

How Social Stigma of Exonerated Individuals Influences the Compensations

Available

by

Marisela Gonzalez-Larrinaga

Submitted to the School of Liberal Studies and Continuing Education

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies

Purchase College

State University of New York

May 2021

Instructor: Alys Hantgan

Abstract

This research paper analyzes the role social stigma plays in post-exoneration compensations for wrongfully convicted people. Although at the preliminary stages, researchers are now analyzing the role social stigma has on financial compensations, social assistance programs, and statutory laws as it relates to exonerated individuals. In turn, the influence of stigma is viewed within the context of its effect on the reintegration process for exonerees. Since much of the research on this topic is provided through studies of legal scholars and social psychologists, I used the method of content analysis to discover how the exonerees themselves feel about the role social stigma played in their reintegration. Through the analysis of personal narratives and documentaries, I found similarities between my research and that mentioned in the Literature Review, (i.e. difficulty obtaining housing and employment and lack of social assistance programs,) although the exonerated individuals expressed different reasons for their reintegration difficulty. Exonerees name mental illness as a result of their unjust imprisonment, the lack of social assistance programs, and the strain their convictions caused on their families as the most difficult part of their post-exoneration life. I submit the differences, as to the influence of social stigma on re-integration between the scholarly research and content analysis, is a result of different vantage points between the exonerees who are living through the struggles and the researcher who are on the outside looking in.

Key Words: Wrongful conviction, social stigma, reintegration, compensations, social programs, re-entry, exonerated people, obstacles, barriers, post-exoneration

How Social Stigma of Exonerated Individuals Influences the Compensations Available

As a child in the early 1990's, the Central Park jogger case was at the forefront of national media attention. Although at the time, I could not fully appreciate the enormity of the case, I vividly recall my mother obsessively following the trials. In addition to the absolute heinous nature of the crime, the tender ages of the alleged perpetrators proved to be equally shocking. Five teenagers ranging in ages of 14 to 16 years old were charged and ultimately convicted of the rape and assault of Patricia Meili, a 28-year-old investment banker. As a result of their conviction, the teenagers dubbed "the Central Park 5" were sentenced to terms ranging from 5- 15 years in either a juvenile detention center or state prison, depending on their age. I was 17 years old when the central park five were legally exonerated and cleared from any involvement in the tragic case.

The Oxford dictionary defines exoneration as "the action of officially absolving someone from blame; vindication" ("Exoneration", 2021). Despite the happiness experienced upon release from prison, exonerated individuals face a plethora of difficulties stemming from their unjust incarceration. Issues such as financial hardship, housing instability, poor social support, and mental health issues make an already difficult situation more unbearable. The exoneration of the central park five piqued my interest in wrongful convictions and caused me to think more deeply about instances when our criminal justice system misses the mark. How could a system based on delivering justice get it so wrong? Can wrongful convictions be prevented? What does reintegration look like for the recently exonerated post-release? How can the harm of wrongful conviction be adequately remedied?

My interest in law is only outweighed by my curiosity in understanding why people behave the way they do. It is for this reason that I decided to pursue my Bachelor's Degree in Legal Studies and a Minor in Psychology. Law and Psychology, although two different fields, very much go

hand in hand and prove most helpful in identifying potential areas that require legislative reform. The goal of psychology is to understand human behavior and the goal of the law is to regulate said behavior. As societal needs change, the expectation should be that the laws will also evolve to accommodate these new norms. Both the fields of law and psychology are actively in play when discussing wrongful convictions.

While the topic of wrongful conviction has been heavily studied by legal scholars and psychologists alike, one aspect of wrongful convictions that I feel doesn't get enough attention is compensation, particularly how monetary and non-monetary compensations are determined for exonerated individuals. There are a variety of factors that should be considered when determining compensation in cases of wrongful conviction, however, there are various barriers to adequate compensation as well. This poses the question, how does the social stigma of exonerated individuals influence the compensations available to them? There are many inconsistencies in the compensation that exonerees receive. A major reason for the inconsistencies stems from the lack of statutes in place, nationwide, to outline clearly what is available to each exoneree. As a result, many exonerated individuals are forced to rely on private bills and litigation to recover damages. Researchers have argued that legislation to compensate exonerees can be derived from compensation statutes that are already in place to help other subsets of the population, particularly that of refugees. The experiences of refugees upon re-entry are said to be comparable to that of exonerees as both groups endure similar traumatic events (Goldberg et al, 2020).

