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G. Michael Davis

*Antioch University - PhD Program in Leadership and Change*

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EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF EX-PRISONER REENTRY ON STRUCTURAL FACTORS  
IN DISORGANIZED COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

G. MICHAEL DAVIS

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program  
of Antioch University  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:

EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF EX-PRISONER REENTRY ON STRUCTURAL FACTORS  
IN DISORGANIZED COMMUNITIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP PRACTICE.

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date

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The journey toward the completion of this work has been filled with the full spectrum of human emotion. The terrain was at times rocky, full of peaks and valleys; however, a quote from the great American writer Henry David Thoreau encouraged me along through this journey.

Thoreau said, “If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.” The successful completion of this journey in common hours has been reached with the assistance and support of people of uncommon love, knowledge, generosity, and kindness.

I would first like to thank my loving wife Tracy for her patience and unwavering support. My daughter Tristen, Daddy’s sugar plum; all things are possible to those who believe. To my sons Austin and Preston, I love you both. You remind me of the things that are most important in this life.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of George and Esther B. Gilmore without whom none of this would be possible; to the people of the Driving Park Neighborhood and the memory of James Johnson who was a staunch advocate for improvements in the quality of life for all people in Driving Park;

And, finally to Dr. Howard T. Washington and the members of my church family at the Second Baptist Church of Columbus, OH—thank you intercessory prayer team for your prayers and support.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the way(s) in which the disproportionate return of ex-prisoners to socially and economically disadvantaged communities impact(s) specific community structural factors identified in the study. After three decades of withstanding the enduring effects of the mass incarceration, communities stand at the edge of a new era. Economic realities, and the failure of policies designed to deter crime through imprisonment are rapidly ushering in an era of mass prisoner reentry. The complexity of the challenges surrounding the successful integration of offenders to communities requires a new leadership paradigm for justice leaders. This study posits that communities are complex adaptive systems and examines the applicability of complexity leadership theory to the interactive impact of prisoner reentry. Existing academic literature is replete with research examining the ability of community institutions to ease the transition of citizens returning home from prison and contributing to their ability to achieve success within the community. Additional studies have identified the negative effects of mass incarceration on elements or structural factors often define the viability of a community. These include, but are not necessarily limited to: employment, crime, poverty, and family relationships. This study builds upon previous academic research in the area of prisoner reentry. It steps in a new direction that focuses on the impact the concentrated return of ex-prisoners exerts on elements that contribute to the collective efficacy of neighborhoods. In order to effectively examine the interactive or reciprocating impact of prisoner reentry, a mixed methodological approach using both qualitative and quantitative research, situated in a case study, is employed. The research design incorporates the constructed realities of those experiencing the interactive impact of reentry and provides a statistical analysis of the

attitudes of a broad representation of the community examined in the case. The electronic version of this Dissertation is at Ohiolink ETD Center, <http://etd.ohiolink.edu>



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## Chapter I: Introduction

As we move toward through the second decade of the 21st century, it has become apparent that a significant social issue looms large on the horizon of our collective landscape as the ripple effect of mass incarceration and prison reentry can currently be felt throughout the industrialized world. The most demonstrable example of the effects of this issue is in the United States (O'Donnell, Baumer, & Hughes, 2008; Stern, 2002). In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell (2000) describes a tipping point as the moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold and spreads like an epidemic. The point at which the negative effects associated with crime, ex-prisoners, and disadvantaged communities intersect threatens to be a tipping point. The collateral consequences of 35 years of punitive sentencing policies have created a nation full of overcrowded prisons. The results of mass incarceration threaten to create circumstances that spread much like the social epidemics that become engrained in our culture, as outlined by Gladwell. The implications of thousands of ex-prisoners returning to specific communities threaten to exacerbate the already fragile social order in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods. The collateral consequences associated with having a felony conviction extend beyond the prison sentence. The concentrated return of ex-prisoners to the community promises to draw neighborhoods and the criminal justice system into an intersection that will require both to examine the ways in which they operate.

While it has been suggested that agencies assigned the task of addressing difficulties associated with high crime neighborhoods and former prisoners returning to (those) communities have increased public safety, the enhanced strategies have also systematically increased incarceration rates. The unintended consequence of such policies has been the dismantling of the social structures around which communities are generally organized (Dzur, 2003). This has led

to the creation of communities in which criminality is the common modality of individuals operating within the boundaries of these neighborhoods. Crime has become so pervasive in some residential areas that these communities are rapidly approaching a tipping point, a point of no return, where generations of Americans will live subjected to crime and violence. Leadership practitioners may offer one last hope to save many of our most vulnerable citizens. The ability of leaders to identify a strategic model appropriately suited for the current environment is vital to the sustained efficacy of communities on the brink of losing the battle for a safe and secure environment. This study proposes to examine how the return of ex-prisoners, in the post-mass incarceration era, impacts structural factors in socially disorganized urban communities.

There is a growing confluence of criminal cultures within the cities of America. Like no other time in the history of this nation, we are being challenged to resolve the issues of crime, punishment, and the restoration of offenders to communities around our country. We are experiencing an unprecedented return of former prisoners to communities. Approximately 700,000 offenders have been released from jails and prisons back into communities each year since 2000 (Visher & Travis, 2003). An overwhelming majority of these offenders are returning to communities that are disproportionately disadvantaged in a number of significant ways. A number of factors indicate that the surge of offenders returning home from prison, combined with issues already facing residents of high crime, socially disorganized communities, call the effectiveness of the autocratic leadership theory currently prevalent in law enforcement and correctional agencies into question.

The challenges posed to ex-prisoners, regardless of the country of imprisonment or the correctional method utilized, are significant, and universal (O'Donnell et al., 2008). Invariably, those impacted by incarceration are subject to some level of exclusion from the basic privileges

associated with citizenship. This exclusion includes drastically diminished opportunities for employment and housing, as well as underrepresentation in the political process (Pryor, 2010). In many instances this lack of opportunity perpetuates feelings of alienation and often results in anger and frustration. The collateral consequences of prisoner reentry can be found in the growth of a new ex-prisoner sub-culture that has a direct impact on community structural factors, including but not limited to employment, crime, and poverty.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The convergence of large numbers of ex-inmates returning to specific communities, along with the pressing problems related to violent crime currently occurring in these locations, are significant elements and have important implications for the communities involved. The most pressing issues, with regard to the high number of inmates returning to these areas, are the destabilized social networks and social relationships that already exist.

Scholars indicate that the problems associated with mass incarceration and prisoner reentry emanate from robust policies that promise eradication of the immediate threats posed by individuals who engage in criminality. While effective at reducing the U.S. crime rate in the 1970s and 1980s, these policies continue to result in extremely high rates of incarceration, even though the overall crime rate continued to decrease over time (Mauer, 2007). Moreover, justice leaders have been slow to recognize that enforcement intensive methods will not sufficiently address the specific problems associated with high concentrations of offenders returning to the same communities in which they were arrested.

Criminal justice observers estimate that, for over a decade, approximately three-quarters of a million ex-prisoners have been returned to communities each year. While this circumstance has not gone unnoticed by policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and community residents; the

response has been narrowly focused. In academia, the extant literature on the subject of prisoner reentry has primarily addressed the individual level risk factors that contribute to ex-prisoner recidivism (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006). Individual level risk factors include, but are not limited to, factors such as: the criminal history, employment potential, proclivity for substance abuse, and mental health condition of the individual involved. Over the years, a substantial body of knowledge exploring the extent to which community characteristics contribute to ex-prisoner recidivism has developed. As a result of this exploration, many community residents, and leaders in the field of criminal justice are migrating to a view of reentry that revolves around concerns about increases in jail and prison populations that contradict the recent downturn in overall crime rates (Wood, 2012).

The majority of existing scholarship, and thus the historic and contemporary research on offender reentry, addresses the relationship between offenders and communities in a linear fashion. These studies have paid close attention to the impact of particular community to individual variables that may serve as predictors, or contributing factors, to offender recidivism. The extant literature has little to say about the reciprocal nature, (in this case, individual to community), of relationships. The fact that scholars have only viewed the relationship in a linear fashion indicates that there is a major gap in research on offender reentry. Further, academic investigators of the subject have not examined this phenomenon in a way that addresses the interconnectedness of relationships between ex-prisoners and communities. An expanded understanding of the way the criminal justice system follows ex-prisoners into the community and the community response to the influx of high need individuals will prove to be valuable.

This research study will explore, in part, the role that mass incarceration has played in shaping the socio-economic phenomenon of ex-prisoner reentry. In addition, this research

project will address a significant gap in the academic literature by investigating the full impact of ex-prisoner reentry on communities, through the assessment of prisoner reentry's interactive impact on socially disadvantaged communities.

The interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry is defined as the reciprocating nature of the influence of each actor on the other. The interactive impact of reentry considers the effect of community variables inclusive of structural factors on individual risk to reoffend. Conversely, it also considers the effects of the high concentration of ex-prisoner returns on community structural factors. This study will describe what behaviors occur and the resultant impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the community structural factors that include crime, poverty, housing, employment, and family. The presuppositions of the study are: first, the relationship between ex-prisoners and the community is not mutually exclusive as indicated in a number of studies. Much of the existing scholarship on the subject examines reentry on the basis of a micro, or individual, level assessment of the community impact on the individual ex-prisoner. Second, the existing leadership methodology within criminal justice and allied systems is insufficient to address the challenges facing communities, and individuals impacted by the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry.

Prisoner reentry may well present criminal justice leaders with challenges never before encountered within the profession. For correctional leaders, the historic framework from which organizations operated is rooted in autocratic, top-down leadership epistemology. The purpose of this study is to assess how prisoner reentry is impacting existing community structural factors that stabilize the existing social ecology of disadvantaged communities. It is clear that federal and state policymakers have given priority to the amelioration of the punitive laws that ushered in and sustained the mass incarceration era. Since 2002 correctional agencies have pursued the

development of programming designed to assist offenders guiding them toward successful reentry. The study of the impact of reentry on communities is relevant in the face of the pending mass return of individuals and the implications of these returns on the quality of life opportunities for residents in these neighborhoods.

Understanding the specific consequences associated with the interactive impact of prisoner reentry offers the opportunity for dynamic approaches to the practice of leadership that are suited for the knowledge era that is defining the 21st century. Through the investigation of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, criminal justice leaders can better understand the social context of reintegration. As we explore the full range of implications for communities disproportionately impacted by prisoner reentry, criminal justice leaders can be better positioned to apply the leadership methods that appropriately engage existing social systems, and mitigate the negative effects of reentry on employment, crime, housing, healthcare, and families. Beyond the implications for the criminal justice system, this study provides the opportunity to examine the management of complex adaptive systems within the confines of the interactive relationship between government entities and established community factors

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study will ultimately serve a dual purpose. It will address a significant gap in the academic research in the area of prisoner reentry by placing emphasis on the community perspective of the relationship between the individual and community structural factors. It will also provide criminal justice leaders with a theoretical foundation for addressing the unique challenges presented to the previously insular leadership practices of justice leaders.

A view of complexity leadership theory, situated in the context of the relationship between bureaucratic organizational hierarchy and the dynamic conditions of community

variables, will provide a leadership structure to guide correctional organizations in the strategic development of a continuum of care for ex-prisoners and the communities to which they disproportionately return. At this point in the history of the criminal justice system, as state agencies attempt to ally themselves with existing social systems embedded in the community, the study will further the understanding of appropriate knowledge era criminal justice leadership. In the attempt to work collaboratively, correctional agencies must be able to implement bilateral adaptive leadership strategies that foster new learning, innovation, and new patterns of behavior (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKinley, 2007).

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (characteristics) in a community where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing?
2. How can complexity leadership theory assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry?

### **Mass Incarceration: The Catalyst to the Reentry Dilemma**

The growth of prison populations in the United States and around the world has made recidivism studies and prisoner reentry a significant issue to address; however, the subject of prisoner reentry and its implications cannot be fully understood without a direct discussion on the conditions that have created it. The return of prisoners to the community after the completion of a term of incarceration is not historically unique. It is the current period, of what has become known as the era of mass incarceration that has created significant concern for both communities and the criminal justice system. The era of mass incarceration refers to a systemic response to



crime that resulted in federal, state, and local policy that focused on the strict enforcement of penalties for the commission of felony level crime.

The resultant impact of policy driven by a response to crime that saw the incapacitation of offenders as the only way to address crime is the overcrowding of the federal and state prisons systems around the United States. In 2009, the Pew Center on the States produced a report titled *One in 31* (Pew Center, 2009). This report highlighted two significant circumstances that had never occurred previously in the United States. First, the report stated that for the first time in history one in 100 adults living in the United States were incarcerated in jail or prison. Second one in 31 adults in this country were under some form of correctional supervision. This included federal or state prison, jail, parole, probation, and incarceration in a community-based correctional facility, i.e., a halfway house (Pew Center, 2009).

### **Positioning of the Researcher**

A 2002 study conducted by the Urban Institute examining prisoner reentry in the State of Ohio found that 68% of offenders exiting the state's prison facilities returned to the seven most populous counties within the state (LaVigne & Thomson, 2003). In 2002, the same year that LaVigne and Thomson (2003) were conducting their study of offender reentry and its impact on Ohio communities, I was assigned the task of working with family members of murder victims. I prepared them for death penalty clemency hearings with the parole board and for witnessing the execution of the condemned. In a particular case, the offender was Alton Coleman. Alton Coleman was a serial killer, murdering victims in five states in the early 1980s.

During the death penalty clemency hearing, the public defender and a pastor from the neighborhood in Coleman's hometown described the horrible conditions of his early childhood. The testimonials provided during the hearing illuminated the importance of the environmental

factors within communities and the impact on outcomes for individuals exposed to distinct social and economic disadvantage. In reflection, learning the background and conditions associated with Coleman's life was a key motivation for the idea that became the Urban Crime Prevention Initiative (UCPI). The combination of a sense of justice for marginalized populations and a desire to investigate implications of criminal justice policy on communities provides an explanation for my research interest. These interests include investigating how criminal justice professionals can engage communities and move them toward higher moral standards. The goal is to move communities to the engagement in actions that are conducive to the pro-social activities that mitigate the impact of criminal behavior, and criminal risk factors.

UCPI was a crime prevention strategy designed to integrate complex adaptive systems for the collective addressing of crime in socially disadvantaged communities. During this time, I developed an interest in how to utilize the knowledge and information from various agents or actors into producing effective outcomes relative to reducing crime and changing community responses to the conditions that produce crime.

In May of 2002, I witnessed the execution of Alton Coleman in the "death house" of the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility. As Alton Coleman struggled to complete the sentence "The Lord is my shepherd" from Psalm 23, I began to think of how I might address the issue of fairness in the lives of young people living in the conditions that produced a man like Alton Coleman. That night I wrote the concept paper that would later become the foundation of the Urban Crime Prevention Initiative.

Since 1998, my professional experience has included working within the field of criminal justice as an advocate for victims' rights, a crime prevention coordinator, and most recently as a public information officer. These professional experiences include firsthand observation of two

significant events that have changed the professional landscape for criminal justice practitioners. First, the events of 9/11 and the subsequent move within the law enforcement community to enhance interconnectivity of communication and information sharing among local, state, and federal agencies. Second, the development of a strategy within the state to enhance offender reentry programming from initial incarceration through release of the offender into the community (Rhine, 2002).

These two events highlighted the shortcomings of the criminal justice system's approach to integrating and coordinating complex adaptive systems. Further, these events demonstrated the importance of leadership and the identification of effective leadership strategies for the environment that now shaped the landscape of the criminal justice system.

In particular the experience of assisting law enforcement agencies in identifying the strategies of terrorist networks, in retrospect, allowed for a close examination of the self-organizing ability of unstructured entities with common goals. Similarly, the work with grass-roots victim services organizations and the creation of UCPI positioned me to better understand the way in which community structural factors and interconnected systems relate. These experiences provided practical experiences in the limited capacities of hierarchical structured organizations to handle the rapidity of changing environments, and volatile conditions that required real-time innovative problem-solving.

As a scholar-practitioner in the field of criminal justice, I believe I am best qualified to frame the issues surrounding the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on disadvantaged communities. My background as a community outreach worker in a non-profit social service agency in addition to my work with crime victims, and my experience with significant change

efforts involving complex adaptive systems, provide the greatest potential for a balanced approach and proper interpretation of the data collected in this study.

An important part of being a criminal justice professional is the ability to forecast and predict the potential implications of specific circumstances that have significance for public safety. The impact of ex-prisoner reentry on communities is such a circumstance, and warrants further investigation.

### **Rationale for Studying the Problem**

Over the past decade, just over three-quarters of a million people have been returned to communities from prison each year. This circumstance presents unique challenges to these individuals and the communities to which they return. The significance of these returns to the community is disproportionately felt in socially and economically disadvantaged communities.

The issue of ex-prisoner reentry is a multifarious social dilemma. The majority of the research on re-entry is either focused on the individual characteristics of the offender or the contributing neighborhood factors that contribute to recidivism. More obscure, but just as important, is the research related to the impact that this returning population will have on disproportionately disadvantaged neighborhoods. The prisoner reentry discussion has primarily focused on the individual coming home from prison, and the impact of local conditions on his or her successful integration into the community. This research includes a focus on how local and state resources can be galvanized to assist the transition of these individuals back into neighborhoods.

This study proposes to move the discussion of prisoner reentry beyond the linear relationship currently addressed in the literature, and inquire into the interactive impact of reentry by viewing the influence ex-prisoners have on the neighborhoods to which they return.

Certain inferences can be made about the impact that ex-prisoners returning to socially disadvantaged neighborhoods can have on various structural factors within the community. These assumptions are all negative, and are generally supported by the existing scholarship on offender reentry.

It has been well documented that over the last quarter century the United States experienced an explosion in incarceration rates. The inevitable repercussion of the mass incarceration, of approximately 300,000 incarcerated offenders in 1980 to nearly 2 million in 2006, will be the phenomena of mass reentry. Since socially disadvantaged communities experienced substantial disproportionate impacts from the coercive control efforts of the mass incarceration era, it is logical to predict that the impact of the return of the approximately 700,000 individuals, who have been returning from prison each year beginning in 2000, up from roughly 170,000 who historically returned, might exert a disproportionate impact on the social and economic framework of these same communities.

