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A quasi-experimental design with non-equivalent groups assessed the impact of privatized management on crime and personal safety in large public housing communities in Miami, Florida. A randomly-selected sample (N = 503) of low-income African Americans living in 42 different housing "projects" were surveyed. Privatized sites had greater mean values for break-ins and thefts (m = 2.03, S.D. = 1.47, p<.01) and vacant apartment usage. Publicly-managed sites had higher mean values for shootings and violence (m = 2.52, S.D. = 1.67, p<.01). While there were no statistically significant differences in perceived personal safety, publicly-managed respondents expressed greater satisfaction with police services. Privatized management did not result in significantly more positive outcomes and social services utilization was associated with less violent crime. Implications are discussed for public housing crime, federal housing policy, and future research.

The idea of "privatizing" state, local, and federal services has been a tradition in the United States for many years (Barnekov, Boyle, & Rich, 1989; Hays, 1994). Privatization occurs when government sectors transfer partial or full responsibility for a variety of public services to the private sector (Bendick, 1985). By using grants, purchase-of-service contracts, and different types of reimbursement mechanisms, a complex partnership was developed between governments and private, non-profit agencies to deliver a wide range of human services (Abramovitz, 1986; Gilbert, 1986; Salamon, 1993).

In the 1980s, the Reagan Administration ushered in an ide-
ological shift toward a different type of privatization—that in-
volving private, for-profit firms (Kamerman & Kahn, 1989). This
new philosophy was crystallized when President Reagan ap-
pointed a Privatization Commission and subsequently integrated
the philosophy into many of his Administration's operational
and policy decisions (Reid, 1995). The assumption behind the
thinking was that private firms would improve management
and implementation based on a perception of market discipline,
superior management skills, and the profit motive, character-
istics which are supposedly lacking in the public sector (Van
Horn, 1991). The 1990s were characterized by an accelerated mo-
mentum in the provision of public welfare services by for-profit
firms (Netting, McMurtry, Kettner, & Martin, 1994; Salamon, 1993;
Stoesz & Karger, 1994), including services such as hospitals, nurs-
ing homes, home health, child care, social services, and housing
(Pack, 1991; Reid, 1995).

The current study examines privatized management of public
housing ("projects") and its comparative impact on the incidence
of crime, neighborhood problems, and personal safety as per-
ceived by public housing residents. The research is based on a
4-year public housing privatization experiment conducted under
the auspices of the Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA), which
is the official Public Housing Authority (PHA) for the City of
Miami and unincorporated Miami-Dade County. The MDHA is
also the 8th largest PHA in the United States with 20,653 family
and elderly housing units under their jurisdiction countywide
(U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [USHUD],
1999). An independent research team was contracted by Miami-
Dade County to do a comparative assessment on the impact of
privatization and develop recommendations on the feasibility
of the MDHA expanding the managerial scope of privatized
property managers (Becker, Bowie, Dluhy, & Topinka, 1998). Af-
ter going through an extensive competitive bidding process, the
MDHA selected four national property management companies
with good "track records" and considerable experience, and the
firms were given maximum administrative and operational flexi-
bility. The overall assessment was multi-faceted with an emphasis
on cost-containment variables, but a major component of the

study was an empirical examination of perceived crime, personal safety, and levels of satisfaction with police as perceived by public housing residents. A fundamental question to be answered was whether "traditional" public housing managers or profit-driven, private sector managers achieved better results in the aforementioned areas.

USHUD, which provides operating revenues for public housing nationwide, has been severely criticized for years because of management ineffectiveness and substandard performance (National Housing Task Force, 1988). The public housing system is widely perceived as being a colossal failure, with problems that include substandard construction, physical deterioration, social disorganization, epidemic levels of drug abuse and drug trafficking, violent crime, and vandalism. The consensus view is that addressing these widespread problems will require major changes in how public housing is operated (Hula, 1991).

Significance

The sheer numbers of people who live in public housing communities and their socio-demographic characteristics make privatization policies a salient issue. Approximately 3 million people live in public housing "projects" nationwide. Almost 70% are minorities, 48% of whom are African Americans and 18% Hispanics. Seventy-six percent of the families in public housing have female heads of household with no spouse present. Almost 75% of public housing residents have annual household incomes of less than $10,000 and 23% have incomes of less than $5,000. The proportional age distribution for public housing households nationwide is as follows: 25–44 years (36%), 62+ years (33%), 45–61 years (20%), and under 25 years (11%) (USHUD,1999a).