I hope that the research found on this topic will help raise awareness of how society views exonerees and assist in ending the stigma. I think the most effective way to convey exonerees struggle to delve into their personal stories and utilize firsthand accounts of what the journey of reintegration has looked like. Perhaps by hearing these testimonies, society can understand that the

scariest thing about wrongful conviction is that it can happen to anyone. No one is immune. My hope is also that through education we can change the laws that are currently in place to create a more uniform compensation method for those who were unjustly robbed of their lives.

How Social Stigma of Exonerated Individuals Influences the Compensations Available

The National Registry of Exonerations (NRE, 2021) has now identified over 2,700 cases of wrongful conviction in the United States. While the rate of wrongful convictions is on the rise, the policies in place to right these wrongs have not kept pace (Norris, 2012). The conversation surrounding compensation for the wrongfully convicted is heavily researched and highly debated. One aspect, however, that doesn't get as much attention, is the influence social stigma has on the types of compensations available to exonerees. Although the public's awareness of wrongful convictions is growing, this does not translate to an increased awareness of inconsistencies in the administration of compensations and reentry services provided to exonerated individuals (Goldberg et.al, 2020). Research has shown that negative social stigma directly influences the civil damages awarded, the ability for exonerees to support themselves with adequate employment and housing, as well as other social support programs they qualify for (Connelly, 2019). Therefore, this review will focus on ways social stigma creates barriers for the reintegration of exonerees in monetary compensation, housing, and employment as well as statutory inconsistencies.

Literature Review

Monetary Compensation

An exoneree can seek compensation for a wrongful conviction through litigation, special legislation, and statutory means (Simms, 2016). Although the customary standard of determining damages should be moderately consistent throughout various factors, research has found that jurors

awarded considerably smaller damages to those who falsely confessed in the absence of coercion (Kukucka & Evelo, 2019). Findings show the need for automatically guaranteed aid for exonerees, noting that if aid is to be decided on a case-by-case basis, those exonerees who have been wrongfully convicted of a race-consistent crime will be at a disadvantage due to negative stereotypes that continue to skew the perception of the exoneree (Scherr et. al., 2018).

The just-world hypothesis is said to be the root cause of why people are more likely to shift blame to or doubt the true innocence of the victims of the injustice rather than look at the system as unjust (Zannella et. al, 2020). Similarly, people are more likely to judge a person with an element of control over their situation more harshly than someone who has no control over it. For example, a false confessor is viewed as having more control than someone misidentified in a lineup (Clow & Leach, 2015). Participants rated exonerees who falsely confessed most responsible for their conviction regardless of the presence of police misconduct or eyewitness misidentification (Kukucka & Evelo, 2019). To combat the bias surrounding false confessions, many legal organizations are proposing a policy that would allow the respective juries to hear (or read transcripts) of recorded interrogations of false confessors, whereby helping them better understand the circumstances under which the exoneree gave his/her confession (Kukucka & Evelo, 2019).

Social Support Programs

Although financial compensation can prove helpful for exonerated individuals, it is not on its own enough to assist in their post-exoneration struggles (Clow et. al, 2012). Lack of support programs for exonerees that were incarcerated during their teens and early adult years interferes with their ability to successfully reintegrate. This issue is largely ignored by statutory law (Norris, 2012). Clow and Leach found people perceive exonerees who falsely confessed as truly guilty, less intelligent, and less friendly than other exonerees (2015). Similarly, Scherr, Normily, and

Sarmiento found that racial stereotypes and race consistent crimes also are shown to lead to reluctance in believing the innocence of a wrongfully convicted person and in turn, will prevent support for reintegration programs (Scherr et. al., 2018). Many agree that a state-issued apology by the state responsible for someone's wrongful conviction can change the public's perception of the individual making others more inclined to help (Clow et. al, 2012).

