Racial demographics	Economy (median income and % under the poverty line)	Representation
Wasco	19,835	49.2% White, 7.6% African American, 76% Hispanic or Latino	\$28,997 24.3% of families and 27.5% of individuals were below the poverty line	Democrat Melissa Hurtado, Democrat Rudy Salas, Democrat TJ Cox
Arvin	19,304	53.1% white, 1% African American, 92.6% Hispanic or Latino	\$23,674 About 30.9% of families and 32.6% of individuals were below the poverty line	Democrat Melissa Hurtado, Democrat Rudy Salas, Democrat TJ Cox

2010	Population (non-institutionalized)	Racial demographics	Economy (median income and % under the poverty line)	Representation
Calipatria	3,559	41.7 White, 20.9% African American, 64.1% Hispanic or Latino	\$60,962 2.4% of families and 2.4% of individuals were below the poverty line	Democrat Ben Hueso, Democrat Eduardo Garcia, Democrat Juan Vargas
Holtville	5,939	61.5% White, .6% African American, 81.8% Hispanic or Latino	\$36,318 15.7% of families and 18.2% of individuals were below the poverty line	Democrat Ben Hueso, Democrat Eduardo Garcia, Democrat Juan Vargas

2010	Population (non-institutionalized)	Racial demographics	Economy (median income and % under the poverty line)	Representation
Ione	3,769	(3.6% White, 10.4% African American, 25.1% Hispanic or Latino	\$40,625 About 9.3% of families and 11.0% of individuals below the poverty line	Republican Andrea Borgeas, Republican Frank Bigelow, Republican Tom McClintock
Jackson	4,651	87.9% White, 0.7% African American, 11.2% Hispanic or Latino	\$35,944 About 4.1% of families and 8.3% of individuals below the poverty line	Republican Andrea Borgeas, Republican Frank Bigelow, Republican Tom McClintock

2010	Population (non-institutionalized)	Racial demographics	Economy (median income and % under the poverty line)	Representation
Chowchilla	7,409	61.6% White, 2% African American, 37.8% Hispanic or Latino	\$30,729 16.5% of families and 19.2% of the population were below the poverty line	Democrat Anna Caballero, Republican Frank Bigelow, Democrat Jim Costa
Firebaugh	7,549	62.5% White, .9% African American, 91.2% Hispanic or Latino	31,533 20.0% of families and 22.5% of the population were below the poverty line	Democrat Anna Caballero, Democrat Joaquin Arambula, Democrat Jim Costa

	Crescent City	Fort Bragg	Wasco	Arvin	Calipatria
Population in 1970	2,586	4,455	8,269	5,090	1,824

	Holtville	Ione	Jackson	Chowchilla	Firebaugh
Population in 1970	3,496	2,369	1,924	4,349	2,517