The study also has important implications for current federal housing policy, particularly the HOPE VI Program underway by USHUD. HOPE VI is a major federal strategy for revitalizing severely distressed public housing. The overall goal of the policy, which was enacted in 1998, is to replace 95,000 units of the worst public housing in the country by 2003 and replace them with new, viable, economically-thriving communities. As of 1998, HOPE VI grants were awarded to 52 different PHAs in 26 states. The level

of financial resources involved was indicated by the USHUD 1999 appropriation request of over $550 million for demolition, reha- bilitation, and new construction of pubic housing (USHUD, 1998). A key aspect of this housing policy involves the establishment of public housing communities that are safe, secure, and free from violence and drug trafficking. In this respect, an examination of crime and personal safety issues is timely. The success of USHUD in controlling crime in public housing neighborhoods is vital to the success of HOPE VI and could influence continued public support for the policy and related public housing programs.

Literature Review

In the last 40 years, there has been a considerable amount of scholarship regarding the problem of crime in public hous- ing communities. The focus of the literature, however, has been somewhat different in each of the decades from 1960 through the 1990s. In the 1960s, for instance, the emphasis was on conceptual analyses of the problem. Authors focused their attention on the physical aspects of public housing and how structural features of buildings could reduce or enhance the probability of crime or the prospect of detecting offenders. Wood (1961) discussed how physical characteristics of public housing minimized com- munication and informal gathering among residents, and thus inhibited development of a sense of community. Jacobs (1961) expanded on this idea and addressed ways that residential safety was facilitated by natural surveillance, continuous use of commu- nity facilities, and overlapping patterns of pedestrian movement. Another study analyzed how the physical environment impacted the incidence of crime by defining territories, reducing or in- creasing accessibility through the use of barriers, and increasing observability by residents and/or police (Angel, 1969).

The emphasis changed over the next two decades, with schol- arship evolving from conceptual analysis to more empirically- oriented research. A series of studies sponsored by USHUD made it clear that (1) there was a disproportionate level of serious crimes (i.e., murder, rape, burglary, robbery, aggravated assault, grand larceny, and auto theft) committed in public housing communi- ties, and (2) the fear of crime was just as salient a factor as actual

crime committed, in terms of reducing the quality of life in public housing communities (Brill & Associates,1975, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1977d; Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, 1977). The studies were conducted in the urban areas of Los Angeles, Washington, DC, Baltimore, Miami, and Boston. In each city, the incidence of serious crimes in the public housing communities was consistently two to ten times higher than both the respective citywide and national crime rates.

Public housing residents also indicated a great fear of crime, even in cases where the actual incidence of crime was not high. In their comparative analysis of four public housing sites in Boston, for instance, Brill and Associates (1975), discovered that substantial percentages of residents reported that it was "very dangerous" waiting for a bus at night (75%), shopping at night (71%), riding elevators in their buildings at night (60%), walking down hallways at night (59%), and being alone in their apartments at night (40%). Research by Lawton, Nahemov, Yaffe and Feldman (1976) found that the fear of crime was especially pronounced among elderly public housing residents.

Several empirical studies documented the inverse relationship between surveillance opportunities and level of crime in public housing (Luedke & Associates, 1970; Molumby, 1976; Newman, 1972, 1975, 1978; Pope, 1977). Theses studies repeatedly indicated that a major contributor of crime are areas where surveillance by residents, management, security personnel, or police is severely restricted. Many areas of the grounds are not visible from windows, have poor lighting, or have unmonitored and obscure stairways, halls, and entrances. Other factors cited as key contributors to crime in public housing are low levels of social organization, minimal social cohesion, and weak informal social controls (Rainwater, 1970; Rosenthal, 1974; Wilson, 1975; & Montgomery, 1977). This literature cites the negative impact of mutual distrust among public housing residents, lack of responsible involvement, and residents looking out, for the most part, only for themselves and their own personal well-being. This type of community fragmentation only serves to empower and embolden the perpetrators of crime (National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, 1973). Finally, lack of proprietary interest (Rosenthal, 1974), trained security

personnel (Brill, 1973, 1975,1977a, 1977b, 1977c, 1977d), social services for residents (Brill, 1975; Rosenthal, 1974), supervision and organized activities for youth (National Urban League, 1978), employment opportunities for residents (Brenner, 1976), and poor management practices (Brill, 1975) were identified as contributing to the proliferation of crime in public housing.