One of the strongest indicators to the successful reintegration of exonerees lies in their ability to secure housing and employment. Many exonerees have difficulty obtaining employment as a result of the limited job skills and large gaps in employment history (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020). The experiment conducted by Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello involved hiring professionals tasked with reviewing applications from qualified candidates with no criminal history, exonerees, and ex-offenders. The research found that hiring professionals view exonerees just negatively as ex-offenders and desired to check more of the exoneree's references. In turn, the hiring professionals offered the exonerees a lower-paying salary than his counterpart without a criminal history despite their applications being otherwise identical (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020). Since their conviction is still visible to potential employers, exonerees still suffer the burden of their wrongful conviction with no assistance in place as they reintegrate (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020). As a result, policies such as "Ban the Box", (which will prevent a candidate from having to disclose criminal history until later in the interview process) are said to reduce the odds of discrimination and prejudice because the employer will have the opportunity to meet with the prospective employee before learning of their criminal history (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020). Research supports that in-person contact with exonerees results in a more positive impression (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020).

Similar sentiments were echoed in Zannella's experiment on housing discrimination for exonerees. The results of this study indicated that exonerees face housing discrimination similar to releasees, and are less likely to receive a response from a potential landlord than the general public, and if they did receive a response, was less likely to be told the apartment was available (Zannella et. al, 2020). Again in this instance, matters are further complicated by the status as exoneree disqualifying individuals from assistance programs reserved for ex-offenders (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020).

Statutory Compensation

Current statutes regarding exoneree compensation vary greatly from state to state. Analyzing the current state of statutory compensation shows that exonerees require more advocates to both create statutes in states that are lacking and expand the existing statute to include monetary and non-monetary support (Simms, 2016). The most common factors that are considered in determining compensation (outside of the length of time served) are the impact of the conviction on social relationships, character damage, crime severity, and age (Clow et. al, 2012). The primary focus of statutory compensations is financial recompense. Simms found that of the 30 states with compensation statutes, only 14 of them provide at least one of the alternate social supports proposed by the Innocence Project (Simms, 2016). Research also addresses the unnecessary obstacle presented by not including automatic expungement of the criminal charge in the process of exoneration. While the issue of automatic expungement is being worked on, states like Kansas have opted to provide exonerees with state-issued documentation of their innocence that they can present in the interim (Connelly, 2019).

Despite the provisions in place to assist exonerees, some exonerees are disqualified from seeking recompense. For example, the exclusion of false confessors from seeking compensation

inherently restricts the compensation of juveniles and the mentally impaired (Norris, 2012). Similarly, certain state laws have specifically excluded those with a criminal history or those who are deemed to have contributed their conviction by way of a guilty plea or false confession regardless of misconduct is present (Goldberg et al, 2020). Another barrier in seeking compensation is the short statute of limitations for filing the claim. Many states grant exonerees as little as 12 months to file a claim for compensation (Norris, 2012). Researchers agree that given the obstacles exonerees face establishing self-sufficiency post exoneration, it is unfair to be given such a short timeline to file suit (Goldberg et al, 2020). The push for a more comprehensive compensation package has led to effective reform in some states as it relates to legislation. For example, the new Kansas standard of compensation addresses key social supports, outside of financial compensation, that will greatly assist in the reintegration of exonerees (Connelly, 2019).

If there is anything my research has unveiled, it's that there are certain injuries that one is unable to quantify using solely mathematical formulas. The damage wrongful convictions cause to that person and their families are practically immeasurable (Connelly, 2019). Research has only begun to explore the various ways negative social stigma contributes to the difficulties exonerees face with obtaining adequate compensations necessary for successful reintegration. Understanding that wrongful conviction is an error made by the state, it is understandable to expect accountability on the state's behalf, however, this is often not the case. For my contribution, I would like to focus on the statutory laws surrounding compensations for the wrongfully convicted and how it sets the foundation for discrimination and negative bias to become socially acceptable.