Most of the existing scholarship, and thus the historic and contemporary research on offender reentry, views the relationship between offenders and community in a linear fashion. These studies have paid close attention to the impact of particular community variables that may serve as predictors, or contributing factors, to offender recidivism. The extant literature has little to say about the reciprocal nature of these relationships. It remains to be determined if the return of ex-prisoners to communities has a proportional impact on community characteristics as may be assumed in linear relationships. The effects of the neighborhood conditions that may include significant temptations, including opportunities for drug use, drug trafficking, illicit sex, and crime, have a proportional impact on incarceration, and thus form a linear relationship, yet the same may not be true of the macro-level effects of prisoner reentry on neighborhoods.

The fact that scholars have only viewed the relationship in a linear fashion indicates that there is a major gap in research on offender reentry.

Research has primarily focused on the individual characteristics of ex-prisoners and the influence of community conditions on their ability to desist from future crime. In this way, the research has almost has almost been exclusively in one direction, and consisted of micro-analysis. The study of prisoner reentry must include an examination of the exertion of influence a significant population of ex-prisoners can have on the neighborhoods where they live. Further, there must be an acknowledgement that there are a wide range of variables that contribute to an ex-prisoner's successful reentry that move beyond the conditions of the community. Finally, academic investigators of the subject have not examined this phenomenon in a way that accepts the interconnectedness of ex-prisoners and communities.

The impact that the nearly three-quarters of a million returning men and women will have on communities is found in the areas of employment, crime, healthcare, housing, families, and poverty. Beyond these major impact areas identified in the research, the social implications associated with the high concentration of offender returns is almost inexhaustible. Just as 30 years of mass incarceration greatly affected both offenders and communities, the subsequent increase in ex-prisoners returning to specific communities threatens to impact specific community structural factors in much the same way.

The gap in the research literature related to the interactive nature of ex-prisoner reentry on communities is also indicative of the leadership methods expressly used within the criminal justice system to address challenges associated with ex-prisoner reentry. The primary concern for criminal justice leaders when addressing the return to the community of ex-prisoners has been solely tied to the issue of recidivism. The main objective when releasing an offender to the

community has been his or her ability to leave the correctional facility and not return to prison. There has been little concern for the local ecology of the fragile communities to which these prisoners disproportionately return (Ewald & Uggen, 2012).

### **Implications of New Policy**

The current emphasis on the mitigation of federal and state policy that ushered in an era of mass incarceration is essentially the reason we must acquire a more comprehensive understanding of ex-prisoner reentry. As previously discussed there exists a body of research examining risk factors associated with offender recidivism. Concurrent with these studies but to a lesser degree is a growing number of studies examining the impact of offender returns to the community, but not of how these two entities (ex-prisoners and communities) influence each other. The policies currently being crafted to address prison overcrowding will ultimately result in the increase of ex-offenders returning disproportionately to specific communities.

An example of new legislative reform exists in Ohio. Over the past 18 months the State of Ohio passed two significant pieces of legislation designed to address the prison crowding and the collateral consequences associated with felony convictions. On September 30, 2011, Ohio House Bill 86 (2011) was passed in the state legislature. House Bill 86 is designed to reform sentencing practices diverting first-time non-violent offenders from entering the prison system. Additionally, the new law allows the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to petition the court to provide a judicial release for offenders that have served 80% of their original sentence and have met certain requirements relative to standards of conduct and programming (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction [ODRC], 2012).

HB 86 also has a provision that allows offenders who have completed specific vocational training programs to receive a certificate of achievement that provides increased employment

opportunities by alleviating employer liability in the hiring of individuals with felony convictions. The second piece of legislation was passed by an Ohio governing body on June 30, 2012. This new law, Ohio Senate Bill 337 (2012), addresses the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction for individuals with a felony or misdemeanor on their record. Collateral consequences in this sense refer to the intended and unintended sanctions imposed on felons post release. These penalties are not related to the actual crime but serve to further punish those with felony convictions. In reality the collateral consequences of criminal conviction serve to diminish the capacity of these individuals to enjoy their rights of citizenship (Alexander, 2010). These include voting privileges, educational opportunities, housing, and employment.

The new laws in Ohio represent a national trend toward the development of policies driven to provide new opportunities for former felons while concurrently mitigating the negative practices during the mass incarceration era. While these laws and the complimentary practices that accompany them serve to provide better opportunity, there remains the question of what impact the increased population of ex-prisoners will have on the socially disadvantaged communities to which they primarily return.

### **High Risk Population**

Through increased ability to assess and analyze the needs of offenders and their risk to engage in criminal activity, prisons have become more adept at providing programs that address their specific needs while incarcerated. However, there is a reality that exists in the real world environment that must be examined. The number of individuals coming out of prison with significant problems, that require significant treatment, is a part of that reality for ex-prisoners and communities.



In a study assessing risk factors that included alcohol abuse, drug use, and mental health needs, Petersilia (2005) found that 40% of offenders scored at the highest level of risk of alcohol abuse, and nearly 50% at the highest risk category for drug abuse. It was also determined that 75% of prisoners were in the highest risk level of need for mental health services. Another interesting aspect of reentry studies is related to the reciprocal and mutual impact of being under-resourced for offenders who enter and exit the prison system with limited social and emotional resources. The other aspect of the issue is the ability of the community to provide the necessary support for these offenders in several distinct categories that enable rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society (Hochstetler, 2010).

### **Summary**

The concentrated return of ex-prisoners to disadvantaged communities stands to present unique challenges that will require adaptive leadership strategies in order to overcome its potential negative impacts. This chapter introduced the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, as a term used to describe the interconnected nature of the relationship between ex-prisoners and the communities to which they return. There is a significant gap in the academic literature relative to the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry. Further, the extant research does not include an academic investigation into the effective leadership methodologies to guide the collaborative efforts of criminal justice agencies and communities in establishing the most effective strategies to mitigate the effect of mass prisoner reentry on neighborhoods. This study will address the existing gap in the literature relative to the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, and thus add to the growing body of knowledge relative to the growing investigation of the subject. Second, the research will address the gap in the literature associated with prisoner reentry and scholarship in leadership studies.

Ex-prisoner reentry has moved from being a social phenomenon on the periphery of mainstream society to a social problem that impacts every facet of our major social institutions. Similar to the effects of epidemics that have swept through the population over the course of time causing disease and sickness, prisoner reentry threatens to dismantle moderately affluent communities, and permanently debilitate disadvantaged ones.

As we move from the era of mass incarceration into an era of mass reentry it is imperative that we examine the effects of the disproportionate return of ex-prisoners to the community. As the academic literature suggests, there are significant consequences for communities that will impact the quality of life of residents, and arrest their potential for economic and social privilege. Implications of my specific research interests include the development of a specific research strategy that, based on my position as a practitioner, I believe will present a clear picture of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry. Additionally, a theoretical model for leading prison systems and communities in the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners can be demonstrated. Communities that are marred by social disorganization and concentrated economic disadvantage would benefit from the applied scholarship in leadership studies applying a systems approach to incur substantive change. Leadership models that promote innovation, and problem solving while acknowledging the natural processes of intellectual capital that grow from group, or individual interaction can be sublime (Schwandt, 2008).

In Chapter II, Literature Review, I will examine the existing culture of inquiry and the academic discourse related to prisoner reentry and the proceeding effects of mass incarceration on the current and future circumstance of disproportionate ex-prisoner returns to disadvantaged communities. Several themes emanate from the body of literature on the impact of ex-prisoners on community life in specifically defined communities. The findings suggest that employment,

crime, housing, healthcare, crime, families, and poverty are consequential for communities with significantly high returns of ex-prisoners. These themes are drawn from several methodological approaches all designed to examine the impact of the offender population on the social ecology of communities. The result is a well-defined culture of inquiry that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the answer to the research question. The literature review will also provide the theoretical context for the discussion of the reintegration of ex-prisoners into disadvantaged communities. Furthermore, the scholarship related to prisoner reentry and the nexus with leadership studies is minimal. Studying the interactive impact of prisoner reentry through the lens of current leadership research will provide practical guidance for practitioners and criminal justice leaders. The close examination of these phenomena and the introduction of rigorous scholarship for those wishing to counter the negative effects of prisoner reentry on communities will create a platform for doing so.

The focus of the literature review will be the examination of the precursors to the prisoner reentry dilemma, the impact of ex-prisoner returns on community structural factors, and the role of leadership theory in the context of the interactive impact of prisoner reentry.

Chapter III, Methodology, is a presentation of a mixed methods approach to research that provides a flexible and adaptive process for data collection perfectly suited for the examination of the complex adaptive systems that form the varying agents associated with ex-prisoner reentry. The use of mixed methods inquiry allows for the testing of theoretical perspectives, the integration of survey data, embedded designs, and transformative data collection (Creswell, 2003).

My research will rely most heavily on the data collected through focus groups. The quantitative data collected through surveys, and the administrative data will be complimentary to

the qualitative data. The research design will include a three-phase approach. I foresee this dissertation as fundamentally involving a small sampling of administrative data in the first phase of the study. The second phase of data collection will derive from qualitative information emanating from focus groups. Third, a survey designed from thematic analysis of the focus group data will be administered to a larger sample. In an attempt to provide both a generalizable and transferable analysis of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on disadvantaged communities, my selected approach will consist of the above noted methodological approaches to inquiry.

The interconnected relationship between community and ex-prisoner population will be analyzed through the use of the mixed methods research strategy. The collection of data using the three-phase approach will rest within a case study. The heart of case study is the realization that its context is dependent on the knowledge and experience of the expert (Flyvbjerg, 2006). In this case, the experts are those individuals, inclusive of community residents, agency staff from state and local organizations, and those living with the ramifications of offender reentry. In the next section of this dissertation, I will examine and reflect on my examination of the literature related to the research tools and concept of case study for my dissertation research.

The remaining chapters of the study will include:

Chapter IV: Results of the Study, provides a description of the study participants, a detailed description of the survey contents, and analysis of the data.

In Chapter V of the study I examine the evidence and summarize the data with respect to the research question. In this chapter I will discuss the practical implications of the study, and the consequences of the results. This chapter will also include suggestions for further research in this area.

### **Implications for Leadership**

In the final chapter of the study I will provide an overview of the study and discuss a proposed model for leadership as it relates to ex-prisoner reentry and community interaction paradigm. Further, I will address the important role of leadership and put forward a model for assisting criminal justice and community leaders facing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry.

## **Chapter II: A Review of the Literature**

The purpose of this chapter is to situate this study within the academic discourse and culture of inquiry on ex-prisoner reentry and leadership. Through a review of the literature there will be an examination of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors including: employment, housing, healthcare, poverty, crime, and family. These structural factors provide the cornerstone of stability and infrastructure in formal community environments. While limited academic literature exists on the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, there has been a substantial amount of literature examining the collateral consequences of reentry, and the impact of mass incarceration on communities.

Increasingly, research scholars and practitioners have recognized the social significance of ex-prisoner reentry. As the number of individuals incarcerated in state and federal prisons has increased so has the number of individuals returning to the community from periods of incarceration. Individuals returning from prison are faced with numerous challenges to successful reintegration into community life. Because the majority of these ex-prisoners return to communities already characterized by distinct social and economic disadvantage, opportunities for success are greatly minimized.

The communities to which the majority of ex-prisoners return experience significantly higher rates of crime, joblessness, homelessness, and poverty. Coupled with anti-social constructs that include availability of illegal drugs, high concentrations of ex-prisoners, street gangs, and few informal social controls, the individual risk factors confronting returning prisoners is significant. Historically, the academic literature relative to prisoner reentry has focused on the contribution of individual-level characteristics of offenders to reoffending. These studies highlight factors such as mental illness, drug addiction, education level, gang affiliation,

and static factors such as race, gender, and family history in assessing the individual's risk of returning to prison (Petersilia, 2005).

Increasingly, scholars have begun to look at the influence of community context on the successful reentry of ex-prisoners. While these studies are significant in our understanding of ex-prisoners and the impact of the local community ecology on the offender, there remains a need to further understand the impact return of ex-prisoners exerts on the complex adaptive systems that are at play in the community, and structural factors in the neighborhoods to which they return.

### **Defining Prisoner Reentry**

Prisoner reentry is defined as the system of governance that surrounds the return of prisoners to the community following a period of incarceration in jail, prison, or detention facility (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2012). The system of prisoner reentry represents a plethora of management policies and programs offered to offenders to ensure a successful transition from incarceration to the community. The successful return of offenders to the community must include the appropriate levels of supervision from the criminal justice system to ensure a continuum of care that begins at the point of incarceration and moves through the actual return to the community, and beyond. Increasingly, over the last decade there has been realization among correctional leaders and allied professionals that successful reentry of ex-offenders is grounded in the ability to integrate these individuals into the fabric of the local society during incarceration and upon post-release supervision.

It is the American public's expectation that elected officials, representing various government agencies, will address the issue of crime. As the issue of crime has become a precarious political platform on which to stand, elected officials are less willing to call for

legislative actions that mete out harsh sentences and enact sanctions that have an unremitting effect on the privileges of citizenship of incarcerated men and women upon release because of the costs associated with incarceration (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002).

Lynch (2011) posits that the two most important factors in consideration of the growth of the U.S. prison population are the alteration of state penal codes and, in the aftermath of mass incarceration, policies that continue to pose high risk of a return to prison for offenders returning to communities. There are a broad range of political dynamics that influence the decisions of policymakers and elected officials that impact the ability of correctional leaders to address the technical and adaptive challenges associated with the view that harsh sentencing policy is the only pragmatic option to address crime and punishment.

One of the major difficulties posed by mass incarceration is the ecology in which it thrives. The incapacitation of individuals who prey upon the innocent and weak are necessary for an enjoyable quality of life. The issue of public safety is at the center of the debate over imprisonment in the United States. What has occurred is the politicization of the issue of crime and punishment. For nearly 50 years prior to the mass incarceration era, which began in the mid-1970s, the U.S. prison population remained stable. Correctional agencies employed a system that sought to identify the individual needs of offenders and implemented treatment, and specific programming designed to alter the anti-social attitudes, behaviors, and actions of the incarcerated. This system, adopted from the field of medicine was referred to as the medical model. The medical model flourished as standard correctional practice until a research study examined 236 prison programs, concluding that no program consistently contributed to the rehabilitation of prisoners (Martinson, 1974).



## **Nothing Works and Policy Specifics**

The get tough on crime legislation that has dominated the criminal justice system for the past 30 years is rooted in a change in a philosophical ideology that once preferred rehabilitation over retributive punishment. The literature points to a seminal research study conducted by Martinson (1974) as the veritable source of the change in the purpose of the correctional system. At the time of Martinson's study of prison programs the ideological stance of the field of corrections was the notion that crime was committed as the direct result of a specific biological, psychological, or sociological impediment within the criminal. In response to this belief, prison rehabilitative efforts took the form of hospital treatment as practitioners attempted to identify the specific issue relative to the prisoners' needs and applied treatment (Foster, 2006; Miller, Schreck, & Tewksbury, 2008).

Martinson's (1974) work emanates from a period during which a medical model was applied to offender rehabilitation. This period also included high profile prison riots, hunger strikes, and a general call for prison reform. While evaluating the existing rehabilitative programs within the New York Department of Corrections, in an attempt to ascertain empirical evidence to support that the existing programs were effective in rehabilitating offenders, Martinson found that nothing works. At least nothing works conclusively, or in a manner that is sustainable. The message, however, was that nothing works, and it was heard loud and clear by policymakers.

The evidence made clear that for the United States to address the issue of crime and provide safe communities for its citizens, the incarceration of dangerous felons was necessary. Martinson's (1974) research put teeth into President Richard Nixon's edict that America must

engage in a war against crime. The war was directed against those individuals that posed a threat to our cities, homes, and our very lives (Pager, 2007).

The war on crime paved the way for the next American war, “Just Say No,” coined from the catch phrase that emanated from the White House in 1988 as then President Ronald Reagan increased penalties for drug offenses, beginning with the Anti-drug Abuse Act (Foster, 2006). The stepped up efforts of the nation’s War on Drugs came after two high profile deaths involving professional athletes Don Rogers of the Cleveland Browns and Len Bias, the highly touted first-round draft pick of the National Basketball Association’s Boston Celtics. Although the deaths of Rogers and Bias were not directly attributed to crack cocaine, the primary focus of enforcement efforts was directed at crack cocaine dealers and addicts (Alexander, 2010). The accumulation of these circumstances has resulted in the mass incarceration phenomenon.

For much of its duration, the mass incarceration era and the circumstance of ex-prisoner reentry has taken place on the periphery of the American political landscape. The problem of crime and incarceration was largely viewed as an inner-city or urban problem attributed to poor African Americans and Latinos. The formerly diminutive issue of crime, incarceration, and prisoner reentry has grown into an all-encompassing penal system. The carceral state has extended to influence aspects of politics, key institutions, and has impeded the opportunity for full engagement in the privileges afforded by full citizenship to significant portions of the population (Gottschalk, 2011). Why then has the issue of mass incarceration and prisoner reentry moved up the political relevance ladder over the last eight years?

The major reason mass incarceration and prison reentry have become mainstream issues is that the costs associated with incarceration are depleting state budgets. Across the country, states are estimated to have spent more than \$47 billion in general funds on corrections and

another \$2.5 billion for probation and parole (Imas, 2009). The criminal justice system spends billions of dollars on the custody and supervision of offenders. The current economic fiscal downturn has led states to seek assistance in changing/developing policies in an effort to reduce prison overcrowding and thus eliminate costs associated with housing offenders.

### **A Prelude to the Increased Ex-Prisoner Population**

The stepped up efforts of the nation's "Just Say No" war on drugs came after two high profile deaths involving professional athletes Don Rogers of the Cleveland Browns and Len Bias, the highly touted first-round draft pick of the National Basketball Association's Boston Celtics. Although the deaths of Rogers and Bias were not directly attributed to crack cocaine, the primary focus of enforcement efforts was directed at crack cocaine dealers and addicts (Alexander, 2010).

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### **The Mass Incarceration Era**

For over 50 years prior to the ideological shift from the medical model of prisoner reform, the United States maintained an incarceration rate of 110 persons per 100,000. The prison population in the United States remained constant during the time period. Crime and ways to apply the elements of deterrence remained primarily in the hands of local authorities. Beginning in the early 1970s with President Nixon's declaration of a "war on crime" raising the issue of crime to national prominence through to the beginning of the 21st century the nation's prison population quadrupled with over 1 million adults populating the state correctional institutions (Travis & Petersilia, 2001). The last decade has seen the prison population in

America grow to over 2 million. The era of mass incarceration, a term coined by Garland (2001), is used to describe the drastic increase in the contemporary U.S. prison population as compared to historic incarceration rates over time. The time period of this increase in incarceration has been marked by the politicization of crime and the influence of the media, which has shaped the public perception of criminal identity. Critical to the construction of the collective thought of the public relative to crime were several high profile crimes that “shocked and outraged the nation” (Clear, 2007, p. 52).