In the 1980s, the level of research on crime and safety in public housing was less than in the previous decade. Huth (1981) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the problem and developed concrete strategies for reducing crime in public housing communities. Farley (1982) contradicted conventional wisdom and concluded that crime levels in St. Louis public housing developments was not significantly higher than in the city as a whole. The author pointed to (1) the socioeconomic status of public housing residents and (2) the reality that most urban public housing communities tended to be located in areas that already have high crime rates, as factors that are associated with violent "street" crimes, burglary, and theft. Weidermann, Anderson, Butterfield and O'Donnell (1982) assessed public housing resident perceptions of satisfaction and safety in an Illinois housing development. They found an interdependence between the physical environment and the residents and managers of the community. Like the research in the 1970s, the authors pointed out the relationship between physical and social changes, the actual problem of crime, and the fear of crime. They added that perceived safety and satisfaction will improve only when positive physical design is supported by consistent enforcement of PHA management policies. A final study in the 1980s examined fear and perceptions of crime by elderly residents (Normoyle & Foley, 1988). Using Newman's (1972) defensible space model, they found that high rise public housing buildings had a significant effect on respondent reactions to crime, even though there were variations among elderly residents who were segregated within these buildings.

In the most recent decade, the literature was characterized by research on more specific types of crime and social problems in public housing communities. The issues examined included crack cocaine trafficking by adolescents (Dembo, Hughes, Jackson & Mieczkowski, 1993), weapons possession and violence among public housing adolescents (Durant, Getts, Cadenhead, & Woods,

1995), the relationship between family structure and drug trafficking among children and adolescents (Okundaye, 1996), and youth and alcohol/drug abuse (Rodney, Mupier, & O'Neil, 1997; Williams, Schier, Botvin, Baker, & Miller, 1997). Other scholars (Popkin, Olson, Lurigio, Gwiasda, & Carter,1995) investigated resident perceptions of the effectiveness of the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program (a comprehensive USHUD anti-crime initiative) and analyzed methodological issues involved in conducting research in dangerous public housing neighborhoods (Gwiasada, Taluc, & Popkin, 1997).

There was limited research in the literature that indirectly integrated the issues of privatization and crime in public housing communities. Aulette (1991) addressed of crime and safety in her description of a public housing privatization experiment in Charlotte, North Carolina. The Granville Corporation (1983) and Miller, Dickerson, and Greenstein (1984) addressed the crime problem in their comparative study on privatized management in different public housing communities around the United States. Even though the major focus of their analysis was on cost-performance measures, perceived crime and social problems were also examined as secondary issues.

Research Questions

The research questions for the current study were as follows:

1. Are there significant differences in the extent and types of neighborhood crime perceived between residents of publicly-managed and privately-managed public housing communities?
2. Are there significant differences in perceptions of personal safety and levels of satisfaction with police services between residents of publicly-managed and privately-managed public housing communities?

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 503 heads of households who lived in public housing developments operated by the MDHA. Most

of the sample lived in family units and the others lived in elderly units. For study purposes, the MDHA aggregated 42 public housing developments within general proximity to one another into major "sites," four of which were managed by MDHA property managers and four operated by different private companies. Table 1 is a comparison of the major publicly-managed and privately-managed sites, as well as the number and classification of housing units assigned to each.

The sample had to be stratified to ensure that residents from all developments were represented in the sample. To accomplish this stratification, the sites were further differentiated by all housing developments which constituted each site. Within each development, housing units were classified as family or elderly units. Fifteen percent of these were then calculated for elderly and

Table 1

Comparison of Privately-Managed and Publicly-Managed Housing Sites

	Private Firms			
Site Name	Management Company	Elderly Units	Family Units	Total Units
Scott Homes	Russell	0	742	742
Gwen Cherry	Dominium	0	276	276
Naranja	Pinnacle	34	. 310	344
Mays Village	Insignia	48	326	374
Total		**82**	**1,654**	**1,736**
	Miami-Dade Housing Agency			
Site Name		Elderly Units	Family Units	Total Units
Liberty Square		0	753	753
Homestead		92	187	279
Modello		52	161	213
Perrine		42	230	272
Total		**186**	**1,331**	**1,517**

family units within each development. This process resulted in an optimal sampling frame of 503 units. Residents of individual units were then randomly selected from a master list provided by MDHA.