Method-Content Analysis

The method I opted to use in my research was content analysis. I decided this method would best convey the emotional and psychological toll that social stigma has on exonerees. Content analysis is a research method that is used to determine the presence of particular terms, themes, and concepts within qualitative data. For this section, the content analyzed consisted of transcripts of exoneree experiences obtained through articles, documentaries, radio interviews, and lectures. The purpose of analyzing this data is to determine if the exonerees, themselves, viewed social stigma as having the same degree of influence on their difficulties with reintegration as the literature review indicated.

Materials:

The materials involved in my research were a laptop with internet access, Otter AI (an audio transcription site), a printer, and highlighters. I researched various wrongful conviction sites, such as The Innocence Project and Life after Exoneration, in search of first-person accounts that addressed the reintegration obstacles that many exonerees faced. Through my research, I was able to locate personal narratives of six exonerees who recounted various aspects of difficulties they faced with reintegration post-exoneration. The exonerees that I researched are Mark Schand, wrongfully convicted of murder and served 27 years in a Massachusetts prison, Jeffrey Deskovic, wrongfully convicted of rape and murder at the age of 17 and served 16 years in a New York State prison, Michael Anthony Williams who at 16, was wrongfully convicted of the rape and beating of his 22-year-old tutor and served 24 years before DNA evidence exonerated him, Gregory Counts who at 18 was wrongfully convicted of rape and kidnapping which resulted in him serving 26 years in prison, Calvin C. Johnson, wrongfully convicted of rape and released by DNA evidence after serving 16 years in a Georgia prison and Marvin Reeves, wrongfully convicted of murder

and served 21 years before being exonerated as a result of the discovery of gross misconduct on behalf of Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge.

Procedures:

Once I had the audio recordings transcribed I printed out all my data for easier analysis and note-taking. I read through all the articles and transcripts I used the analysis technique of coding, where I reviewed the transcripts exhaustively. Next, I highlighted specific aspects mentioned regarding their adjustments to reintegrating to life outside of prison. I paid close attention to things like self-sufficiency, social and family support, mental health, and compensation. I highlighted the relevant portions of the data and after similarities in various accounts presented themselves, I grouped those accounts.

Results

Mental Health

The results of my research found that exonerees struggle greatly with mental health issues post-exoneration. Jeffrey Deskovic (pictured below) experienced great difficulty adjusting to his



new life outside of prison. Suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, he had a hard time learning how to adapt to the new world that is so different from the one he left behind. "Sometimes," he said one morning in his dorm room, "I feel that the only difference from here to

prison is that I don't have bars on my windows" (Santos, 2007). Gregory Counts echoes similar

sentiments stating "The craziest part of reintegration is that you are finally free to go anywhere and you have nowhere to go. . . .As soon as we park the car I run inside and go straight to my room. I'm comfortable in my room. I'm not going anywhere" (Vice video). Similarly, Marvin Reeves explains "On the outside, you are on your own." stating "When you come from captivity and are thrust into freedom, it's a shock. You almost forget how to survive in the real world." (Davis, 2011).

Many exonerees report difficulty believing they are free and have nightmares of waking up in prison. Others, like Michael Williams, report being unable to sleep in the dark and having to keep the lights on while they sleep. Hypervigilance is another common side effect of incarceration. This has led to anxiety in highly populated areas, difficulty cultivating social relationships, and a general difficulty in everyday life. Mr. Counts explains that seeing a large group of people coming towards him, such as the morning rush on the train, causes him to fear bodily harm. "They are just rushing on their way to work, but in prison when a crowd is coming at you. They could want to shank you." He adds "If I get on the elevator with a little old white woman, I am more scared than she is because I know what can happen. It has happened to me." Mr. Williams describes the difficulty adjusting to the sounds of the outside world, explaining how prison has resulted in hearing sensitivity "In prison, your ears are your eyes," he says. "You know everyone's footsteps" (Zimmerman, 2007).