In the 1988 presidential campaign, presidential hopeful Michael Dukakis maintained a healthy lead over George Bush until campaign ads featuring convicted killer Willie Horton were aired. In 1987, while involved in a Massachusetts work release program that allowed him to leave prison Horton repeatedly raped a Maryland woman while seriously assaulting her fiancé with a knife. Subsequent to the fervor caused by the Horton political advertisement, the nation was again appalled by the murder of Polly Klass, a nine-year-old child who was abducted from her home in California by a recent parolee. These events were followed by the murder of Megan Kanka by a New Jersey parolee who had been previously convicted of a sex crime. These crimes and those like them in communities around the country spawned federal and state legislative action that sought to toughen sentencing and community supervision stipulations (Clear, 2007).

The concept of criminal identity is the perpetual and systemic approach that categorizes individuals into roles based on a created heuristic that distinctively personifies the criminal. Further, the era of mass incarceration has been conspicuous by an adherence to correctional methodologies that emanate from an epistemological position that situates the criminal justice system within a retributive and “racialized” paradigm. The case of Willie Horton epitomized the personification and racial connotations that many associated with identity of the criminal. These

practices have disproportionately impacted those in lower socioeconomic and minority communities (Pager, 2007).

The sensationalism and stereotyping of the criminal element coupled with the impact of high-profile crimes made it easy to implement enforcement intensive approaches to policing. Additionally, the retributive sentencing strategies that called for criminals to serve 85% of their sentences or definite sentences that offered no parole with increased community supervision stipulations increased incarceration and recidivism rates. Despite the recent call for significant increases in rehabilitative programs and an emphasis on successful prisoner reentry programming stimulated by the Second Chance Act of 2002, the oppositional positioning of proponents of get tough on crime polices have made the issue of prisoner reintegration a political conundrum.

It is the American public's expectation that elected officials representing various government agencies will address the issue of crime. As the issue of crime has become a precarious political platform on which to stand the willingness of elected officials to call for legislative actions that mete out harsh sentences and enact sanctions that have an assiduous effect on the privileges of citizenship of incarcerated men and women upon release are not in vogue because of the costs associated with incarceration (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002). It is the contention of some scholars that the growth of the carceral state is best explained by the specific demographic, crime rates, and socio-economic variables that characterize individual states. Lynch (2011) posits that the two most important factors in consideration of the growth of the U.S. prison population is the alteration of state penal codes, and in the aftermath of mass incarceration, policies that continue to pose high risk of a return to prison for offenders returning to communities.

## **Parole and the Revolving Door to Prison**

Prisoners who enter the correctional system are under a systematic deracination or coercive removal from their families and communities, given the negative credential of a felony conviction, housed with individuals in similar states of pathos, and then returned to the socio-economically disadvantaged communities from which they came (Padfield & Maruna, 2006). As highlighted by Kurbin and Stewart (2006), the successful return to the community from prison has always been plagued by significant barriers to the individual. In the modern era these significant challenges include the unprecedented numbers of individuals returning to the community. In addition, the current economic downturn, tenuous labor market, and the increased use of technology make the successful return to the community more problematic for ex-prisoners. While these factors contribute significantly to the recidivism of a substantial number of ex-prisoners, it has been the policy framework that has been less than pragmatic in properly regulating the conditions of community supervision that has most significantly contributed to mass incarceration.

The convergence of ex-prisoners returning to socially disadvantaged communities and the conditions of supervision for individuals with a plethora of unmet needs contribute to increased technical violations of parole supervision. These violations result in the return of individuals under community supervision to prison (Petersilia, 2001). The social phenomenon of mass incarceration has primarily focused on the arrest and subsequent incapacitation of criminals due to the formal sentencing structure of the justice system. Although discussed to a lesser degree in the academic literature but just as significant in the discourse relative to mass incarceration is the return to prison of those under community supervision. The subject of prisoner returns has been primarily found in the research literature on the subject of prisoner reentry.

Travis and Petersilia (2001) note that the discussion related to ex-prisoners has not typically originated with a review of the impact of community supervision on prisoner reentry and mass incarceration. However, in the decade since this study, the evidence is highly suggestive that the issue of parole supervision is a significant contributor to the epidemic of mass incarceration. The structure of intensive parole supervision methods has not resulted in the reduction of arrests for new crimes but has contributed to the violation of the conditions of supervision for ex-prisoners found to be in non-compliance with the rules of supervision. This circumstance has resulted in a significant contribution to the rates of incarceration being experienced in the United States (Pryor, 2010).

### **Collateral Consequences of Mass Incarceration**

There are several central themes discussed in the academic literature relative to mass incarceration. Central to the discourse on mass incarceration are the collateral consequences associated with being imprisoned. The collateral consequences of incarceration refer to the intended and unintended sanctions imposed on felons post release. These penalties are not related to the actual crime but serve to further punish those with felony convictions. Invisible punishment is the term provided by Mauer and Chesney-Lind (2002) for the continued punishments experienced by ex-prisoners as they provide insight into the extent of the impact of the sanctions against felons.

The tangible effects of these invisible punishments manifest in reduced opportunity for the social and economic empowerment of individuals with criminal convictions. Having a criminal conviction on an official record serves as a punishment that goes beyond the intention of the conviction to serve as a limited time of punishment. In a recent study, Pager (2007) demonstrated the impact that a criminal mark can have on opportunities for ex-offenders. Pager's

study examined the percentage at which prospective employers would contact applicants to determine the effects directly attributed to criminal status. In testing white applicants only, she found that 34% of the applicants without criminal records received job callbacks compared to only 17% of whites with criminal histories. The Pager study concludes that a criminal record reduced the potential employability for a white person with a criminal record by 50%. The study also examined the impact of a criminal record on Black applicants. The study found that only 5% of the Black applicants received a callback, “despite the fact that these testers were bright, articulate college students with effective styles of self-presentation” (Pager, 2007, p. 80). Blacks without a criminal record received a callback at a rate of 14%.

Beyond the impact of the penalties for imprisonment on individual felons, many of the unintended consequences extend into the lives of the children, parents, and communities that are inextricably linked. The effects of the policy decisions that have resulted in over 30 years of mass incarceration have equally diminished opportunity for the self and community efficacy necessary for the establishment of stabilized community and individual lives. Clear (2007) contributes to the understanding of the tangential effects of mass incarceration through the investigation of its impact on communities. Clear establishes an empirical truth as he highlights the fact that incarceration is not proportionate relative to the populations entering and exiting correctional facilities. Just as incarceration is not proportionate as compared to the general population, the effects of the collateral consequences of incarceration are felt most deeply among the socially disadvantaged (Mears, Wang, & Bales, 2008).

### **Epidemiology and the Impact of Mass Incarceration**

The impact of elevated incarceration rates within communities characterized by high rates of unemployment, poverty, and minority populations is equated to the impact of a high



mortality endemic disease. Relative to public health, epidemiologists base the importance of an epidemic on size, small scale or large scale, and the loss of life or disability caused by the disease (Drucker, 2011). Drucker posits that a normative view of imprisonment does not meet the criteria for consideration as a disease, but an “epidemiological analysis of mass incarceration reveals that it meets all the important criteria for being an epidemic” (para. 2). In examining the criteria, Drucker highlights the rapid growth rate of incarceration, the breadth of the problem (large-scale), and the self-sustaining properties of the phenomenon.

According to Drucker (2011), health epidemics are characterized by their immensity and the subsequent mortality rate, or disability produced by the crisis. Comparisons can be drawn between mass incarceration and health epidemics along the lines of the disproportionate impact that both have on the socioeconomically disadvantaged. Included in the comparisons between epidemiological factors and elements of mass incarceration is the destabilizing effects on communities that experience high rates of imprisonment among residents (Clear, 2007).

The effects of mass incarceration on local communities are substantial as it relates to the large-scale ramifications for the quality of life for individuals in disadvantaged communities. Implications for communities subject to destabilization as a result of mass incarceration face a far more nefarious future as local neighborhoods prepare for the disproportionate return of historic numbers of ex-prisoners. Clearly, families are disrupted, social networks are interrupted; employment opportunities are dissolved, and personal well-being is jeopardized by mass incarceration and the pending reentry of ex-prisoners (Massoglia, 2008a). Prior to examining the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, it is necessary to fully explore the social phenomenon of mass incarceration and the tenets that characterize the issue.

Central to the idea that mass incarceration includes several peripheral consequences that impact key community structural conditions are the underlying variables that contribute to the disease of mass incarceration. Unfortunately, the risk factors that contribute to this endemic have remained stable over time. Key to the static nature of the variables that contribute to the negative outcomes associated with high incarceration rates is that inadequate measures have been implemented to ensure success for those released from prison. More simply stated the mass incarceration epidemic flourishes because of an ample supply of individuals from socially and economically disadvantaged communities. Among the reviewed literature the work of Pager (2007) supports the idea that incarceration is closely associated with limited opportunity for social and economic advancement. The reciprocity in the relationships among the variables of arrest, incarceration, and social disadvantage provide an interactive impact between incarceration and ex-prisoner recidivism.

The reflexive response of incarceration is the creation of fragility within the fabric of local communities. The sum of extensive incarceration is further demonstrated in the impact of ex-prisoner returns on the macro-system that extends beyond the individual characteristics of those returning to the community from prison. The literature on prisoner reentry provides clear evidence that the reciprocity of this phenomenon diminishes both collective efficacy and self-agency (Massoglia, 2008b).

There have been a sufficient number of studies conducted on the issue of mass incarceration and the subsequent collateral consequences associated with the approach that has become the high impact criminal justice occurrence of the last half-century. Significant in this review of the literature is a focus on the influences of mass incarceration that signify the extent to which the mass incarceration of a substantial portion of the population impacts the entire

society. While policymakers and correctional leaders are focusing on measures to address mass incarceration, the key to the success of these strategies will be the ability of leaders to devise methodological frameworks from which to reduce prisoner recidivism and minimize the impact of mass incarceration on fragile communities. In the field of practice criminal justice leaders are beginning to reflect on the academic research community in acknowledging that the prison system's expansion must be stunted for the well-being of communities, and economies. Just as the academic discourse outlines a course toward this understanding, there is a starting point in the academic discussion that must be reviewed.

### **Economics and the Criminal Justice Crisis**

As prison populations have increased, the expense of incarceration has taken a toll on the budgets of state governments. From the beginning of the 21st century, several notable scholars attempted to get the attention of policymakers and government officials; warning them of the pending financial crisis that would result from the continuation of policy that increased incarceration rates (Mauer, 2007). The environment in which the criminal justice system and its leaders currently find themselves is best described as posing both technical and adaptive challenges. This circumstance provides a unique opportunity for scholarship on leading change to provide a framework from which the criminal justice system can draw conclusions related to the most profound methodologies of practice for addressing these challenges (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009).

A scholarly perspective on leadership defines technical challenges as those structural variables that can be remedied through diagnosis of data collection, and potentially remedied through the restructuring of policy. Adaptive challenges refer to those issues that result from the iterative processes of working with others.

As criminal justice leaders attempt to diagnose the far reaching impacts of mass incarceration, adaptive leadership techniques that assist in the implementation of ideas, data analysis, and remodeled interventions will be essential to address the problems associated with the consequences of mass incarceration. In October of 2011, the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services attempted to engage scholars and practitioners in a discussion related to the development of a strategic plan for the development of best practices in criminal justice research and practice. The following section of this essay will provide an overview of how scholars in Ohio propose to address the unique challenges posed to criminal justice professionals during the fiscal crisis that shapes the national landscape.

Across the country, states are estimated to have spent more than \$47 billion in general funds on corrections. Add in another \$2.5 billion for probation and parole (Imas, 2009). The criminal justice system spends billions of dollars on the custody and supervision of offenders. Ohio has not escaped the fiscal impact of costs associated with its correctional system.

Ohio faces significant criminal justice challenges against the backdrop of a total budget shortfall estimated at more than \$8 billion. Although, Ohio has created modern justice strategies in high impact areas such as criminal risk assessment and made available funding for community corrections programs that have provided the system the ability to concentrate on prison overcrowding, further reforms can help the state both control costs and improve public safety. The budget for the Ohio prison system is approximately \$1.79 billion.

Furthermore, Ohio spends 7.3% of its budget on corrections, compared with the national average of 6.7%. Levin (2010) states that, "If current policies are maintained, the state projects that the prison system will need another 5,330 beds by 2018, which would require \$424 million in construction costs and \$501 million in annual operating costs" (p. 3). The issues related to the

challenges being presented to the prison system in Ohio are often viewed and presented in numerical fashion. For justice professionals who work with the victims impacted by crime, the increase in prison population represents at least one victim of a violent crime per offender. The realities of tough economic circumstances set against 40 years of the “mass incarceration” mentality could prove to be a tough challenge as elected officials such as judges, prosecutors, and sheriffs have found that being viewed as soft on crime is not a winning formula during elections.

The prison population in Ohio exceeds the system’s rated capacity of 38,665 by 30%. The current offender population stands in proximity to 51,000. Like no other time in its history, Ohio, along with the rest of the country is facing a crisis in how to resolve the issue of crime, punishment and the restoration of offenders to communities while providing safety for victims. Leaders in the criminal justice field are not new to problem solving, however, the complexity of these current issues present diverse technical difficulties. Without an ideological shift in the way decision-makers view who deserves a prison sentence versus alternative measures of punishment, Ohio and many other states do not have the infrastructure to accommodate the current rates of new admissions to prisons.

### **Social Disorganization Theory**

Explanations for the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry theoretically lay in the criminological category under social disorganization theory. Formulated by Shaw and McKay (1942) two researchers from the University of Chicago, social disorganization theory attempts to explain why some communities are more conducive to crime using a macro-view of community versus an individualized or micro-view of the criminal (Miller et al., 2008).

Social disorganization theory assists us in moving away from the historic inclination to view prisoner reentry based on the individualistic character traits of the offenders as a determinate in successful reintegration to an expanded view of the importance of the local ecological system and its role in successful ex-prisoner reintegration. Social disorganization theory is important in the ex-prisoner reentry discussion because the majority of individuals coming home from prison overwhelmingly return to communities characterized as socially disorganized (Rose & Clear, 1998).

In a 2002 study conducted by the Urban Institute examining prisoner reentry in the State of Ohio, it was learned that 68% of offenders exiting state prison facilities returned to the seven most populous counties within the state (LaVigne & Thomson, 2003). Within those counties, these offenders returned to communities where a persistent inability to maintain effective social controls existed (Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001). Simply stated, the majority of ex-offenders exiting prison facilities return to communities characterized as disadvantaged, and defined by the conditions that are the basis for the theoretical position outlined by social disorganization theory.

In regard to the issue of offender reentry, a quote from a bulletin produced by The Council of State Governments (CSG, 2008) states that

In every state there are a handful of high-stakes communities to which most people released from prisons and jails return; these are also the communities where taxpayer-funded programs are disproportionately focused. State and community agencies often provide costly uncoordinated services to the same neighborhoods, and to the same families, without successful outcomes. (p. 1)

This is especially true of programs designed to assist offenders returning to the community. Communities that are classified as socially disorganized are unable to adhere to the common values expressed by the residents within the community boundary. Furthermore, these

communities are ineffective in the establishment of common values, and social controls. Social disorganization theory makes the basic assumption that all citizens have the desire to live in an area void of crime, where conditions are conducive to a sense of security, and safety (Rose & Clear, 1998).

Social disorganization theory is widely accepted in both criminological and sociological disciplines. In the interest of this study, the application is in relation to the theory's postulation that deficiencies within community characteristics are precursors to the destabilization of the community. Additionally, these communities are typically defined by residents with poor educational backgrounds, and high unemployment. It is within this context that the impact of the high concentration of ex-prisoner returns is examined in this study. Social disorganization allows us to view a community as the sum of the collective behaviors of its components as opposed to the qualities of the individuals who live there (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

### **The Impact of Reentry on Community Structural Factors**

In my review of the academic literature related to the impact of prisoner reentry and mass incarceration it is significant to note that the majority of the academic literature spans over three decades and that a large percentage of the research was conducted in last 10 years. It is apparent that the phenomenon of significant mass incarceration rates, occurring since the late 1980s, has caught the attention of researchers examining the impact of the collateral consequences of prison overcrowding and the high concentration of ex-prisoner returns to communities. In 1990, 10 years prior to the majority of research conducted in the area of community reintegration, the national prison population was stable at approximately 713,000. The prison population steadily increased and by the conclusion of 2001 the prison population stood at 1,330,000 (Foster, 2006).

These figures provide the most plausible explanation as to why the preponderance of research has been conducted on the subject during the last decade.

While the release and return of prisoners is not a new circumstance, the data provided above, associated with the number of ex-prisoners returning to communities, has led criminal justice practitioners and policymakers to consider prisoner reentry a critical issue and worthy of examination. The work of Kurbin and Stewart (2006) shed light on the community context of prisoner reentry, and that work has been explicated more recently in the literature as being significant to the discussion on reentry.

While the work of Kurbin and Stewart (2006) highlights the need for a macro-view of reentry and the existing community conditions that determine successful reintegration, there remains in the academic discourse a need to discuss the impending return of this high risk population on the existing community structural factors. Hipp (2010a) highlights how social scientists have continually pointed to the role of community characteristics in explaining the pervasiveness of crime in communities defined as socially disorganized. Overwhelmingly, the literature relative to social disorganization theory in the context of mass incarceration cites specific foundational elements as being necessary for the efficacy of a community.

The literature describes the influence of the structural factors of a community on the individual and the neighborhood effect(s). Neighborhood effects are defined as the impact of neighborhood characteristics on social interaction that influences socio-economic outcomes or behaviors of an individual (Dietz, 2002). The importance of this study is the examination of the influence of ex-prisoners on these community structural factors, and the cascading effect of this population on social interactions across disciplines to include the collective neighborhood. While there are a multitude of characteristics that define a neighborhood and that are affected by



prisoner reentry; the consensus drawn from the literature is that there are six structural elements generally influenced by prisoner reentry.

Because research examining neighborhood effects also includes characteristics of neighborhoods as well as the composition of populations, research on the influence of ex-prisoner reentry serves to provide an expansion of the existing literature on neighborhood effects (Dietz, 2002). The question remains, what does this mean for resident quality of life in the intersection of reentry, and neighborhoods? The ensuing paragraphs in this chapter will address the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors that include: housing, crime, employment, healthcare, poverty, and family as presented in previous academic inquiry.