Respondent and Neighborhood Characteristics

The age range for the sample was 19–93 years, with a mean age of 40 years (S.D. = 13.0). Most of the sample (91.1%) were African Americans and a negligible number were Hispanics (6.6%) and non-Hispanic Whites (1.4%). Almost 92% of the respondents were females and the mean educational level was 11th grade (S.D. = 2.2). Seventy-two percent of the heads of household had school-aged children (5–17 years old) and 25% of the respondents reported having at least one person in their household with a disability. The mean number of years the respondents had lived in public housing was 10.5 years (S.D. = 9.8). The mean number of years they had lived in their current residence was 6.2 years (S.D. = 6.9). Approximately 33% of the respondents were either working full-time or part-time or had another adult living with them who was employed. Fourteen percent of the households had at least one adult in the home who was attending some type of educational or training class.

All of the public housing sites (N = 42) were located in socially distressed neighborhoods. The family incomes and percent of the population below the poverty level were compared to national averages. The census tracts in which target neighborhoods were located had significantly lower incomes and greater percentages of people living in poverty than national norms. There were, however, no significant differences in the incomes and poverty levels of the publicly-managed and privately-managed sites.

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected from heads of household who lived in each of the housing units that were selected from stratified sites. Alternative housing units were also randomly selected in the event a respondent was non-cooperative or not available after three visits to their homes. All respondents who lived in targeted housing developments were notified of the study from a letter sent to them from their property managers. The

letter outlined the purpose of the study, how it would benefit the residents, and requested their cooperation if they were selected to participate. They were also advised that they would receive a $5.00 incentive if they were selected and completed the interview.

Data were collected over a 3-month period in the summer of 1998 by public housing residents who were hired as research assistants (RAs). The survey was administered in the respondent's homes by the RAs. In order to qualify for an RA position, residents were required to participate in one of three separate 5-hour training sessions that focused on all aspects of survey administration and other logistics of data collection, including personal safety, appropriate survey response protocols, unexpected situational responding, and so forth. The training and retrieval of data was coordinated by a team of field supervisors who collected and logged in surveys weekly, implemented quality control procedures, and verified survey completion with telephone calls to respondents. The field supervisors also coordinated respondent payments through management offices, investigated suspicious survey response patterns, and provided reassurances to RAs about their abilities to succeed in data collection.

Several problems and issues surfaced and had to be addressed during the data collection phase. These included strategies for assessing the literacy of RA trainees, accelerating the process of compensating RAs (the original plan was to pay RAs six weeks after the data collection was completed), extensive traveling to study sites throughout Miami-Dade County, and trying to assure personal safety in dangerous neighborhoods while carrying large sums of cash for compensating RAs. All problems and issues were successfully addressed and 100% of the surveys were completed and usable for analysis.

Variables

The independent variable in the study was management type, that is, whether the public housing sites were managed by private firms or by the regular, county-employed property managers. The dependent variables were (1) resident perceptions of crime in their neighborhoods, (2) resident perceptions of personal safety, and (3) resident levels of satisfaction police services in public housing neighborhoods.

Instrumentation

Data for the study were collected by using a modified 55-item Resident Satisfaction Survey that was developed jointly by the Survey Research Center of the University of Illinois at Chicago and Abt Associates (1997) for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban and Development. The survey was adapted in consultation with MDHA officials to meet and address local conditions and needs. In addition to demographic items, the survey had questions regarding physical condition of their units, time responding to repair orders, treatment by property managers, and so forth. It also included eight questions about the extent of specific types of crime problems in their respective neighborhoods, two questions about how safe they felt alone or outside their buildings at night, and two questions regarding satisfaction with police services in their neighborhood.

The items on crime problems were in Likert format and allowed a range of scores from one to five, with one indicating "no problem" and five indicating "major problem." The personal safety questions were in Likert format (1–5), with one indicating "very unsafe" and five indicating "very safe." The questions on satisfaction with police services were also in Likert format with one indicating "very dissatisfied" and five indicating "very satisfied."

Research Design and Data Analysis

A quasi-experimental design with non-equivalent control groups was used for the current study. Three different types of statistical analyses were utilized. Frequency distributions were computed for each of the demographic and study variables in order to do a profile analysis of the sample, assess response patterns for survey items, and determine measures of central tendency. The independent samples t-test was conducted to assess whether statistically significant differences existed between mean scores based on the dependent variable (management type). Finally, data from the dependent variable survey items (perceived neighborhood crime and personal safety, satisfaction with police services) were subjected to a reliability procedure to assess internal consistency and establish alpha coefficients.