Social Support Programs

Another finding was that many of the exonerees found that their status as exoneree, disqualified them from receiving post-release assistance in gaining employment and finding housing. Mr. Reeves was understandably frustrated hearing about the assistance granted to parolees upon release from prison, stating "You might as well go out and commit a crime so you

can get help. They got programs for ex-cons. But what about a man who got 21 years for something he didn't do" (Davis, 2011). Mark Schand recalls applying for dozens of jobs online with no response until he applied in person for a job at a group home. He was asked why he left the employment section blank and he responded "It's because I was incarcerated." The manager responded, "Well since you were incarcerated, you can't work here." He pleaded "Listen, google my name and you'll see my story. Apparently she did because this was the lady that gave me my first job" (Radio WSPU). Although difficulty obtaining employment is a common obstacle for exonerees, one exoneree in my research, used his work history while in prison to improve his odds at gaining employment. "I had a resume. And I didn't try to hide anything. My resume had a list of jobs that I had while I was in prison. And as I listed my former employer, I listed the state of Georgia, which I didn't lie." Calvin C. Johnson credits his ability to obtain employment to his openness in sharing his wrongful incarceration experience. Mr. Johnson applied this same openness to the rental manager that wanted to charge him 3 times the security deposit for an apartment due to his lack of rental history. "I remember actually leaving, going home, getting all these newspaper articles together of me coming out of prison, going back to that renter's office and speaking to the manager and sitting down with all my articles in front of him. And I said, here, look. I said, ``How can I have a rental history?" His persistence paid off because Johnson ended up getting the apartment and only paid the security deposit that was being asked of everyone else (Inkeep, 2007).

Time Lost & Familial Strain

Of all the obstacles faced by exonerees, the most profound is the time that they lost that can never be returned. "You cannot replace years taken away. Children growing up, parents dying, you can't replace that," says Calvin Johnson. Jeffrey Deskovic's social life has been difficult to

navigate as a result of his wrongful conviction. "I'm physically 45 but I don't feel 45...I still want to go throw a ball around or go to amusement parks or travel or nightlife and most people my age have been there, done that already, that's not their agenda anymore. It's hard to find people to do things with" (Conviction, 2020). Mark Schand understands that the harm caused by his wrongful conviction will never be adequately remedied, stating "I don't deserve to be where I am right now financially. I don't deserve to be away from my family as long as I was away from my family, they can't make that whole again no matter what, you know, but I think they deserve to try" (Radio WSPU). Mr. Williams, who had nowhere to go after his release despite having several siblings with whom he could have stayed, explains that the length of time he was incarcerated created a negative perception of him stating, "When you are in prison for as long as I was, people either think you must be guilty or at least damaged," (Zimmerman,2007).

Discussion

The degree to which social stigma influences the compensations available to exonerees varies greatly between researchers and exonerees. Certain obstacles exonerated people face that was not addressed in the literature review may be a contributing cause of negative social stigma. The conducted research addressed the psychological effects of a wrongful conviction on mental health which could contribute to strained social interactions, the lack of social support programs available to exonerees that are afforded to ex-offenders, and the irreparable damage wrongful incarceration causes to familial relationships.

While the findings in my research reflect some of the same points presented in the literature review, there were also many differences detected. The differences, however, do not indicate a lack of merit on the part of either party. I believe that the research referenced in the literature review and the findings of my research represents similar difficulties viewed through different

lenses. The findings of social psychologists and legal scholars as it relates to obstacles that exonerees face are viewed from a much more general scope. Many of the researchers involved are viewing the issue from an outside perspective regardless of how close or passionate they are about the issue. On the other hand, my research views the obstacles exonerees face while reintegrating through a much more intimate lens. These exonerees are fighting to regain their independence, reclaim their existence, and ultimately become whole versions of themselves again, after the unimaginable victimization of wrongful conviction. Ultimately, exonerees are not afforded the luxury of analyzing the effects of social stigma on reintegration because their lives are consumed by the monumental task of surviving day-to-day.

For many exonerees, the struggle of reintegration is one of constant difficulty. They live with the effects of their trauma day in and day out and I feel the urgency of their situation is not accurately appreciated. The issue of mental health is a prominent theme I noticed in the personal narratives I analyzed. While all the exonerees express gratitude for being free from their cells, it seems that they ultimately come home to a different kind of prison. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, and anxiety are common mental health issues that plague exonerees as they reintegrate. Oftentimes, many resort to self-medication to cope and find the lack of access to post-exoneration counseling contributes to their difficulty acclimating to life on the outside.