### **Housing**

Another specific aspect of prisoner reentry that should draw more attention from scholars is the impact of prisoner returns on communities that are moderately stable with aspects of collective efficacy and where a substantial number of residents exhibit self-agency and self-sufficiency. Two significant aspects of the local ecology of neighborhoods may be substantially affected by returning offenders. First, are the impediments to housing opportunities across racial lines? Research indicates that on average blacks and Latinos have fewer economic resources than whites (Hipp, 2010b). While it may be safe to assume that everyone desires to live in a safe environment, the reality is the lack of economic and social resources in minority communities limit their ability to move when the perception of danger exists due to increased crime.

There is a distinct correlation between mass reentry and increased property and violent crime rates. While the effects of incapacitation have a moderate effect on crime levels, the reintroduction of ex-prisoners has proven to significantly increase capacity for crime

involvement (DeFina & Hannon, 2010). A result of the increase in crime is the movement of more affluent whites and in some cases minorities to neighborhoods perceived to be safer. The resultant impact of this condition is the decrease of community affluence and increase in economic disadvantage which often manifests in poor housing conditions, and options for community residents (Xie & McDowall, 2010).

The lack of suitable housing establishes a barrier to successful reintegration in the community. Beyond being physically situated outside the walls of the correctional facility, permanent housing creates a sense of belonging for the former offender (Thompson, 2008). In addition, to the sense of belonging, established residence is an advantage to gaining employment, and receiving the necessary services to enhance the well-being of the returning citizen (Rhine & Thompson, 2011). The second reentry impact is in the area of crime and its subsequent effects on neighborhoods.

### **Crime**

While crime and violence permeate the very fabric of our society, empirical data suggests that crime disproportionately impacts individuals and communities within specific racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries. The concentration of the return of inmates with the convergence of pressing problems related to violent crime in these locations are significant and have important implications for the communities involved. The most pressing issue in regard to the high number of inmates returning to these areas is the destabilized social networks and social relationships within neighborhoods. Several notable researchers have addressed the association between the high concentrations of offender returns to specific communities directly to increased crime. The general thought of those investigating this specific issue conclude that the influx of ex-offenders returning to communities creates additional social disorganization and drives

contemporaneous crime rates up (Defina & Hannon, 2010; Hipp & Yates, 2011; Morenoff et al., 2001; Rose & Clear, 1998). Further, the positive result of mass incarceration has been counterbalanced by the returns of these offenders to the community (Defina & Hannon, 2010).

The methods used to learn about the impact of reentry on crime rates include a mixed methods study by Hipp and Yates (2011). These researchers desired to answer the question, “Is there a relationship between the change in parolees within a census tract and the change in crime rate?” Hipp and Yates used a correlational design utilizing empirical data from the Sacramento, California, census tract records from 2003 through 2006. The result of the Sacramento study confirmed the assumptions of the researchers. The evidence gathered gave support to the idea that increased numbers of parolees within a census tract result in increased crime. There is a common thought among practitioners that criminal justice policy dictates that there must be increased surveillance of parolees and ex-prisoners. These policies typically result in the removal of large numbers of residents from the community. The removal of residents as a result of arrest and the subsequent returns of offenders further de-stabilize the community (Rose & Clear, 1998).

As we review the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on employment and crime we see some interrelationship between these two community structural factors. Ecological theories related to crime causation, of which social disorganization is one, seeks to explain crime through the examination of the social characteristics of a community. Identified socially disorganized communities experience high levels of unemployment, which is exacerbated by the returns of ex-prisoners. The fact that non-criminal residents and ex-prisoners are unemployed and therefore more likely to interact creates an increased potential for crime engagement and the victimization of community residents. The methodological approaches to prisoner reentry, specifically

analyzing the issue of crime, have provided a thorough and complete survey of the issue by utilizing quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method investigative strategies.

In order to properly understand the contemporary problems related to increased crime rates caused by concentrated offender returns, this study has examined the existing knowledge obtained through research. As previously discussed, Hipp and Yates (2011) conducted a mixed method study. The synthesis and analysis of the same phenomena utilizing both a quantitative and qualitative research design provides a complete picture of the problem of increased crime as a result of ex-prisoner reentry (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009).

Recent reports submitted by law enforcement agencies through the Uniformed Crime Reporting System indicate that violent crime has declined. Nevertheless, violent crime in historically high crime urban areas has remained consistently high and is increasing. While crime and violence permeate the very fabric of our society, empirical data suggests that crime disproportionately impacts individuals, and communities within specific racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic boundaries.

## **Employment**

The investigation of the impact of ex-offender reentry on the economy and specifically on employment in the community has been accomplished in a manner consistent with the balanced approach to research demonstrated previously in this study. Quantitative studies, using descriptive methods appear in articles written by leading academicians Grogger (1995), Rose and Clear (1998), and Western (2007), assert that communities discount the returning offender populations and thus, although incarceration ultimately diminishes employment opportunity, overestimate the economic well-being of the community. Essentially, the returning offender population is consigned to a life-course inclusive of a low probability of employment and

increased risk of re-arrest (Grogger, 1995). Grogger employed an ex-post facto research design that examined the relationship between previous incarceration and employment status. The focus on empiricism provides a general understanding of the fixed condition most ex-prisoners will face when reentering the community. Other researchers have selected phenomenological designs that provide insight into the direct experience of the plight of ex-offenders seeking employment.

In describing the impact of concentrated returns on neighborhoods defined as socially disorganized, we must note that these communities are the victims of economic abandonment. Further, since these communities lack the economic base to support job growth that will cause ex-prisoners and community residents to suffer exponentially as the remnants of social capital move to more stable neighborhoods. The high concentration of returns in these specific communities will make persistent the weak social structure of the community to include employment opportunity and informal social controls needed for community self-governance (Rose & Clear, 1998).

The methods of inquiry used to investigate the impact of returning ex-prisoners on employment proved to be effective in addressing the research question. However, the analysis presented in the qualitative studies failed to provide in-depth information related to the research subjects and the positioning of the researchers. Information related to the subjects would assist readers in drawing proper conclusions about the transferability of the findings. There remain strong inferences in the existing body of knowledge that the research findings enable us to conclude that concentrated offender returns to disadvantaged communities will have a negative impact on resident life. A final critique of the topical area is related to the positioning of the researchers. Absent from each of the studies was an adequate presentation of the observers. Because qualitative study involves the researcher being a participant, or at least engaging the

study population, it is imperative that we know more about their positioning in order to ascertain the level of researcher bias that may influence the study results (Ritchie & Lewis, 2007).

## **Healthcare**

There is substantial evidence to demonstrate the correlation between incarceration and chronic health related issues (Massoglia, 2008b). Several academicians who have investigated prison populations and the growth of the prison industrial complex have noted concern over the rates of disease, and other significant health issues experienced by those in the penal system. Historically, research involving the nexus between incarceration and inmate health focused on outcomes dealing with suicide and depression in relation to the experience of prison (Liebling & Maruna, 2005). Studies of the prison population over the course of the last decade note that 15% of all persons with HIV and 40% of all individuals with hepatitis C have been counted among the prison population during their life-course. This coupled with recent episodes of tuberculosis cases have made the presence of these diseases on par statistically with some third world nations (Farmer, 2002). In general, the collective effects of an incarceration experience expose prisoners to the many high-risk activities that are prevalent in a correctional environment.

The negative effect(s) of exposure to infectious disease often evolves into a far greater healthcare issue for prisoners because of the exposure to the negative effects of stress over time. The literature on the human reaction to stress is summarized by Halfon and Hochstein (2002) who posit that “severe or chronic stress” creates vulnerability within an individual making them susceptible to illness and disease.

The literature relative to the impact of ex-prisoner returns on healthcare demonstrates that these individuals exhibit a significant need for healthcare services (Thomas & Thorne, 2006). Communities that contain high levels of concentrated disadvantage, and thus social

disorganization, often exhibit an inability to collectively petition mainstream society for necessary resources to serve the population (Hipp & Yates, 2011). The inability to mount a coordinated effort to petition for the necessary resources to serve the population is compounded by that fact that these communities do not provide the proximity to services in the area thus creating an overload on the existing limited resources available (Hipp, Petersilia, & Turner, 2010). The temporary amelioration of health problems in the offender population, as a result of treatment provided in prison, are either quickly overcome or non-existent when these individuals return to the community. This is due, in part, to the inability to access the necessary services and care (Ewald & Uggen, 2012).

### **Poverty**

Previous research on prisoner reentry has brought to the surface some pressing issues related to the reintegration of ex-prisoners into the community context. The majority of these studies indicate that the most pressing issue is related to the community variables that serve as predictors for recidivism (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006). The Kurbin and Stewart study assists in establishing the argument that the most pressing issue related to prisoner reentry is the impact on community structural factors resulting from the absorption of ex-prisoners into these communities.

While the majority of the literature does not specifically address the impact of returns on communities, with regard to poverty, a few researchers have come close enough for some specific themes to be examined. Of the themes examined by the literature in relation to employment, crime, and poverty, poverty is the most prevalent in the lives of individuals who reside in communities most impacted by prisoner reentry. In examining the issue of poverty, it

should be noted that it is considerably distinguishable from employment and crime, which have a more direct association with the actions and behaviors associated with the ex-prisoner.

Poverty is distinguishable in that it is an outcome of the conditions that exist among the other community characteristics. The literature related to prisoner reentry and mass incarceration leads us to conclude that as the return of ex-prisoners changes the other community structural factors it culminates in the diminishing of the political, social, and economic ability of the community. The overarching disenfranchisement of community results in the establishment of an embedded and prevailing characteristic of poverty (Sampson & Morenoff, 2006).

Poverty is a definite collateral consequence of the high concentration of offender returns to specifically defined communities. The social impact of poverty has far reaching implications, especially since the welfare of families has long been viewed a primary responsibility of law and policymakers (Defina & Hannon, 2010). The increase in ex-prisoner population creates an increase in socioeconomic disadvantage that is directly correlated to increased crime and poverty rates. The impact of socioeconomic disadvantage is most acute within racial and ethnic minority communities (Bennett & Frazier, 2000). This fact, combined with the other significant impact areas of concentrated offender returns, has significant implications for practitioners across a broad range of academic and professional disciplines.

The cascading effects of ex-prisoner reentry ripple through entire communities. The essential elements that stabilize communities can be unhinged by the significant number of returning citizens to these neighborhoods. Reentry represents a core element of criminal justice policy. The intersection between the criminal justice system and communities impacted by reentry present unique and unprecedented challenges for the systems involved as the existing



social ecologies prepare to embrace an increase in residents returning from the prison environment (Rhine & Thompson, 2011).

### **Family**

In light of the influence of ex-prisoner returns on community structural factors none is more traumatic than the impact of returns on the core of all communities, the family. The ripple effect of mass incarceration and reentry affects every aspect of social life (Ewald & Uggen, 2012). Incarceration has a destabilizing outcome for all existing familial relationships. The fact that incarceration is most prevalent among males even results in the diminishing of potential marital relationships (Edin, 2000).

Braman (2004), in his work *Doing Time on the Outside*, highlights the discussion about how the fact that mass incarceration has reshaped family life in the United States is missing from the reentry equation. In his overview of the effects of incarceration and reentry, Braman interviews families directly impacted by the incarceration of a family member. It is apparent from the interviews that incarceration and the subsequent reentry of individuals from prison make it very difficult to establish long-term meaningful relationships.

Previous research on the effects of mass incarceration, specifically the issue of coercive mobility outlined by Clear (2007), reflects that it has deeply fragmented family relationships. The cumulative effect- of sentencing policies, mass incarceration, and prisoner reentry has rested heavily upon the family. While the impact of reentry on families is intrinsically qualitative, McClanahan and Booth (1989) cite the increase in mother-led families as being a significant impact of mass incarceration. According to their research, approximately 9% of families in the United States were headed by single-mothers in the 1960s. By 1990, that number had increased to 20%. The increase in these figures corresponds with the increased incarceration rates

experienced in the United States during the era of mass incarceration (McClanahan & Booth, 1989).

In examining the effects of incarceration on marriage Western (2007) attributes the rise in single-mother headed households on two primary developments: high incarceration rates coupled with high mortality rates as being significant in the increase of households headed by single-mothers. For many men the associated social attachments and relationship of marriage prevent them from engaging in the anti-social behaviors that lead to incarceration. If as Warr (1998) states “marriage is good for criminal desistance” (p. 187), what is the effect of incarceration on marriage? While the increase in single-family households cannot be solely attributed to the rise in incarceration rates, the research does lead us to conclude that the impact of incarceration, coupled with the additional effects of the collateral consequences of incarceration that include high unemployment for ex-prisoners contributes significantly to the rise in single-mother led households, and fragmented families. In the African American community approximately a third of non-college educated women were the head of a single family home in 1970. Over the next 30 years that number leaped to over 50% of families in the black community being led by single mothers (Western, 2007).

The interactive elements and influence of the examined community structural factors on each other allow for the examination of communities as complex adaptive systems. The success or failure of a particular community characteristic or structural factor is dependent on the conditions of the parts of the whole. This is true of complex systems, and it is true of communities.

## **Communities as Complex Adaptive Systems**

Complex adaptive systems (CAS) are systems that are based on the interaction of subunits of the whole and are able to generate new structure without being subject to external influences. The interacting units within the system are capable of producing strategic changes that energize the CAS, and do not result in the dissipation of the energy created by the system. The more diversity within the CAS the more enhanced the ability of the CAS to produce creativity, learning, and problem solving (Andriani, 2001). The diversity found within subunits of a community or neighborhood (i.e., community characteristics), situate it perfectly in the discussion of complex systems. The dynamic behaviors found within community structures emerge from the complex interaction between the elements of the neighborhood. This interaction often results in outcomes that are unpredictable and according to Cillers (1998) include multiple redundancies and chains of effect.

Communities or neighborhoods can be described as “two coevolving complex adaptive systems, the individual and the collective” (Schwandt, 2008, para. 2). Communities in this instance are CAS because they evolve and mutate, and are not static. The disproportionate return of ex-prisoners to specific communities proposes to create a ripple in the environment that again will affect both the individual and aggregate elements of the community. Communities also possess an element of self-organization. Within the realm of the criminal justice system, this is often seen in communities that experience episodic violent crimes. Residents without the direction of formal leaders band together to start block watches and community rallies in an attempt to prevent future crimes. As similar issues arise communities tend to learn, and adapt, applying new measures to effect change. In this example the tension caused by the problems

associated with crime and violence lead to innovative strategies, self-organization, and change. This is just one example of the self-organizing ability of communities.

In general systems theory, problems are examined in respect to the whole rather than just a specific element of the system. The complexity or diversity of the components of the system, and the ability of the system to adapt to environmental change distinguish CAS from general systems thinking. The essence of a CAS is further characterized as a network of interacting, interdependent components engaged in action toward a common goal or purpose. The interrelationship of these agents is dynamic and often unpredictable. The result is an interactive impact of one agent on the other (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). The scholarly literature is replete with examples of the influence of neighborhood conditions on a variety of outcomes to include crime, violence, victimization and employment (Stewart & Simons, 2010). In Stewart and Simons (2010) investigation of street culture they point to the influence of neighborhood structural context on the institutions that comprise the public interactions of residents. The research of Stewart and Simons (2010), and Hipp (2010b) support the idea that community characteristics are interrelated, and have direct influence on the individuals residing within the community.

The influence of neighborhood structural context extends beyond the effect on individual behavior to include systems. The examination of the impact of reentry on specific community elements outlined earlier in this chapter demonstrates the interactive relationship among each of the identified systems. Further, the changeable nature of neighborhood systems clearly identifies it as complex and adaptive. Changes in neighborhood demographic information and other administrative data that can be collected through census data demonstrate the changing nature of communities. The increasing number of ex-prisoners returning to communities could change the way in which criminal justice leaders engage communities moving forward. The disproportionate

return of ex-prisoners to specific communities proposes to contribute to the unpredictability of the existing social structure of these neighborhoods (Simpson, 2007). Dr. Ed Rhine, reentry scholar (2013), and former Deputy Director of the Office of Reentry at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction contends:

There is a reentry movement in Ohio and across much of the nation that remains robust. It is presently shaping both discourse and practice across the field of corrections and criminal justice. The proposal is designed to examine the interactive impact of prisoners returning home on the social/local ecology of the communities to which they return. This issue remains “under-researched” in the literature. Understanding the dynamics of this interaction at both the structural level and at the level of human agency is critical to addressing how prisoner reentry affects the collective efficacy of communities and neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by this phenomenon. (E. Rhine, personal communication, April 14, 2013)

The view of neighborhoods as complex adaptive systems provides a suitable framework for the discussion of criminal justice leadership in an era of complexity. From a criminal justice leadership perspective the level of complexity involved in the management of CAS poses an unprecedented challenge for the field of practice. A macro-level analysis of communities, and the interactive impact of reentry creates a framework for criminal justice organizations to develop leadership practices that move agencies toward the ability to develop organizational cultures based on the ability of the leadership to effectively engage stakeholders and manage the tension between existing practices as new behaviors are learned (Evans, 2007).

### **Prisoner Reentry in the Context of Leading Change**

A contemporary analysis of leadership theory seems to provide clear evidence that the scholars who have researched and studied present day leadership epistemology overwhelmingly feel that certain forms of leadership are tailor made for specific situations or conditions. The idea that leadership is a static condition vested within organizational or appointed authority within stable environments is an element of an era in leadership that appertains to the industrial-age

(Rost, 1993). Generally speaking, academic literature discusses industrial-age leadership in terms of centralized management within traditional hierarchical frameworks.

The recent realities of our increasingly complex world have revealed the necessity to move consideration of leadership away from simply the individual characteristics of the leader to an expanded and diverse perspective that views leadership as a dynamic process that involves the prioritization of interactive relationships. Leadership in the field of correctional practice must adhere to these principles. The external influences that impact the prison system requires that leaders place subordinates in positions from which they can engage in a variety of approaches to meeting organizational challenges. Prison systems are no longer self-contained entities. Modern circumstances are too complex for leadership to reside in only a few individuals. It is the priority of the interactive and emergent nature of relationships that uniquely aligns the theoretical perspectives associated with complexity leadership with the social phenomenon of ex-prisoner reentry.

Complexity theory is the science of complex adaptive systems and the acknowledgement of the synergistic effects of multiple agents on variables that include innovation, creativity, emergence, and resiliency. As it relates to leadership, complexity science is about human interconnectedness, and the management of the emergent knowledge that results from adaptive interaction (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). This new model for correctional leadership will require a specific skill set. Correctional leaders must possess the ability to stimulate the creation of knowledge, be adept communicators, and be problem solvers.