Results

Reliability

Three sets of survey items were used as scales to measure the dependent variables. There were eight (8) items on the scale that measured resident perceptions of crime, two (2) items on perceived personal safety, and two (2) items on levels of satisfaction with police services. The alpha coefficients were .86 for perceived crime (N = 492, Item mean = 1.9), .70 for perceived personal safety (N = 488, Item mean = 3.9), and .62 for satisfaction with police services (N = 482, Item mean = 4.0).

Perceived Neighborhood Crime

There were statistically significant differences in perceived neighborhood crime in three categories: (1) people breaking in homes and stealing property, (2) people using vacant apartments, and (3) shootings and violence. The privatized sites had the highest mean values for break-ins and thefts (m = 2.03. S.D. = 1.47, $p < .01$) and vacant apartment usage (m = 1.62, S.D = 1.2, $p <$ .01). In the third category (shootings and violence), the publicly-managed sites had the highest mean value (m = 2.52, S.D. = 1.67, $p < .01$) (See Table 2).

Personal Safety and Satisfaction with Police Services

As Table 3 indicates, there were no significant differences in perceptions of personal safety between residents of publicly-managed and privately-managed sites. There were statistically significant differences regarding satisfaction with police services. Residents in publicly-managed housing communities had the higher mean value, indicating a higher degree of satisfaction with police services (m = 4.14, S.D. = .97, $p < .01$).

Discussion and Implications

The current study examined privatized and public management of conventional public housing communities and the comparative impact on perceived crime, neighborhood problems, and personal safety. Data from a randomly-selected, stratified sample of 503 heads of household were collected from non-equivalent control groups in 42 housing sites and analyzed with the independent samples t-test.

Table 2

Comparison of Perceived Crime and Neighborhood Problems, by Management Type

Questions on Survey	Management Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p	Significant at .05 level?
How much of a problem is: people breaking in or sneaking into homes to steal things?	Public	240	1.513	1.047	$p < .01$	Yes
	Private	261	2.027	1.469		
How much of a problem is: people using vacant apartments?	Public	240	1.321	0.849	$p < .01$	Yes
	Private	260	1.623	1.194		
How much of a problem is: people being attacked or robbed right outside your building?	Public	239	1.678	1.210	$p = .363$	No
	Private	262	1.782	1.363		
How much of a problem is: people selling drugs?	Public	239	2.209	1.644	$p = .691$	No
	Private	261	2.153	1.491		
How much of a problem is: people using drugs?	Public	239	2.117	1.551	$p = .665$	No
	Private	261	2.176	1.488		
How much of a problem is: groups of people just hanging out?	Public	239	2.238	1.544	$p = .813$	No
	Private	262	2.206	1.520		
How much of a problem is: shootings and violence?	Public	239	2.519	1.660	$p < .01$	Yes
	Private	261	2.042	1.476		
How much of a problem is: rape or other sexual attacks?	Public	240	1.217	0.789	$p = .163$	No
	Private	260	1.319	0.853		

Table 3

Comparison of Perceived Personal Safety and Satisfaction with Police Services, by Management Type

Questions on Survey	Management Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	p	Significant at .05 level?
How safe do you feel being alone inside your apartment at night?	Public	240	4.063	1.214	$p = .900$	No
	Private	262	4.076	1.248		
How satisfied are you with the police service in your area?	Public	228	4.136	0.977	$p < .01$	Yes
	Private	257	3.825	1.217		
How safe do you feel or would you feel being out alone in the parking lots, the lawns, the street or sidewalks right outside your building at night?	Public	235	3.681	1.286	$p = .794$	No
	Private	253	3.711	1.306		
How satisfied are you with the way the police treat you and your guests?	Public	237	4.143	0.981	$p = .888$	No
	Private	261	4.130	1.109		

The privatized sites were reported to have more problems with residential thefts, unauthorized apartment usage, and assaults or robberies. The problem of shootings and violence was most evident in publicly-managed communities. In fact, this issue received the highest mean score on all crime-related survey items, which denoted the most severe neighborhood problem. The mean survey scores for the problems of drug trafficking, loitering, and rape or other sexual attacks was roughly equivalent for both management types.

The issue of social services availability may have explanatory value in relation to comparative levels of violent crimes and property crimes (e.g., theft, burglaries, etc.). In a related privatization study, it was reported that the publicly-managed public housing sites had more social services available than the privately-managed sites. The extent that residents actually *utilized* the social services, however, was considerably higher at the privately-managed properties for all type of services reported (Bowie, 2000).