The research used in the literature review discusses mental illness as it relates to exoneree access to counseling after their release but fails to elaborate on how mental illness impacts the everyday lives of the exonerees. I believe that combining scholarly research with first-hand accounts from exonerees can help reveal areas of weakness in our current policies that fail to assist exonerees in ways that they need it most. A critical part of advocating for the wrongfully convicted involves listening to what they struggle with most and serving as an active supporter in alleviating

that burden. In that aspect, everyone can be an advocate for the wrongfully convicted. Viewing wrongful conviction as a societal flaw rather than just a judicial error would help shift a portion of the responsibility in assisting exonerees with reintegration to society at large. The fact of the matter is, since wrongful conviction is something that can happen to anyone, it should be a societal obligation to not only assist those who have been victims of wrongful incarceration in whatever capacity we can but also demand accountability from those systems that allow wrongful convictions to occur in the first place.

As mentioned in the Literature Review, one of the strongest indicators of successful reintegration lies in the ability of exonerees to secure stable employment and housing (Kukucka, Applegarth & Mello, 2020). The content analysis confirms that this is an area of difficulty for most, however, it's the lack of the same re-entry assistance programs that are offered to ex-offenders that contribute to the difficulties experienced by exonerees. Many exonerees are left to advocate for themselves when it comes to finding jobs and housing. Although their wrongful conviction was an error made on the part of the state, there is very little offered in terms of state assistance, to remediate this tragic injustice. This is where the push for more comprehensive compensation packages at the statutory level comes into play. Social Psychologists and legal researchers, alike, understand that to facilitate greater access to social assistance programs for exonerees, reform needs to occur at the statutory level. An interesting connection I noticed in my research was how both Mark Schand and Calvin Johnson, through their experience, confirmed the findings of Kukucka, Applegarth, and Mello (2020) as it relates to the effectiveness of policies such as "Ban the box" that promote face-to-face interactions in an effort to reduce discrimination and prejudice. Both Mr. Schand and Mr. Johnson, were able to secure a job and housing,

respectively after in-person interactions resulted in a more positive impression of the exoneree and a greater willingness to help the exoneree.

In comparing the research found in the literature review and my study of first-hand exoneree experience, it was interesting to see how the effects of a wrongful conviction on one's family are the most talked about among exonerees but not researchers. Many exonerees in my research cite their wrongful convictions as the root cause for the strain on their relationships with family members. As a result of those stained relationships, upon release from prison, many exonerees are without the strong support system that family can provide. The length of time one was unjustly incarcerated robs them and their families of creating memories, watching their children grow up, and being able to be with members during their final days. The time that is taken from exonerees is something that cannot be paid back. This inability to return what was taken is often the most unforgivable part for exonerees to deal with and leads to much frustration and resentment when discussing adequate compensations.

The study was limited due to the amount of time I had to conduct research. Perhaps, had more time been available, I could've found more personal narratives about the reintegration experience of exonerees. I believe having a larger pool of experiences to analyze will help identify more prominent areas in reintegration that exonerees struggle with the most. Another limitation in my research is the lack of specific discussion surrounding reintegration experiences. Since the topic of wrongful convictions rarely discusses the nuances involved in successful integration, it was difficult to confirm the role social stigma plays in many of these obstacles. Moreover, I found that when exonerees recount their experience, they identify lack of social support as a major factor in their difficulties with reintegration, not social stigma.

Conclusion

The topic of social stigma as it relates to the wrongfully convicted in reintegration into society is one that deserves as much attention and further research as possible. The reality is wrongful convictions are life-altering occurrences that affect so many innocent people. Research must continue into the various aspects of reintegration that exonerees struggle with and how we, as a society, can assist in bringing attention and ultimately reform the policies that relate to righting the wrongs of unjust incarceration. An important element critical in achieving this is more discussion around what negative stigma consists of, how it is perpetuated and what can be done to unlearn it.

The degree to which social stigma influences the types of compensations available to exonerees is an under-researched facet of wrongful incarceration. That being said, the main conclusion that can be drawn from the research done thus far, is that exonerated people face negative social stigma in nearly every aspect of reintegration. Research has shown that negative stigma influences the willingness to hire and rent to exonerees, the amount of public support of social assistance programs for exonerees receives, and the amount of financial compensation awarded.