There are three distinct characteristics of complexity leadership that offer a unique opportunity for addressing what I have termed “the ex-prisoner reentry dilemma in America.” The three characteristics related to the essential elements of organizational structure that are

found in all organizations and communities are adaptation, administration, and emergence. This section of the literature review will provide an examination of the leadership paradigm within the context of the interactive impact of prisoner reentry. Complexity leadership theory is a theoretical model for leading complex adaptive systems in the building of social capital and collective efficacy and can be applied in communities disproportionately impacted by prisoner reentry.

For leaders in corrections and the criminal justice system in general, the academic literature suggests that for a change initiative to be broadly accepted within the organization, leaders must draw upon formal and informal leaders, often forming guiding coalitions to assist in the change process (Kellerman, 2008; Kotter, 2007; Kusy & McBain, 2000). Much of the academic literature posits that change efforts that do not develop a powerful guiding coalition have underestimated the unique challenges and barriers that come with organizational change efforts. Complexity leadership theory provides a foundation on which leaders can build strategies and methods to address the challenges that are facing organizations. In some instances agencies are faced with multiple variables that are negatively impacting their agency simultaneously (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

Existing bureaucratic leadership models are not fashioned to assist managers and staff to handle this rapidly shifting environment. As criminal justice agencies that have historically operated within a bureaucratic paradigm continue to face fiscal crises, it is more important than ever to apply leadership strategies that stress altruism, moral engagement, vision, values, and creative thinking (Brown & Trevino, 2006). It is my desire that this project will lead to the aforementioned elements being salient within the organization. Complexity leadership theory and similar theories are characterized by natural relationships or linkages that exist between

organizations or members of a society (McElroy, Jorna, & Engelen, 2006). The methodological approaches that flow these leadership theories place leaders in position to identify emergent problems that are produced from naturally occurring interactions, and develop innovative solutions that are rooted in the realities of the experiences of those representing community systems.

### **The Interconnectivity of the Ex-Prisoner Reentry Dilemma**

While the challenges associated with prisoner reentry span geographic borders, nowhere in the world is the issue of mass incarceration and prison reentry more acute than in the United States. There are just over 2 million men and women currently incarcerated in U.S. prisons. By comparison, China, with a total population of 6 billion citizens has only 1.5 million incarcerated citizens (Dammer & Fairchild, 2006). For the Chinese, this is a rate of 119 citizens for every 100,000 people. In a 2008 report, the Pew Center on the States reported that 1 in 100 American adults are currently incarcerated. This demonstrates a significantly disproportionate rate considering the total U.S. population of just over 300 million. The report concludes by indicating that seven million American adults are under some form of correctional supervision. This includes community control such as probation and parole. Just as alarming as the U.S. incarceration rates indicated by the discussion on mass incarceration is the resultant return to the community of thousands of ex-prisoners each year.

While the circumstances of prisoner reentry have similar characteristics, as they relate to socioeconomic impact, in countries around the world, the prevarication of solutions to this social phenomenon also crosses boundaries of professional disciplines (O'Donnell et al., 2008). The research literature on the impact of prisoner reentry extends beyond the field of criminal justice



and can be found in research journal categories that include: economics, sociology, social welfare, ethnography, and nursing just to name a few examples.

The number of returns has occurred during an unprecedented period of mass incarceration. The high incidence of incarceration in the United States has resulted in a high disproportionality of individuals under the jurisdiction of the correctional system. The record numbers of prisoners entering state prison facilities has resulted in severe prison over-crowding. The high prison population, coupled with the fact that 1 in 31 Americans is under some form of correctional control, which includes parole and probation supervision. This circumstance has state prison systems operating in substantial budget deficits (Pew Report, 2009).

As we travel further into the second decade of the 21st century, the corrections community is confronting the same dire economic challenges that face our nation and the global marketplace. Correctional agencies have sought a remedy for the costs associated with incarceration and supervision through the reversal of sentencing guidelines and legislative practices that have fortified decades of mass incarceration (Rhine & Thompson, 2011). While sentencing reform and legislative action is necessary in the effort to mitigate the negative impacts of mass incarceration, these strategies are long-term solutions for a problem that must be addressed immediately. A consensus is drawn from the scholarship (Clear, 2008; Kurbin & Stewart, 2006; Lynch, 2011; Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002; Western, 2007) examining the far reaching effects of prisoner reentry concludes that the impact of reentry has the most influence on the community structural factors that include, but are not limited to, poverty, employment, crime, housing, healthcare, community, and family. It should be noted that in this context, community refers to social capital, and collective efficacy.

As we prepare for historic numbers of ex-prisoners returning to communities, scholars must recognize and address the federal and state policy initiatives that impact individuals, on the local level, who must deal with the realities of inadequate strategies at key transitional points (Rhine, 2012).

As noted previously, the neighborhoods to which these individuals return, in disproportionate numbers, are the most fragile, as it relates to the community structural conditions that allow for stabilized social networks, and relationships. Empirical evidence, collected primarily over the past decade, suggests that high concentrations of ex-offender returns exacerbate the fragility of these communities and result in increased crime rates, stressed job markets, healthcare services, and housing opportunities (Hammett, Roberts, & Kennedy, 2001). Each of the aforementioned community factors has a cascading effect on the other. For example, high unemployment rates typically correlate with significant increases in crime. In communities characterized by poverty there are increased risks for health-related conditions which include high-blood pressure, diabetes, and post-traumatic stress disorders. Many of the individuals returning to the community have multiple medical and psychological diagnoses, and constitute a population that is typically defined as underserved (Hammett et al., 2001).

The structural elements designated by the research as being the most impacted by the prisoner reentry span several academic and professional disciplines. The implications of this are clear. Effectively addressing the negative impact resulting from the high concentration of offender returns on disorganized communities necessarily requires a systems approach. The ability of criminal justice and allied professionals to work collaboratively, guided by a leadership epistemology that supports the creation of knowledge, innovation and the inclusion of

marginalized individuals, is essential in moving us away from a point of no return, with regard to the negative impact of the high concentration of ex-prisoner returns.

### **Complexity Leadership Theory**

Because the current issues facing justice professionals, particularly with regard to ex-prisoner reentry, are so complex, leadership development in this area must be viewed from a perspective that encompasses multiple disciplines. The theories, methodologies, and discussion that permeate the discipline of leadership study must be fully reviewed, analyzed, and applied as appropriate to leadership of the criminal justice system. The level of future success of criminal justice practice is dependent on the ability to adapt to complex challenges while incorporating strategies that meet the unique needs of offenders and community members. In order for leaders in criminal justice to remain relevant in these environments, justice practitioners must examine the continuum of leadership theory and move toward leadership models that most effectively create community.

Historically, leaders within the criminal justice system have been adept at meeting the technical and adaptive challenges that have shaped the field. Generally, these problems mirrored the challenges presented to other fields, during the Industrial Age and were centered on facilities, the effective bureaucratic management of staff and the coordination of organizational practices. These problems were typically resolved through the construction of facilities and or the implementation of management practices designed to produce the best possible results. In short, an “in-house” focused approach that could be implemented rather effectively using a “top-down” leadership model. Currently, the prison and allied systems are confronted with the challenges presented by mass incarceration and prisoner reentry. This challenge is unique and comes at a time when organizations have diminished organizational capacity, and must rely more

heavily on the creation of knowledge, and human capital in order to promote faster learning (Child & McGrath, 2001). The interconnectedness of the structural factors most impacted by the high rates of concentrated returns of ex-prisoners is both complex and dynamic. Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) offers organizations the opportunity, and ability to take advantage of the powerful dynamics at play within Complex Adaptive Systems (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

This model of leadership is designed for the complexities of the knowledge era. Traditional leadership theories utilized within bureaucracies are rooted in practices associated with the industrial age. CLT acknowledges three essential forms of leadership:

- Administrative Leadership (grounded in traditional leadership theory, found in bureaucratic systems)
- Adaptive Leadership (fosters creative problem solving and innovation)
- Emergent Leadership (leadership that serves as a generative dynamic that underlies emergent change)

Complexity leadership theory provides an alternative definition for leaders as those individuals who foster knowledge creation in order to enhance the ability of organizations to adapt to emergent change. Further, leaders are those individuals or groups that influence this dynamic ability to work innovatively outside of the traditional hierarchal organizational system (Pearce, 2004).

Complexity leadership theory enables us to clearly articulate the demonstrable differences between managerial relationships within organizations that are most closely associated with top-down authoritarian leadership. From a historical perspective Rost (1993) posits that the majority of research in the area of leadership has studied the discipline as a form

of management. This view does not account for other forms of leadership that occur outside of the organization hierarchy or outside administrative leadership.

Complexity leadership provides a framework from which leaders and organizations can address problems more closely associated with the dynamics of the knowledge era. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) describe the knowledge era as being marked by the refocus of organizations from physical assets and commodities to an emphasis on social assets and learning. Traditional leadership theories were predominately designed to address technical issues associated with the production or manufacture of goods. Success in the knowledge era is being shaped by the ability or inability to acquire new learning, innovations, and patterns of behavior. Complexity leadership theory provides a model for effective practice within a bureaucracy interconnected with complex adaptive systems. The three prevalent approaches to leadership of administrative leadership, adaptive leadership, and emergent leadership, well position this theory for application to the prisoner reentry issue.

Administrative leadership is distinguished by the application of proven solutions to problems that reoccur across time. This form of leadership has been a preferred modality for criminal justice managers, as the criminal justice system for years was an insulated system minimally impacted by external forces, such as political appointment, economic downturn, and globalization. The administrative leadership attributes of complexity theory are oriented toward comprehending the interaction of top-down leadership functions within a bureaucracy to enhance organizational flexibility (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

The role of administrative leadership is pivotal in the acquisition and allocation of resources to address challenges. While complexity theory points to the ability of interacting systems to self-organize, it also considers the need for the structure of aligned systems through

the bureaucratic process to function under strategic direction provided by common organizational authority structures (Lichtenstein & Plowman, 2009). The idea that solutions can emerge without authoritarian mandates and the dictates of top-down managerial approaches through the interaction of agents within a CAS is not corrupted by the application of strategic leadership. The framework of administrative leadership is foundational to the applicability of complexity leadership within the field of criminal justice. Within organizations, the role of administrative leadership is essential in team or group formation and the establishment of acceptable standards and behaviors that permeate organization boundaries (Boal & Schultz, 2007).

Second, adaptive leadership is the expression of interactive adaptive outcomes within a social system. Adaptive leadership is characterized by its usefulness relative to the external conditions that force change (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). The ability to lead change hinges on the ability of the individual agents involved in the complex adaptive systems to generate knowledge in order to advance innovative approaches to guide the interdependent agents toward desired outcomes. Adaptive leadership is a descriptor of the interactive nature of relationships that emerge from naturally occurring interaction. Schneider and Somers (2006) state that adaptation results from relationship that is non-linear or is not one-sided as they might be in a hierarchal, authority-based relationship. If an interaction can be characterized by one-sided linear interaction then as Cillers (1998) points out, the relationship is strictly built upon the knowledge and skill base of the dominant party. Adaptation, the ability to alter, evolve or change for the purpose of achieving collective or individual goals is rooted in the reality of the complex world in which we live.

Managed conflict between interconnected components within the system ultimately result in the creation of new knowledge. This takes place within the adaptive element of complexity leadership theory. Through adaptive leadership individuals are no longer constrained by the organizational boundaries commonly found in top-down management strategies. Even the idea of thinking out of the box is no longer adequate as it connotes an individual constrained by the notion of what the box is or was. We are now moving individuals toward an idea that they can deconstruct the box, and now only be limited by the creativity that can emerge from the interaction between components of the system. The essence of adaptive leadership is the usefulness of the new knowledge or adaptive ideas that are created from the dynamic interaction (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

The third form of leadership found in the complexity leadership is emergent leadership. Emergent leadership is founded on principles unique to complexity theory: organisms, organizations, and communities. Bonebeau and Meyer (2001) assert that social systems are self-organizing and thus increase in levels of complexity over time. The increase in complexity is a direct result of non-linear interactions among the variables that comprise the system. The emergence of new ideas, solutions to problems, and the creation of knowledge all come as a direct result of the generative processes found within complexity leadership theory. Emergence can result in the reformulation, morphing, transformation, and expansion of theories, practices and procedures that assist the system in enduring fundamental change.

For leadership practitioners in general, and specifically for those engaged with the complexity of the interactive impact of prisoner reentry or other complex adaptive systems, it is vitally important to create an environment that fosters emergence (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009). The idea that leaders can foster the creation of new knowledge and interdependence that can

ultimately result in better outcomes is a promising practice for leaders who must address technical and adaptive challenges (Van Velsor, 2008). There are several leadership behaviors that can foster the probability of interaction. Heifetz (1994) describes the necessity of identifying the adaptive challenge. In other words, identify the issues related to the problem and how these issues might impact the components of the entire system, and their respective interests. Further, leaders must maintain an acceptable level of distress in order to maintain an environment conducive for adaptive work. There are three key elements of enabling leadership according to Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009). Enabling leadership creates the effective operation of CAS through:

- Fostering interaction
- Creating interdependency
- Managing adaptive tension.

While much of the interaction among agents in CAS formulate through naturally occurring circumstances, leaders can engage in behaviors that flatten out existing hierarchy in organizational structures, creating an environment that promotes engagement from the elimination of barriers that are created by authority structures (Nye, 2008). Another behavior that the research literature points to is the development of teams to foster interaction and create interdependence. The development of teams assists in fostering shared accountability. There is also a greater sense of equality, and dependence on other members of the team. The common goals of the team; create a natural interdependence on other elements of the CAS (Zaccarro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001).

Last, Heifetz (1994) posits that attention should be paid to allowing issues to “ripen” or, as he explains, reach a level of urgency within the group to tackle the issues. The ability of



leaders to strategically regulate the environment and create the tensions that lead to action form the interconnected relationships and trust that result in the emergence of new knowledge. While outcomes are often unpredictable, the results can provide positive reinforcement for future action (VanVelsor, 2008).

### **Complexity Theory in Correctional Practice**

Complexity leadership theory is portable. While traditional criminal justice leadership approaches rely heavily on top-down autocratic leadership tactics that have minimal flexibility, complexity theory provides for maximum adaptive capacity. Complexity leadership theory offers the elements of administrative leadership that have been historically utilized while promoting emerging knowledge. By definition, the elements of authoritarian leadership seem in direct contradiction to the elements of leadership that include consideration for the needs of the follower. The definition of autocratic leadership includes the absolute authority of the leader; the task taking precedent over the follower, leadership maintaining significant social distance from follower (Northouse, 2007). This form of leadership was reasonable and efficient and has been effective, for a system tasked with securing dangerous criminals and with maintaining the effective management of staff; however, the attempt to reverse the collateral consequences of mass incarceration, while also addressing the impact of ex-prisoner reentry, requires an ideological shift related to leadership practices.

The interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors demands that criminal justice practitioners work with individuals from systems outside of the criminal justice network. This fact is consistent with the tenets of complexity science that espouse that emergent conditions, structure, and organization occur naturally as groups interact. The interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry is defined as the reciprocating nature of the influence of

each agent on the other. The interactive impact of reentry considers the effect of community variables inclusive of structural factors on the individuals ex-prisoners risk to reoffend.

Conversely, it also considers the effects of the high concentration of ex-prisoner returns on the community structural factors necessary for a stabilized local-ecology.

Complexity leadership theory promotes inclusion of individuals and groups. This specific leadership perspective promotes a constructivist view, where meaning is defined by the individuals engaged in the collective action. As it relates to ex-prisoner reentry, the meaning ascribed to the phenomenon of men and women returning to communities from prison are certainly different based upon the perspective from which it is viewed.

As the field of corrections is increasingly impacted by the swift and sudden change in the volatile environment that has shaped the post-industrial age, complexity leadership offers a leadership framework from which to advantage components of complex adaptive systems (Lichtenstein et al., 2006). The fiscal and budgetary constraints outlined in this study dictate that practitioners must do more with less. These facts demand leadership methods that enable staff to perform within decentralized flattened organizational structures. These decentralized structures allow for the adaptive capacity of the system to meet the challenges associated with the change that results from the internal and external environment. There are several significant implications around future leadership training in corrections that must be explored for meeting the challenges associated with these impending issues. The new training regimen must include curriculum designed to prepare leaders for the rapid changes associated with globalization, technology, and deregulation that characterize the knowledge era (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008)

The prison system has watched as the number of offenders exiting prisons increased in correlation to the increased number of individuals incarcerated during the mass incarceration era.

The next decade promises to see the numbers of offenders returning to the community drastically increase as state and federal prisons de-incarcerate the system seeking to ease prison overcrowding and state budget shortfalls. The fragile and destabilized social ecology, into which prisoner reentry is most prevalent, will require a new epistemological stance relative to the nature of leadership methods utilized to coordinate the complex interconnected systems impacted by this social pandemic. The majority of scholars have examined the subject of prisoner reentry as a one-dimensional relationship, fixated on the individual characteristics of the ex-prisoner and the contributing community factors that may lead to recidivism; however, a significant gap in the literature does exist. Very few researchers have examined the interactive impact of ex-prisoner returns on the communities in which they will reside when returning from prison. The primary focus of the existing research examines the effects of mass incarceration and reentry in a way that attributes the effects of one variable on a corresponding variable proportionally. There are few studies that examine the influence of each variable on the other. The primary focus of the research has been one way, with a focus on the community characteristic influence on the ex-prisoner. Clear (2008) has led the way in the examination of the effects of reentry, however, more research is needed. The back and forth nature or interaction of the relationship between the effects of each variable on the other is an under researched area. Further, scholarship related to discourse on the role of leadership methodology as a contributing force in ex-prisoner reentry studies is non-existent.

### **The Intersection of Reentry and Complexity Leadership Theory**

The interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on community characteristics provides a macro-level view of prisoner reentry that can be viewed through a theoretical framework known as social disorganization theory. Social disorganization as discussed earlier in this chapter

identifies the ecological circumstances that allow crime to flourish in certain communities as opposed to others. Interestingly, social disorganization theory examines the relationships among systems that when supported by informal social controls serve to fortify the efficacy of communities (Rose & Clear, 1998). The inability of the community to manage the interacting systems and social processes that serve to cause the disruption of the neighborhood social structure that leads to disorganization. It is the examination of the impact of reentry on systems that formulate the ties that bind between offender reentry, social disorganization and complexity leadership theory.