The report of more social services may be explained by the MDHA history prior to the introduction of privatized management. The MDHA had a "Resident Services Division" that was in place for over last twenty years that worked as a social services branch and procured external funds for community programming. An example is the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, which has funded several different social programs since the early 1990s. The privatized management firms, on the other hand, had to develop their social work programming independently, or in conjunction with existing agencies. The increased rate of social service utilization at the privately-managed sites may be a result of more effective outreach or "marketing" strategies by the property managers (Bowie, 2000).

A possible factor in the different types of crime prevalent in publicly-managed and privately-managed communities may involve management eviction policies for residents who engage in drug trafficking and other criminal behavior. For instance, if the privatized managers had more latitude to evict these perpetrators, it could help explain the lower indications of violent crimes. As it turns out, both the private and public managers are bound by identical MDHA policies regarding evictions for

drug trafficking and other criminal activity (R. Johnson, personal communication, December 15, 2000). These include hearings and appeal procedures available for accused residents. It is conceivable that if the privatized sites had more administrative independence regarding managerial responses to criminal activity—as property managers do in the private sector—it would be a factor that could be readily isolated as a possible detriment to violent crime in neighborhoods.

Residents of privatized and publicly-managed public housing had comparable survey scores on the two items that addressed personal safety. There were also comparable survey scores on personal treatment by the police, but there were significant differences in satisfaction with police services. Residents in privately-managed sites were considerably less satisfied than those who lived in publicly-managed sites. A logical reason for this could not be ascertained. In fact, since the publicly-managed sites reported higher levels of violent crimes (which are more visible than property crimes), it seems that they would perceive the police as being ineffective in carrying out their duties.

Study results make it evident that serious crime is a major problem in these pubic housing communities, irrespective of management type, especially shootings and physical assaults. About 72% and 63% of respondents in privatized and publicly-managed housing, respectively, reported that they personally heard gunshots in their neighborhood during the last 12 months.

In spite of these statistics that clearly point out the crime problems in public housing communities, many respondents appeared to be content with the situation. For instance, 75% of the residents in publicly-managed sites indicated that they were "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their residence as a place to live. Almost 67% of the respondents from the privatized sites had expressed the same sentiments. In a similar vein, substantial numbers of respondents reported feeling safe when home alone at night. This may be an indication that high levels of crime and violence in public housing communities is perceived as "normal" and residents have become de-sensitized to it, to a large degree.

These findings have implications for law enforcement and for current public policy regarding the upgrading and renovation of pubic housing communities. Police presence, per se, does not

appear to be an issue. Over 80% of the sample reported that police patrol their area by walking or driving through. The findings suggest that different policing strategies, greater numbers of police, and/or more frequent or aggressive patrolling may be required to curtail the level of crime in public housing neighborhoods. This is a serious issue in relation to current nationwide attempts to re-vitalize public housing communities and help change the negative image of public housing in America. These well-intentioned housing policy efforts will not be effective in a vacuum. Regaining control of public housing streets and neighborhoods and establishing a sense of safety and security among the residents will be an important aspect of the improvement efforts. The current renovation efforts in public housing (HOPE VI) represent a long-term strategy that is occurring in incremental stages, and the extent to which policymakers can demonstrate reductions in crime can affect the level of public and political support for continued financial resources.

The current research did not support the idea that privatized management in public housing leads to greater operational efficiency as it relates to resident perceptions of neighborhood crime and satisfaction with police services. As pointed out above, the increased levels of social service utilization in privatized communities were associated with less violent crime outcomes. Beyond that, the differences on the research questions were negligible, except in the case of satisfaction with police services, which favored the publicly-managed housing sites.

This study raises some questions and directions for future research on crime and personal safety in public housing communities. One feasible area of inquiry may be to examine what contributes to different crimes being prevalent or differential perceptions of police service in privatized versus publicly-managed communities. The identification of contributing factors can facilitate the development of new strategies for reducing or suppressing crime, or modification of existing efforts to do the same more effectively. Future studies should also attempt to determine the reason for differential perceptions of policing by residents of privately and publicly-managed public housing communities.

In spite of the attention given to research design and statistical analysis, the author warns against generalization of the current study findings. A limitation of the study is that the data were

based on resident perceptions of neighborhood crime. While the literature did establish that the resident fear of crime is as salient as actual crime committed, the analysis would have been further strengthened by police reports of criminal activity at the sites. Unfortunately, the site-specific data required for the current research were not available. The research, however, does contribute to the very limited body of knowledge about crime in public housing communities and how it may or may not be influenced by privatized management.

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