As the number of wrongful conviction cases increases, the conversations surrounding adequate compensations to facilitate successful reintegration must keep pace. This responsibility should not be left to lawmakers and legal organizations, and most importantly, the exonerees themselves. We all possess within ourselves the power to evoke real change for those who have been unjustly incarcerated. Whether if it's by volunteering our time in assisting with social justice organizations, lobbying for policies that promote a more equitable distribution of funds and resources, or simply lending a listening ear to those in our community who have been affected,

either directly or indirectly, by wrongful incarceration. Understanding that the stigmatization of exonerees is rooted in fear and lack of genuine understanding for their experience, it stands to reason that an important way to reverse the stigma would be to educate ourselves and those around us through communication and interaction.

References

- Clow, K., Blandisi, I., Ricciardelli, R., & Schuller, R. (2012). Public perception of wrongful conviction: support for compensation and apologies. *Albany Law Review*, 75(3), 1415–
- Connolly, S. (2019). RIGHTING THE WRONGFULLY CONVICTED: HOW KANSAS'S NEW EXONEREE COMPENSATION STATUTE SETS A STANDARD FOR THE UNITED STATES. *St. John's Law Review*, 93(3), 883–911.
- Exoneration. 2021. *Oxford Online Dictionary*. Retrieved from <https://www.lexico.com/definition/exoneration>
- Goldberg, L., Guillen, N., Hernandez, N., & Leuett, L. (2020). OBSTACLES AND BARRIERS AFTER EXONERATION. *Albany Law Review*, 83(3), 829–.
- Inskeep, Steve, (2007, February 27) Exonerated Prisoners Adjust to Life on the Outside. <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/7567797>
- Kukucka, J., & Evelo, A. (2019). Stigma against false confessors impacts post-exoneration financial compensation. *Behavioral Sciences & the Law*, 37(4), 372–387. <https://doi.org/10.1002/bsl.2403>
- Kukucka, J., Applegarth, H., & Mello, A. (2020). Do exonerees face employment discrimination similar to actual offenders? *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 25(1), 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lcrp.12159>
- Kimberley A. Clow & Amy-May Leach (2015) Stigma and wrongful conviction: all exonerees are not perceived equal, *Psychology, Crime & Law*, 21:2, 172-185, DOI: [10.1080/1068316X.2014.951645](https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316X.2014.951645)
- Norris, R. J. (2012). Assessing Compensation Statutes for the Wrongly Convicted. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 23(3), 352–374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0887403411409916>
- NRE, National Registry of Exonerations (2021) Retrieved from <http://www.law.umich.edu/special/exoneration/Pages/about.aspx>
- Santos, Fernanda, (2007 November 25) *New York Times*. Vindicated by DNA, but a Lost Man on the Outside. <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/25/us/25jeffrey.html>
- Scherr, K. C., Normile, C. J., & Sarmiento, M. C. (2018). Reluctant to embrace innocence: an experimental test of persevering culpability judgments on people's willingness to support reintegration services for exonerees. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 14(4), 529–538.
- Simms, T. (2016). Statutory Compensation for the Wrongly Imprisoned. *Social Work (New York)*, 61(2), 155–162. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/sww003>

Wertz, Jia, 2020 “Conviction”. PrimeVideo

Zannella, L., Clow, K., Rempel, E., Hamovitch, L., & Hall, V. (2020). The Effects of Race and Criminal History on Landlords’ (Un)willingness to Rent to Exonerees. *Law and Human Behavior*, 44(4), 300–310. <https://doi.org/10.1037/lhb0000419>

Zimmerman, Ann, (2007, October 30) *The Wallstreet Journal*. A Convict Freed By DNA Evidence Tries to Find a Life <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB119370490025875727>

<https://radio.wpsu.org/post/no-mans-land-when-innocent-prisoners-are-released>

https://video.vice.com/en_us/video/innocence-one-false-accusation-half-a-life-behind-bars/5b578280be407723ef785911?popular=1