The literature from which researchers draw upon to examine the impact of reentry on the local ecology of communities demonstrates that the ripple effect of the return of ex-prisoners extends beyond the individual, and moves to the larger socio-economic landscape of neighborhood systems. Senge (1990) describes the true essence of a system as being the interrelationships between interacting agents that impact behavior over time. Based on this analysis, we can conclude that agents within a system have an interactive impact on each other. Prisoner reentry is no different. The return of an agent(s), in this case, ex-prisoners, has an effect on the behavior of existing agents, in this case, the examined community characteristics. Thus, the focus of this study is the investigation of the naturally occurring interaction between ex-prisoners, and specifically identified systems.

Aside from the need to examine reentry from the perspective of the effect on community, there is a need to identify a compatible leadership model to foster innovative solutions to the potential problems posed by the interactive impact of prisoner reentry. Prisoner reentry is essentially a product of the correctional system. As such it is imperative that the investigation of the broad implications of reentry begin from the perspective of the criminal justice leader.

Complex systems, just like communities, are defined by the multiple interacting parts, where the components exhibit behaviors that are unpredictable and difficult to understand (Tan, Wan, & Joseph, 2005). It is the aspect of unpredictability that poses challenges for leaders in the criminal justice field tasked with managing prisoner reentry. It is the instability of current neighborhood dynamics, and the process of ongoing process of change experienced by communities that identify the subject of this study as a CAS. While many of the elements of a general of open system exist within the intersection of prisoner reentry and neighborhoods, the fact remains that the generally stable environment through which most systems operate does not exist in communities experiencing a disproportionate return of ex-prisoners (Deming, Harter, & Phillips, 2004). According to Plowman et al. (2007) there are five characteristics that distinguish CAS from open systems, (a) CAS consists of multiple interacting agents that produce unpredictable outcomes; (b) the agents are influenced by changes in the environment; (c) the totality of behaviors associated with the interaction is often unpredictable; (d) the interaction within the system varies between stability and instability; (e) results emerge from the unstable environment.

In and of themselves the components of the community that are impacted by the return of ex-prisoners to the community can be seen as maintaining a sufficient level of sustainability. The weakness of each of the structural factors that are pointed to in the literature as being the most fragile, become so at the point of interconnection. For example, families that experience the incarceration and return of a family member tend to adapt overtime to the new realities of the familial relationships. The new ways in which families are structured tend to pose challenges to the unit when the family intersects with the other community characteristics of housing, employment, and healthcare. It is at the point of the intersection that the absence of money

earning fathers, husbands, or co-parents becomes most evident (Braman, 2004). The literature has examined and found that ex-prisoners tend to have dissipated employment opportunities as compared to non-offending individuals. These individuals often turn to “under the table” income earning opportunities, which challenges their ability to avoid incarceration at the intersection of other community structural factors like housing, crime, and healthcare (Pager, 2007).

For its part, complexity leadership theory presents the opportunity to examine the point of interconnectivity between the components of the community that are identified by social disorganization theory as being necessary for the establishment of collective neighborhood efficacy. The literature highlights the elements of social disorganization as parallel with the devastating effects of mass incarceration. Logically, the return of ex-prisoners to communities with existing fragile networks will experience a negative impact akin to the negative effects endured during the mass incarceration era.

From a criminal justice perspective, social disorganization theory and the academic literature examining the impact of reentry both support the fact that there are essentially four primary stakeholders in any given community. These stakeholders are the victim, offender, community residents, and service providers. Restorative justice is a model of thinking that asks us to envision the way we think about crime as a break in relationship versus a violation of the law (Armour & Umbreit, 2006). The concept of restorative justice provides a model into which the tenets of complexity leadership could be applied. Each of the stakeholders has a significant and equal role in the process of restoring relationships to the extent possible between victims and offenders. Additionally, service providers (which include government agencies, etc.) are responsible for providing order, services, and the necessary goods for the promotion of peace (Van Ness & Strong, 1997). The service providers in this justice model also serve to assist

offenders in maintaining an acceptable level of social engagement, for civic order. The stakeholders also have the shared goal of enhancing the quality of life for each of the stakeholders within the community. In keeping enabling leadership, the relationship between each of the stakeholders presents a level of tension created by the natural position of each of the groups (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004).

### **Culture of Inquiry and Academic Discourse**

Several themes emanate from the body of literature on the impact of ex-prisoners on the quality of life in specifically defined communities. The findings suggest that employment, crime, and poverty are consequential for communities with significantly high returns of ex-prisoners. These themes are drawn from several methodological approaches all designed to examine the impact of the offender population on the social ecology of communities. The result is a well-defined culture of inquiry that allows for a comprehensive understanding of the answer to the research question.

Research generally starts with certain assumptions about the best way to learn (Creswell, 2003). While the research question is essential to the acquisition of knowledge, there are multiple avenues for obtaining that knowledge. The academic research over the past three decades has continually pointed to six areas within the structure of a neighborhood that are negatively influenced by the high concentration of ex-prisoners predominately returning to socially disadvantaged communities. The literature clearly illustrates that the areas mentioned earlier in the chapter are community characteristics that remain static in these communities with limited potential to gain affluence or reverse the impact of prisoner reentry.

The remaining sections of this study will examine the significant research and analytic methods used to engage in shaping the culture of inquiry on the specific effect of ex-prisoner reentry on communities.

Although the field of criminal justice is fundamentally a people business, recent trends in research have been centered on pure scientific approaches to inquiry. This is especially true in the field of adult corrections. Across the country, states are estimated to have spent more than \$47 billion in general funds on corrections in 2008. The criminal justice system spends billions of dollars on the custody and supervision of offenders. The fiscal realities of enormous expenditures and costs associated with correctional spending require governmental agencies to employ the use of performance monitoring and evidence-based practices (Mears & Mestre, 2012).

There is currently a high premium placed on research utilizing numerical summations to identify specific causes or traits related to criminal behavior (Miller et al., 2008). A review of the literature netted a substantive amount of quantitative studies. The majority of the quantitative research approaches were descriptive or correlational designs. According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), these research methods respectively provide a description of a phenomena using statistical analysis and explore the relationship between multiple variables.

From a leadership standpoint, the criminal justice system highly regards systems that support timeliness, efficiency, and predictability. The quantitative methods used to investigate the impact of concentrated offender returns to the community align perfectly with traditional leadership approaches within the criminal justice system. However, criminal justice leaders and those responsible for managing the supervision of offender reentering communities must adopt leadership strategies that are more conducive to the information age. Practices that are aligned



with the leadership machinations of the industrial age that lead criminal justice administrators to an overly strict adherence to statistical analysis of human behavior and societal influences to the exclusion of other ways of knowing.

Fortunately, the methodological landscape for the exploration of offender reentry in this study also included an equal number of qualitative research approaches. The qualitative studies have examined ex-offenders in their natural settings utilizing the direct experience of the study participants, and ethnographic designs studying the participants through direct engagement in order to acquire a thorough understanding of the studied group or individual (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). While statistical analysis assists in gaining an understanding in a broad sense, statistics do not help us gain understanding in individual cases. For example, one reviewed article, by Byrne and Stowell (2007), provides an in-depth analysis of the impact of culture and the link between the disruption in core pro-social values, ex-offender reentry, and community violence. The study provided an understanding of the impact that these ex-offenders are having on community norms, and the amplified disruption of community structure that is exacerbated by the high number of ex-offender returns to the community.

### **Ex-Prisoner Reentry: An Opportunity for Leading Change**

A contemporary analysis of leadership theory seems to provide clear evidence that the scholars that have researched and studied present day leadership epistemology overwhelmingly feel that certain forms of leadership are tailor made for specific situations or conditions. The idea that leadership is a static condition vested within organizational or appointed authority within stable environments is an element of an era in leadership that appertains to the industrial-age (Rost, 1993). A general consensus in the academic literature discusses industrial-age leadership in terms of centralized management within traditional hierarchical frameworks.

The recent realities of our increasingly complex world have revealed the necessity to move leadership away from the individual characteristics of the leader to an expanded and diverse perspective that views leadership as a dynamic process that involves the prioritization of interactive relationships. Leadership in the field of correctional practice must adhere to these principles. The external influences that impact the prison system require leaders to position subordinates in positions to engage in a range of contributions to meeting organizational challenges. Prison systems are no longer self-contained entities. Modern circumstances are too complex for leadership to reside in only a few individuals. It is the priority of the interactive and emergent nature of relationships that aligns complexity leadership theoretical perspectives uniquely with the social phenomenon of ex-prisoner reentry.

Complexity theory is the science of complex adaptive systems and the acknowledgement of the synergistic effects of multiple agents on variables that include innovation, creativity, emergence, and resiliency. As it relates to leadership, complexity science is about human interconnectedness, and the management of the emergent knowledge that results from adaptive interaction (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). This new model for correctional leadership will require a specific skill set. Correctional leaders must possess the ability to stimulate the creation of knowledge, be adept communicators, and problem-solvers.

There are three distinct characteristics of complexity leadership that offer a unique opportunity for addressing what I have termed the ex-prisoner reentry dilemma in America. The three characteristics related to the essential elements of organizational structure that are found in all organizations and communities are adaptation, administration, and emergence. This section of the literature review will provide an examination of the leadership paradigm within the context of the interactive impact of prisoner reentry. Complexity leadership theory is a theoretical

leadership model for guiding complex adaptive systems in the building of social capital and collective efficacy in communities disproportionately impacted by prisoner reentry.

Leaders in the field of corrections are rapidly being faced with an unprecedented level of challenges. These challenges include external factors that encompass both the political and fiscal environment. Increasingly these political issues result in public scrutiny affecting the certainty of employment for some discretionary or politically appointed staff. Challenges also include a rapidly changing workforce. Many of the employees who began their careers at the onset of the modern prison era beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s have reached the age of retirement. Challenges associated with diversity among staff and the inmate population continues to be an issue within the correctional environment (Sims, 2001). The multiple issues facing leaders in the field require a new leadership paradigm. An inquiry into the relatively new phenomena of concentrated reentry provides the potential for the development of a methodological approach to corrections leadership that can provide guidance in an era of multiple complex challenges.

### **Conclusion: Reflections**

Effective leadership requires the ability to identify, examine, and solve problems. The literature reviewed in this study clearly identified and delineated the existing problems associated with the impact of ex-offender reentry on specific communities. The compilation of articles has given evidence to support the general assumptions made by the researchers, that the studied phenomenon has an adverse effect on three primary community factors (employment, crime, and poverty). In addition to supporting research claims, testing hypothesis, and recording the lived experience, the research provides clear direction in regard to the need to engage in the study of the interactive impact of prisoner reentry. There is a reciprocating relationship between

individuals returning from prison and the environmental characteristics that exist in the communities to which they return. The unprecedented return of ex-prisoners to the community calls for the further investigation of the impact of offender returns on the community.

Complexity leadership theory offers potential solutions to its negative impact in a way that views each community structural factor as part of a complex system. It remains important to remember that a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of reentry assists in better positioning leaders to be effective in mitigating the effects of prisoner reentry.

There are many significant aspects of leadership theory from which researchers could draw in future investigation of this subject. The issue of offender reentry is not a linear cause and effect issue. There are both distinct and blurred interrelationships between the criminal justice system and other significant community structural factors that either contribute to offender success or lead the offender to recidivate. Criminal justice leaders must see the issue of reentry as a process and the structural factors as interconnected systems (Senge, 1990). The procedures and ideas of the industrial age still frame the way justice leadership solves problems; however, leadership is about transformation and adaptation to change. Heifetz et al. (2009) posits that decisions and problem solving are not just developed from within but include those external influences that impact individuals or organizational systems. There are two basic assumptions that frame my thought about this phenomenon: the first is that the relationship between ex-prisoners and the community is not mutually exclusive as indicated in a number of studies. Second, the existing leadership methodology within criminal justice and allied systems is insufficient to address the challenges facing communities, and individuals impacted by the ex-prisoner reentry dilemma.

Criminal justice professionals must cast off historic views of leadership that are more conducive to industrial age ideology and adopt methodological approaches to problem solving that are intrinsic in adaptive leadership, complexity leadership, systems thinking, and appreciative inquiry that are more applicable to the rapidly changing environment of the 21st century. While arguments abound about a single definition for leadership, it would be safe to conclude that leadership is about relationships between a leader and follower. In her work on followership, Kellerman (2008) examines the symbiotic relationship between leaders and followers. Kellerman points out that a view of followers as inconsequential in the relationship between leaders and followers is a fatal flaw in the review of a proper understanding of leadership. A study addressing the impact of the high concentration of ex-offender returns on the quality of life for residents in disorganized urban communities must be examined in the context of a symbiotic relationship between ex-prisoners, and the community.

The majority of scholars have examined the offender reentry in a linear fashion, fixated on the individual characteristics of the ex-prisoner and the contributing community factors that may lead to recidivism; however, a significant gap in the literature does exist. Very few researchers have examined the intended and unintended consequences of concentrated ex-prisoner returns on the communities in which they will reside when returning from prison.

As this review of research indicates there have been a relatively few studies examining the impact of the ex-prisoner population on disorganized communities. The contemporary academic discourse suggests that there are three primary impact areas that are amplified by the return of ex-prisoners. The impact areas made evident by research span across several academic and professional disciplines. Only the issue of crime is directly related to the field and study of criminal justice. The implications are clear, in order to effectively address the negative impact of

the high concentration of offender returns on disorganized communities, a systems approach is necessary.

Nearly three quarters of a million men and women are being released back into communities each year. Current projections indicate that the number of offenders returning predominately to disorganized communities will increase. A review of past academic research presents a case that the population of returning offenders will increase significantly over the next decade. This circumstance threatens to create communities where the lack of economic potential is matched by the lack of human capital needed to reverse negative trends and impacts associated with concentrated prisoner reentry.

For the contemporary criminal justice practitioner, scientific methods of research are the guiding elements of practice and procedure in the field. Because the existing research related to offender reentry has been limited in scope, questions remain about the possible influence new approaches to problem solving could have on the impact of ex-prisoner reentry and communities. New approaches to research in this area must include more comprehensive research designs embedded with both qualitative and quantitative elements in single studies. A mixed methods approach to research provides a flexible and adaptive process for data collection perfectly suited for the examination of the complex adaptive systems that makeup the variables associated with ex-prisoner reentry. The use of multiple method inquiry allows for the testing of theoretical perspectives, the integration of survey data, embedded designs, and transformative data collection (Creswell, 2003). The following chapter will examine the specific mixed methodological design for the investigation into the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the key community structural factors outlined in this chapter.

### **Chapter III: Methodology**

This chapter discusses the rationale for the selected methods of inquiry, and provides a detailed description of how the selected research approach will address each of the proposed research questions. This study examined the way in which ex-prisoner reentry affects the relationship between individuals returning from prison and the collective community through the examination of the way their return impacts the specific structural characteristics of crime, healthcare, poverty, employment, housing, and family. Specifically, the overarching question of the study examines: What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (characteristics) in a community where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing? Additionally, I examine how complexity leadership theory can assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry.

The study employed a mixed-methodological approach in the context of a case study in order to comprehensively analyze the effects of reentry from the position of constructed perspectives of those experiencing the phenomenon, supported by statistical analysis. It provided a comprehensive picture of the lived experience of those living in communities disproportionately impacted by ex-prisoner reentry. It might also serve as a tool for policymakers, criminal justice leaders in corrections, and service providers.

#### **Case Study as an Effective Approach to Inquiry**

A case study by definition is an in depth exploration and analysis of an event, process, or activity of one or more individuals (Cresswell, 2003). There is no permanence to the methodological positioning of a case study. In other words, the methodological positioning of the researcher can be rooted in quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research strategies. Case studies offer a methodological choice for the researcher. Case studies are structured around time

and the activity being examined. Case studies can utilize multiple and varied data collection procedures (Stake, 1995). In general, a case study allows the researcher to examine a particular issue or phenomenon in detail, and ascertain what can be learned from the study of the subject.

Yin (2009) defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context” (para. 5). A case study provides an effective ground-level view of a phenomenon in its naturally occurring environment. While experimental research designs seek to detach the phenomenon from its context, the case study attempts to assist in the understanding of the phenomenon in the conditions in which it inherently transpires (Stake, 2005). Yin (2009) advises that a case study is the most effective method of research when investigating how and why questions when the investigator has limited or no control over the events being examined. The case study method allows for multiple techniques in data collection. The flexibility of the methodological approach of the case study, and the multiple data sources to be examined provide verification of the phenomena, and validation of the study results.

George and Bennet (2005) indicate that pure scientific research methods predicated entirely on statistical approaches to research with an epistemological bend toward empiricism in many instances fail to provide policy guidance, and prove inadequate for practitioners. The case study method provides an appropriate strategy for inquiry into the theoretical aspects of social disorganization. An aspect of social disorganization is the idea that it is the disruption of specific community characteristics that lend to instability or stability in the lives of residents, and in the collective order of the community (Shaw & McKay, 1942).

This case study explored the impact of ex-prisoner reentry from two epistemological perspectives (qualitative and quantitative) and attempted to synthesize these views into a



comprehensive analysis for deeper understanding of the phenomena. The subject being observed in this case required a qualitative analysis in order to ascertain the quality and depth of the experience of the participants. The quantitative data obtained in the study alone would be insufficient to explain some of the observable instances that may be significant with regard to this investigation (Parry, 1998).

### **Research Questions**

As communities around the country experience significant increases in the concentrated return of offenders to their communities, the primary question that guides the development of my research is

- What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (services) in a neighborhood where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing?

More specifically, I will be looking at how the influence of the returning prisoner population affects the central components of the community that dictate interpersonal relationships among residents. The question to be addressed by this population is:

- How can complexity leadership theory assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry?

All of this culminates in the guiding research questions outlined in Chapter I.

### **Mixed Methodological Research**

I collected, analyzed, and made meaning of data utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry in a single study. Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study represents the art of mixed methods research (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In creating a mixed methods design an investigator utilizes a specific method, either qualitative or

quantitative, for one part of the study, and the other method for another phase of the study. The degree to which researchers integrate quantitative and qualitative methods varies. In general, methods are mixed concurrently or sequentially based on the structure of the research strategy (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). In addition to the order in which methods are mixed, it should be noted that each method also does not have to be equal in its application to the study. A research design can rely heavily on quantitative inquiry and supplement that strategy with qualitative data collection. Conversely, a study could be primarily qualitative and be secondarily quantitative. These examples do not provide a comprehensive view of mixed method typology but provide a general introduction to the mixed methodological paradigm (Morse, Niehaus, Wolfe, & Wilkins, 2006). A notational system created by Morse (1991) illustrates the methodological approach and sequence of researcher procedures for this study. According to the notational system this study is a quan (Phase I) → QUAL (Phase II)→ QUAN (Phase III) study with (→) indicating the sequential nature of the methodological application (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). The capitalized QUAL and QUAN indicate that these parts were of primary importance in the study. The capitalized methods listed above do not indicate sequence, but the order of the applied method. The research approach is appropriate for this study because of the complimentary nature of the procedures, and the opportunity for balanced interpretation of the data.

The data collection for this study occurred in three separate phases. Data was collected and analyzed during each phase before progressing to the next phase. Analyzing the data at each phase of the process occurred because potential existed for the influence of one phase of data analysis to affect the nature of subsequent analysis.

### **Justification for a Mixed Method Design**

The existing literature specifically examining the prisoner reentry social dynamic includes a plethora of quantitative and a paucity of qualitative research. The research on either side of the ideological divide does not adequately or comprehensively examine the issue of prisoner reentry in its entirety. In order to make substantive knowledge claims about the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on communities an approach to research must encompass a perspective that includes the attributes of both quantitative and qualitative methodology in a single research strategy. In employing a mixed methods research design there is opportunity to use the qualitative data to add depth and understanding to the review of the quantitative data, thus providing the contextual backdrop to the issue of reentry, and illuminating the breadth of the issues faced in these communities.

Yin (2009) points to the historical viewpoint of scientific methodologists who have placed experimental research design at the pinnacle of the research hierarchy. In the field of criminal justice researchers have inferred that experimental design is the highest form of research in keeping with this historical view, while case study is at the low end of the research continuum (Latessa, 2011). However, several notable scholars have through their recent work challenged the historical view that case study research, phenomenology, and ethnography are lesser forms of inquiry in the field of criminal justice research (Clear, 2007; Leverentz, 2011). Other scholars point to the value of the collection of data derived from the lived experiences of those who are engaged in the phenomena (Geertz, 1973; Kelle, 2006). The established research paradigm offers a significant opportunity for exploration using other research methodologies.

It is the opportunity to formulate and construct meaning from these experiences that scholars such as Schwandt (2008) and Bentz and Shapiro (1998) find brings us closer to truth, and the essence of the phenomena being examined. The art of designing a research study is

examination of the subject and then selecting the appropriate methods for the distinctive characteristics of the focus of inquiry (Morse et al., 2006). Thus, the appropriate research tools for investigating the subject of ex-prisoner reentry within the paradigm of local communities consists of a combination of both quantitative and qualitative inquiry. The advantage of a mixed-methods research strategy is the ability to address deficiencies found in both methodological approaches.

For a study related to the interactive impact of prisoner reentry on communities, a review of the statistical correlates does not adequately provide an opportunity for practitioners, policymakers, or community leaders to develop or apply measures to effectively address the potential issues raised by the study. On the other hand, a strategy singularly devoted to examination of the construction of truth as defined by the study participants is incapable in my estimation, of fully providing a rich understanding of the context of this particular phenomenon as experienced by the subjects of the research.

### **Administrative Data**

In order to truly understand the way in which ex-prisoners and residents negotiate their neighborhood context, it is imperative that an appreciation for the existing neighborhood structural factors, and the general condition of the neighborhood be acquired. While the construction of truth can be contextual, the description of the neighborhood from the vantage point of the study participants can be construed as merely the perspective of the self-described in the margins of life. In order to provide clarification and a proper understanding of the neighborhood context, a collection of administrative data to include census tract information, income data, and neighborhood demographics such as gender and race distributions was

necessary. The statistics provided by the collection of administrative data provided a framework from which to better understand the targeted neighborhood.

The collection of administrative data, relative to the context into which individuals return from prison has the potential for being a critical element in assisting policymakers, criminal justice, and community leaders in the formulation of practices designed to assist offender transition after prison. Understanding the larger community context of reentry will potentially assist in predicting outcomes relative to the impact on available resources (Rossmo & Routledge, 1990). Because prisoner reentry has been determined to occur disproportionately in specific neighborhoods, the collection of administrative data creates the opportunity for making comparisons, and generalizations, such that what is true in one community can in fact be true in another.

### **Focus Group Literature**

Research on ex-prisoners has primarily focused on the environmental factors that have influence on the individual. Missing from the research is the effect a high concentration of returns has on the disadvantaged communities into which the majority of these offenders return. Included in this gap in the literature is recognition that there exists a reciprocating relationship between individuals returning to the community from prison, and the influence of the community on these returning citizens. The natural result of the interaction of the actors involved in the systems within the community requires a research tool that replicates or perpetuates the natural interactions as they would occur in the natural environment. It is the characteristic of group interaction that makes the focus group unique among research data collection techniques (Kitzinger, 1994). “A focus group provides a unique perspective, and insight into phenomena from individuals deeply entrenched in the experience” (A. Miranda, personal communication,

January 18, 2012). Miranda's view is in complete alignment with the perspective of Morgan and Spanish (1984), who describe the use of focus groups as a way to capture source data. As with all research techniques the skill and ability of the researcher will directly determine the viability of the data in regard to effective inquiry. Focus group design and effective implementation involves significant preparation. Ultimately, the best focus groups appear to involve participants engaging in simulated naturally occurring conversation (Berg, 2004). As a result of a review of the literature related to the subject of reentry discussed during the focus groups there were several elements fundamental to the construction of the successful focus group discussion specific to this topic. These elements, that included focus group design, selection of participants, and positioning of the facilitator were not inclusive of every aspect of focus group development but were foundational to ultimate success of the focus groups as a data collection instrument (Jakobsen, 2012; Renganathan, 2009).

### **The Focus Group as In-Depth Discussion**

There is a unique distinction between focus group discussion, and the prototypical researcher participant interview found in common ethnographic research methods (Jakobsen, 2012). While the issue of self is important in any form of qualitative research, the facilitator of a focus group must strive to minimize their influence in order to promote conversations, questions and challenging of opinion within the participant group (Morgan, & Kruegar, 1993). Therefore, it was important to pre-determine the design of the focus group. In planning for the study, I considered the manner in which scholars have examined ex-prisoner reentry, with particular interest in the intersection of returning offenders and communities. It was evident in the relevant literature that the nature of the research had not adequately addressed the impact of ex-prisoner reentry of specific communities. Consequential to this discussion was the method of inquiry that

has captured the lived experience of those returning to the community from prison. The majority of qualitative data were captured through researcher participant interviews as is the case in the work of Leverentz (2010, 2011). The focus groups offered the potential for the collection and observation of advanced data in comparison to a standard interview (Jakobsen, 2012). The use of the focus group as a research tool in the investigation of ex-prisoner reentry was an advantage because an alternative quantification method was also used in the research strategy (Morgan & Kreuger, 1993). Thus an environment was created for the interactive nature of the focus groups to provide emotional, spontaneous, and natural interaction in the real-world environment that better framed the quantitative analysis of the subject. The current research literature has failed to provide the academic and practitioner communities with work that provides an inclusive illustration of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on disadvantaged communities (Kvale, 1996).

### **Survey Literature**

The primary quantitative portion of the research was derived from the collection of information obtained from a survey analysis. A thematic analysis of the narrative data collected from the focus groups was conducted to facilitate the survey development. Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as the reporting of pattern or themes that emanate from data. While the central theme of the focus group is the interactive discussion among group participants in a simulated environment, a survey is a designed simulated discussion between the researcher and the study participant. The objective is to lead the study participant along in a logical progression of discussion toward the ultimate goal of obtaining information or data relative to the subject of the study (A. Miranda, personal communication January, 1 2012).

The application of a survey instrument relative to measuring the impact of ex-prisoner reentry provided an acceptable control for specificity relative to potential rival causal factors

during data analysis (Hagan & Coleman, 2001). The ability to provide a broad description provides researchers with the ability to make definitive statements about the subject of the inquiry (Maxfield & Babbie, 2005). Survey data is recognized in both academia and the field of criminal justice as providing high reliability and generalizability (White & Drew, 2011).

### **Case Setting: Community Description**

In order to better conceptualize and provide perspective to the discussions of the participants of this study it was necessary to understand the characteristics of the study site that is the focus of the community level analysis in this case. Prisoner reentry occurs disproportionately in specific communities around the country and in Ohio. Driving Park was selected as a representative of the broader group of communities that experience disproportionate reentry. There are several notable features of the Driving Park neighborhood that provide depth to our understanding of the effects of reentry on those stabilizing community elements that frame the way residents interact.

Driving Park is an urban residential area on the Near East Side of Columbus. It borders many notable areas including Livingston Park, Old Oaks Historic District, Bryden Road Historic District and the King-Lincoln District, all with the common thread of the notable Livingston Avenue Corridor. Mainly a middle-class, predominantly African American neighborhood, Driving Park has 6500 residents (Columbus Department of Development, 2012). There are a few abandoned homes and businesses along Livingston Avenue; however, the majority of the neighborhood contains family dwellings, with a few apartment complexes interspersed throughout the entire area. The Hair and Stuff Beauty Supply shop and Touch of Class beauty salon are businesses that have thrived for over 30 years in the neighborhood. Other long-standing iconic businesses include the Livingston Market at the corner of Fairwood and Livingston



Avenues, Talibs clothing store for men, and the Livingston Avenue Family Health Center. H. Johnson's barbeque restaurant and the Southeast Fish Market are other community mainstays that have endured over time.

The Driving Park Recreation Center provides recreation areas and sports programs for families. The Africentric Personal Development Shop, Columbus Impact, and the Columbus Urban League are a few of the many agencies that provide services to individuals and families in the areas of employment, housing, healthcare, and education. The Driving Park Branch of the Columbus Library System is a mainstay in the community with several after school programs, and other activities for residents. The newly renovated Nationwide Children's Hospital is recognized as one of the finest hospitals in the country and sits on the western border of the neighborhood.

Of the 6,500 residents living in Driving Park, 84% are African-American. The median household income is \$41,488. This is significantly lower than the state median income of \$66,568 and over \$30,000 less than the national median household income of \$74,974. While incomes in the neighborhood pale in comparison to state and national averages; the median incomes of residents is almost double the national poverty rate placing the majority of residents above the poverty line and into the middle or working class (National Poverty Center, 2010).

Residents in the area are proud of their community, and that pride is best exemplified in the very active Driving Park Neighborhood Association. Many of the active neighborhood association members have raised their families in Driving Park, and continue to promote activities in the area that foster good community relationships among residents. Many in this core group of residents have gone to school, own homes, and attend church in the neighborhood. Driving Park is still home to several local churches that serve members of the neighborhood. It

has also remained a hub for worshippers who have moved out of the area but maintain relationships which are fortified during Sunday morning worship services, and other church activities throughout the week.

Driving Park like many other historic communities around the country is facing change in the population. For instance, nearly 40% of the neighborhood's population is between the ages of 25 to 54. The ages of a significant number of the population indicate substantial potential for employment, yet 12% of the population is unemployed and another 37% of the population age 16 and over is not in the workforce. According to the most recent figures from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics only 6% of the neighborhood's population is over 65 years of age (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010).

The large number of residents coupled with the high number of residents without work by choice or disability, which excludes retirees, provide challenges to the community relative to available resources, and provided a basis for some analysis relative to returning prisoner populations. The neighborhood is seemingly stressed by the number of individuals who have not made attempts to enter the workforce, even though there are no observable reasons why they have not done so. Statistics from the Ohio prison system indicated that 67 individuals under community supervision resided in Driving Park in November 2012. In comparison the South Linden Area had 85 residents under supervision during the month and the Hilltop neighborhood, a total of 88. Livingston Park, an adjoining neighborhood to the south of Driving Park, had 117 residents under correctional supervision. While the Driving Park Community faces significant challenges relative to neighborhood dynamics, there are several community structural factors that provide an opportunity for effective resident engagement consistent among communities that are considered as thriving (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006).

Like other large urban neighborhoods, Driving Park is a city unto itself. Everything that a person needs to survive is contained within the geographic boundaries of the neighborhood. There are markets, health care services, used car dealerships, schools, and places of worship. Driving Park represents a community on the edge of a tipping point. The impact of ex-prisoner reentry is a dynamic that could thrust the community into the depths of complete social disorganization; however, the existing community characteristics could tip the neighborhood into a place of collective efficacy providing an example of how communities ripped apart by decades of the coercive removal of residents through mass incarceration can move forward into social stability.

During the 1990s the Driving Park Community, along with South Linden, were prime examples of the devastating effects of the crack cocaine epidemic that was plaguing the nation and was at the center of the Columbus Police Department's War on Drugs. The effects of mass incarceration, as outlined in the academic literature, seemed to define Driving Park for over a decade. While the effects of the coercive removal and return of primarily young African American males could be seen, the neighborhood endured because of the stabilized middle-class that persists in the area.

In addition to the stability provided by the many working class families in the neighborhood, Driving Park is also characterized by the several supportive community organizations that serve its residents. In addition to the government and non-profit organizations that serve the community, there are established private businesses that have thrived in the neighborhood over the years. Driving Park was as a great site to study the impact of ex-prisoner reentry as the effect of the population can be determined based on the existing efficacy, and substantial resources available to residents. It would have been more difficult to assess the

impact that the concentrated return of ex-prisoners has on community structural factors in a neighborhood with demonstrably fewer resources.

Driving Park is a community experiencing a disproportionate return of ex-prisoners. While other communities in the Columbus area are experiencing the same thing, the numbers of ex-prisoners living in the neighborhood coupled with the established resource networks in the community provide an excellent case in which to examine the impact of reentry.

Previous research studies provided a precedent for the examination of Driving Park in regard to the interactive impact of reentry. Clear (2008) explored the idea of coercive mobility, and the idea that the removal and return of residents during the mass incarceration era produced negative outcomes for communities. Similarly, I was able to draw upon the work of LaVigne and Thomason (2003) to show that individuals who are sent to prison overwhelmingly return to the same communities where they resided prior to incarceration.

Recent data examining the reentry phenomena in Columbus for Driving Park indicate that 12.9 residents per 1000 were arrested and incarcerated in the Ohio prison system. This figure placed Driving Park as contributing the second most residents to the prison system. The neighborhood of South Linden had nearly 17 (16.9) residents per 1000 removed to the prison system (Justice Atlas, 2011). Third on the list is the Mt. Vernon Avenue neighborhood on the near eastside of the city. The data show that 10.7 residents were incarcerated in 2008 from Mt. Vernon.

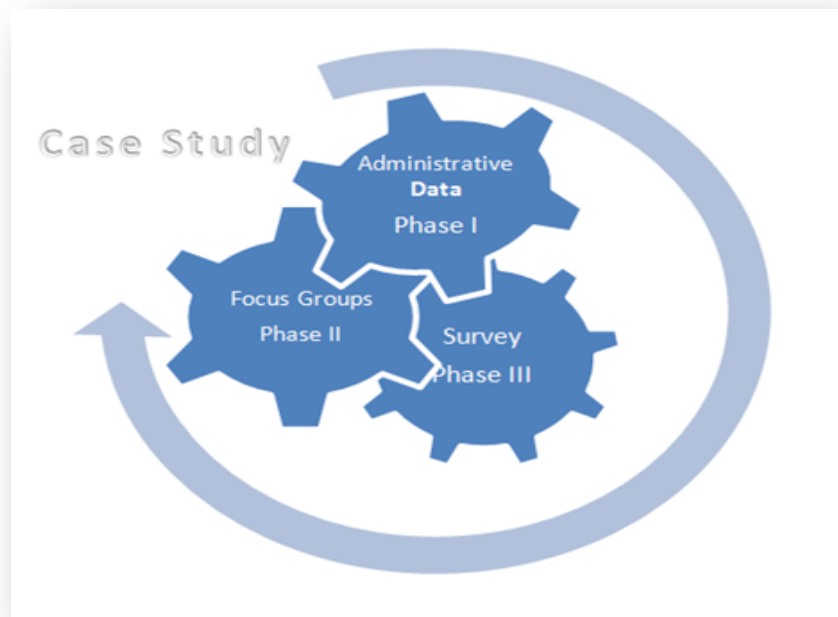
The data further revealed that the prison release rate was 15.07 per 1000 residents for Driving Park. The communities where Clear's (2007) idea of coercive mobility is most prevalent shared several distinct characteristics that research indicates are distinctive of communities where offender reentry rates are high. The community descriptors show higher minority

population rates, higher unemployment, crime, and poverty rates. While other predominately non-minority communities in the Columbus area have similar characteristics the numbers relative to offender incarceration and reentry were significantly lower.

### **Research Design**

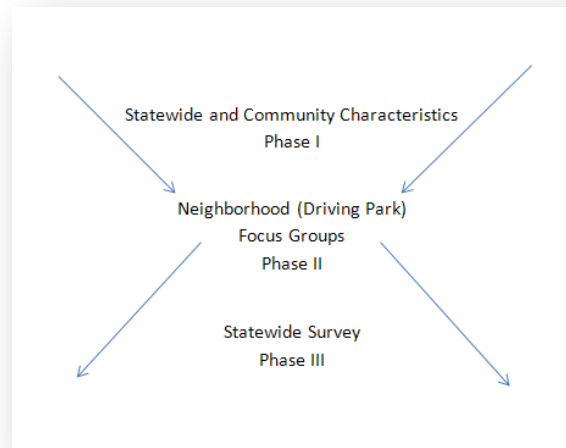
The research design for this study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods within the context of a case study. Data collection took place in three separate phases. Each of the phases represented a specific method of data collection. Phase I included the compilation of administrative data to provide a characterization of community demographics that included but were not limited to: unemployment rates, crime rates, and educational attainment for residents in neighborhoods disproportionately impacted by prisoner reentry. Following the collection of the administrative data; Phase II of the study called for the gathering of qualitative data from discussion among community residents, service providers, and ex-prisoners in three separate focus groups. Each focus group consisted of individuals from three respective areas of the community, residents, service provider and ex-prisoners. The collection of data from three focus groups representing different sources is an aspect of triangulation that was developed into a comprehensible validation of themes to be used for the third phase of the data collection strategy.

Phase III called for a survey of an expanded sample of individuals representing diverse stakeholders from various aspects of community life. The interconnected relationship between community, ex-prisoner, and service provider was analyzed through the use of this three phase research strategy. The mixed-method multi-stage approach provides both a generalizable and transferable analysis of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on disadvantaged communities, as illustrated in Figure 3.1.



*Figure 3.1.* Three phase research strategy.

The study design required an examination of some national, state, and local community characteristics that typify the conditions where high reentry levels are common and provide into a ground-level view of a specific community (Driving Park) delving into the experiences of those living in the conditions outlined in Phase 1. The final phase of the study design points back to the larger focus on communities in Ohio with characteristics similarly to Driving Park in order to examine the magnitude of the effects of prisoner reentry. The goal of the study design as depicted in Figure 3.2 was to provide a context (Phase 1) for the lived experience of individuals living in the environment of the interactive impact of reentry at the local level (Phase 2) and place those experiences into a larger context (Phase 3).



*Figure 3.2.* Three-phase research strategy in context.

### **The Research Plan**

The following sections of this chapter address the specific data collection process, analysis strategy, and data management plan for this study. The procedures utilized for this study included the following actions in the listed order:

#### **PHASE I**

- Collected administrative data
- Presented administrative data in relevant community and state-wide tables

#### **PHASE II**

- Solicited participants for inclusion in the study. Sought approval from select agencies for employee participation in the study.
- Submitted Institutional Review Board application for approval from Antioch University
- Made arrangements to collect data from participants
- Conducted focus groups

- Collected and analyzed data from focus groups
- Conducted member checking
- Finalized themes from focus groups

### PHASE III

- Created survey instrument from focus group themes
- Distributed and collected survey
- Summarized survey data
- Integrated analysis
- Summarized study findings

The investigation into how the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry affects specific community structural factors consisted of three major components which have been outlined in this chapter. The following paragraphs will provide an overview of the processes involved in each of the specific data collection phases of the study.

#### **Phase I: Administrative Data Collection**

Phase 1 of the mixed method research design for the study was the collection of administrative data, including income, employment, crime rates, race, ethnicity, home ownership, education, parolee population, poverty rate, and infectious disease rates. The literature on prisoner reentry indicates that the communities where the majority of ex-prisoners return have higher minority population percentages. The demographic factors listed above, in addition to the information that can be obtained from correctional agencies indicating which communities have higher prevalence of ex-prisoner community returns assisted in the selection of a specific community for my research (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006). In addition to these community variables assisting in the selection of the community, these data served as an



indicator relative to the validity of my research findings, and a general community descriptor for future research on the interactive impact of prisoner reentry.

Administrative data regarding the number of ex-prisoners returning to the community, and those documented individuals under the supervision of the prison system was obtained from data collected by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (2012a, 2012b). Information on the characteristics of the community was obtained from the Columbus Department of Development (2012), U.S. Census Bureau (2010), and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010). These data were specific to the selected study site with available comparisons to other relevant local, state, and federal averages. In regard to the number of ex-prisoners in the community, comparative numbers by census tract are available.

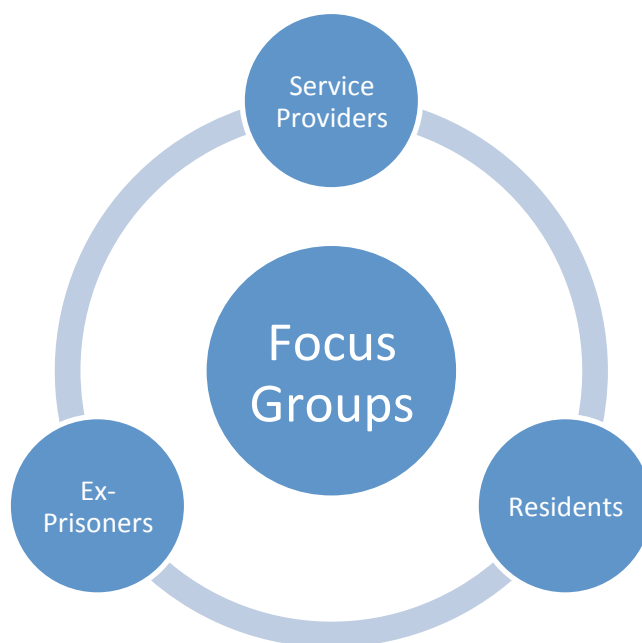
In the first phase of data collection, answers to the following questions were sought in order to provide a broad view of the community context in which the impact of prisoner reentry is most acute; these questions included:

- What are the demographic characteristics of communities disproportionately impacted by prisoner reentry?
- What are the rates of unemployment, crime, and income in communities impacted by reentry?
- What are the demographic characteristics for race and ethnicity in Driving Park and similarly situated neighborhoods?

## **Phase II: Focus Groups**

The qualitative aspect of the mixed method study design incorporated data collected from focus groups. A purposeful sample of participants was selected for the focus groups. Participants consisted of professional service providers and residents of the Driving Park neighborhood in

Columbus, Ohio. All study participants were at least 18 years of age. Participation in the study was completely voluntary. Each participant was provided an informed consent document that required signature in order to participate in the study (see Appendix B). My specific strategy included the development of three focus groups consisting of the individuals most affected by the return of ex-prisoners to specific communities—service providers, community residents, and ex-prisoners. A very specific set of parameters for group participation, and the community from which the participants were selected, guided the setup of each focus group. The selection of the participants was a very important aspect of the design of the focus group. Since the study investigated the way in which ex-prisoner reentry affects specific community structural factors, individuals that represent these structural factors (crime, employment, housing, healthcare, poverty, and family) were included in the focus groups.



*Figure 3.3.* Organization of the three focus groups (Phase II).

The collection of data from three focus groups representing different sources was an aspect of triangulation that developed into a comprehensive validation of themes used for the

Phase III of the data collection strategy. The focus group design employed in this study as outlined by Kitzinger (1994) is the argumentative interactive model. The argumentative perspective postulates that differences in the participant group stimulate depth in the discussion within the group. Focus groups are not necessarily defined nor should they be defined as homogenous (Kitzinger, 1994, p. 113).

There are distinct advantages for research in the design of the argumentative model. Based on the nature of the subject, a focus group discussion predicated on the unique positionality of the participants more closely resembles a naturally occurring environment. The study of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry is a social phenomenon that is enhanced by the consideration of the dynamic aspect of disagreement, misunderstanding, and the challenges of statements that represent the agents in the naturally occurring environment of the subject matter (Mills & Ratcliff, 2012). The goal in creating focus groups for this study was to generate specific discussion related to the topic from the perspective of the individuals representing each group. By creating category specific groups (service provider, community resident, and ex-prisoner), individuals were not unduly influenced nor were they subjected to the potentially harmful effects of combining individuals with strongly conflicting positions to form the groups. A diverse approach to the focus group design included administrators, middle managers, direct service staff and customers from the various community entities, which provided the opportunity to examine and observe the interactive impact of reentry. My goal was to observe the themes emanating from the discussions.

The development of the focus groups was predicated on what I already knew about prisoner reentry from a critical analysis of the existing literature on the subject. In addition to the foundational scholarship of Clear (2007), other scholars have contributed more recently to the

understanding of the place of ex-prisoner reentry in regard to community dynamics. The research of investigators such as Gottschalk (2011) indicates that the phenomenon of mass incarceration is more acute in communities with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime. These neighborhoods are plagued by substandard housing conditions, and inadequate healthcare. The focus groups for this study consisted of selected individuals representing the various agencies, organizations, community residents, and ex-prisoners, as outlined previously, in order to observe the naturally occurring interactions among service. I conducted one focus for each category of community participant for this study. Each group consisted of a minimum of 8 participants and a maximum of 13 participants.

I did not eliminate acquaintances in order to facilitate naturally occurring discussions. Morgan and Spanish (1984) posit that focus group participants that have pre-existing relationships can contribute to a synergistic effect contributing to the elimination of contrasting or conflicting attitudes and opinion among group participants; however Morgan and Spanish (1984) as well as Pepper and Wildy (2008) highlight the importance of the naturally occurring interaction among participants as a strength of the focus group as a research method. I moderated and facilitated the group discussions.

While the formulation of the focus group design for this study was understood to elicit responses that captured the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of the participants, the complexity of the issue required flexibility related to the direction of conversation toward the interests of the participants and away from the interviewer (White & Drew, 2011). In this way the nature of the focus group followed contemporary qualitative research techniques that gave ownership of the collected data to the participants and assured clarity in analysis of the findings (Kvale, 1996). Subsequent to the collection of the qualitative data from the focus groups, the

information provided was reviewed by the researcher and the conversations were transcribed prior to sharing the information with participants in the study in order to validate findings and interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study incorporated the use of four specific tools recommended by Cresswell (2003) to validate the findings of the study. The selected tools are thought to increase the accuracy and validity of the qualitative findings. The tools included:

- Triangulation of data using multiple sources of data in order to justify the themes that emanate from the focus group discussions.
- Member checking through returning to study participants to ensure themes drawn from discussions are accurately captured for the final report.
- Presentation of discrepant information in order to present the true essence of the focus group discussions, and portray accurately the collected data.
- Researcher bias clearly presented in order to be transparent about my perceptions of the phenomena for transparency for the reader.

After the participants were identified and selected for inclusion in this and the subsequent focus groups for the study, I arranged a date, time, and location for the discussions. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 minutes. It was important to provide participants a concrete timeframe for the focus group discussions. This assisted in gaining participants for this phase of the study. Focus group discussions were audio recorded and transcribed by a professional transcriptionist. Only first names were used during the focus group discussion in order to protect the identities of the participants. In addition to the audio tape recording, as the principal investigator for this study I took field notes. All participants that agreed to participate in the three focus groups were asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix C).

Three categories of focus groups were held for this study. Each group was asked to respond to a set of questions specific to the category of service provider, community resident, or ex-prisoner. The following paragraphs list the order of the focus groups. At the conclusion of each focus group there was a period of analysis of the data. The time for analysis was scheduled in anticipation that the questions of the subsequent focus groups could be influenced by the discussion and analysis of the previous groups.

**Service provider focus group.** The first group was made up of local service providers. This group was recruited from among the several service agencies and organizations in the Driving Park neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. Organizations that provide direct services in the areas of crime, healthcare, family, housing, employment, and poverty were targeted. Each of the agencies received a letter in order to gain permission for staff to participate in the study (see Appendix A). Targeted agencies for participation in the study included: Africentric Personal Development Shop (APDS); King Arts Complex, Columbus Housing Network, Mount Period Baptist Church, Franklin County Jobs and Family Services (FCJFS), Community Housing Network, and Columbus Impact. Each of the targeted organizations were selected based on their level of expertise and experience in working with residents in the specified community structural factors as outlined in Figure 3.4 on the next page. These organizations represented both community and government agencies.

Participant selection for the first focus group included the identification of specific staff at the target neighborhood service agencies. These participants were notified via email of their inclusion in the study (see Appendix A).

The service provider focus group was made up of line staff, managers, and administrators from the participating agencies. The group had 8 staff representing the various agencies. The

group was designed to reflect a diversity of service providers that served to represent each of the community structural factors to be examined in the study.

Participants in the service provider focus group were asked to fill out a professional data collection form. This form included questions about the gender, race, occupation, employing agency, and education. Additionally, contact information to include, phone number, and mailing address was requested to assist in following up with participants. The information collected assists in describing the participants and verifying the familiarity of the participants with the impact of prisoner reentry on the community structural factors being examined.



*Figure 3.4.* Interactive focus group discussion.

The service provider focus group engaged participants in real world discussion on a subject that has been underrepresented in the academic literature. My goal was to observe the interactive group discussion to see if the dynamic of individuals representing separate structural factors raise different issues. The guiding questions for the participants in this focus group centered on the observed impact of the returning prisoner population on the resources and

services available to members of the Driving Park Community. The guiding questions for the first focus group consisted of the following:

- In general, how do you think this returning population will affect (employment, housing, crime, healthcare, poverty, and family)?
- How does your agency manage the tension created by problems associated with service to customers?
- What methods should your organization utilize to identify and address problems being experienced by customers or colleagues in performance of service?
- What, if any, expectations do you as a service-provider have of the returning ex-prisoner population? How do these expectations affect the delivery of services?
- How might an increased offender population within the community affect your interaction with other organizations?
- What can your organization do to foster collaboration with other organizations to solve problems, and create new ideas?

**Community resident focus group.** The second category of participants was made up of Driving Park community residents. Residents were recruited for participation through the Driving Park Civic Association. The civic association president provided names, phone numbers, email addresses, and mailing addresses of participants. Residents participating in the study were asked to meet at the neighborhood library where they were informed of the study (see Appendix B). Participation in the focus group was limited to all non-offending residents age 18 and up. In addition to assistance from the civic association residents were also identified for participation in the study by local service providers in the neighborhoods.

There were eight participants in the community resident focus group. Residents participating in the study filled out a short demographic information sheet. This sheet asked,



gender, race, age, address, and how long the participant resided in Driving Park. As a part of my responsibility in framing the study I followed up with community residents, and officials of the civic association to ensure maximum participation in the focus group. The guiding questions for the participants in the second focus group sought to examine the impact of the returning prisoner population on the quality of life and social interaction of community residents in Driving Park.

The guiding questions for the second focus group included:

- In general, how do you think the returning population will affect employment, housing, crime, healthcare, poverty, and family services?
- What role should (formal) leaders play in making sure ex-prisoners are successfully integrated into the neighborhood?
- How will the increased presence of criminal justice professionals affect the relationships among community residents? How will it affect the relationship between ex-prisoners, and other community residents?
- How do your ideas for neighborhood improvement get to policy makers, or formal community leaders?
- Are you concerned about the ex-prisoner population in your neighborhood? Are you concerned about your personal safety? The safety of family members? Does the potential for an increase in the ex-prisoner population in your neighborhood make you want to move out of the neighborhood?

**Ex-prisoner focus group.** The third focus group was exclusive to Driving Park neighborhood residents classified as ex-prisoners. The ex-prisoners selected for participation were identified through a collaborative effort with the TOUCH Program, and the Franklin County (Columbus) Ex-offender Reentry Coalition (FCERC). Since the focus groups were

focused narrowly in the Driving Park community, ex-prisoners residing in the neighborhoods geographic boundaries were sought for participation in the focus group. The FCERC, along with the TOUCH Program identified the individuals from Driving Park for the ex-prisoner focus group.

Understanding the stigma associated with a criminal conviction, and the detrimental effects of the collateral consequences of incarceration were important considerations in the formation of this focus group. The construction of this specific focus group proved to be the most challenging. My goal for this group was to identify and recruit 8 to 10 participants. A total of 13 participated in this focus group. Participants were selected in an attempt to best represent the incarceration and reentry experience. Selection criteria included persons that:

- have served at least one year in a state prison facility
- have been in the community a minimum of one year
- have served a minimum of one incarceration or a maximum of three separate incarcerations.

The selection criteria ensured the inclusion of diversity in both the incarceration and reentry experience of the focus group participants.

In keeping with the format of the previous focus groups, participants were informed that their information would remain confidential and that only first names would be used during the focus group discussion. The ex-prisoners also filled out a brief data form with questions related to gender, age, race, address, phone number, and length of incarceration. The guiding questions for the participants in the third focus group examined the impact of community structural factors on the returning ex-prisoner population. The guiding questions for the final focus group were:

- How do you gain access to the resources necessary for you to successfully transition back into the community?
- In what ways do the characteristics of this community affect your ability to remain crime free and contribute to the community?
- What effect does the existing ex-prisoner population have on this community? What effect would an increase in the ex-prisoner population have on the community and on you individually?
- How do you think community/justice leaders could increase the positive influence of ex-prisoners on neighborhoods and vice-versa? How can the negative influence be decreased?
- In what ways do you feel welcomed or rejected by the residents of Driving Park?

The ongoing relationship with members of the Driving Park Civic Association and several of the community organizations which began with my work as a community specialist with the Columbus Urban League assisted in gaining suitable participants for the study. My primary interaction with members of the targeted community has been in the role of a service provider to victims of crime and as crime prevention professional. As an African American male, with 16 years of criminal justice professional experience who is currently residing in a nearby community, I believe that my personal and professional identities afforded me access to the Driving Park residents that allowed for full integration into the community.

The participants within the selected focus groups shared a common culture or basic belief system, thoughts, and feelings relative to their involvement and interaction with members of the local community (Kitzinger, 1994). The benefit of this design is the synergistic nature of the group and the depth of discussion to each issue presented. Because the members of the group

shared a common experience the participants provided great detail relative to the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the neighborhood characteristics examined in this study.

**Focus group thematic analysis.** Upon the completion and transcription of the information obtained in each focus group analysis of the data occurred in order to draw themes from the discussions. The qualitative analysis of the data took the form of coded responses to the questions posed, and the formulation of general themes, compiling the information into various categories. The essence of the coded analysis was to manage the data using a methodological approach for the creation of meaning from the content of the focus groups (K. Jackson & Trochim, 2002). While diversity in participant responses was expected, general themes emerged from the discussions. The focus group analysis took place in two phases. The first phase of analysis included a thorough review of the information obtained in the individual groups (service provider, community resident, and ex-prisoner). The second phase of analysis entailed a review of the data across groups. The themes emerged from the data itself; however, this researcher was mindful of the theoretical positioning outlined in previous studies related to prisoner reentry, and mass incarceration. The analysis of the qualitative data was comprised of the identification of patterned responses related to the research questions (Braun & Clark, 2006). The goal was for the analysis to be driven by the data and not the researcher's epistemological frame of reference. Braun and Clark provided an outline for the thematic analysis process utilized in the analysis of the qualitative data.

1. Familiarize yourself with the data: Become immersed in the material, reading and reflecting on the information.
2. Generate initial codes: In the most basic way begin to develop an organized coding structure.

3. Search for themes: Review the data to identify the themes or patterns that come from the data.
4. Review themes: Search the themes to identify relevance to the research questions, and overall fit in the study.
5. Define and name: Analyze information in order to generate clear definitions and meaning of each theme.
6. Produce the report: This final phase of analysis involves lifting out examples, connecting these illustrations back to the research questions. (p. 87)

The completion of the data analysis was followed by meetings with participants from each of the three focus groups. The goal of these meetings was to share the analysis of the focus group discussions, and facilitate researcher-participant dialogue relative to the authenticity of the reports. These follow-up sessions happened in group sessions with select individuals representing each of the focus groups. A significant part of the member-checking process involved identifying and speaking with people who were active and those who were quiet, or reserved during the focus group discussions. The follow-up meetings assisted in determining the accuracy of the responses from the study participants. Contact information collected during the focus groups during the administration of the participant consent forms enabled me to conduct the follow up sessions with focus group participants.

### **Phase III: Survey**

The goal of the survey was to collect data from a larger sample than could be reached through individual interviews or through more focus groups. The focus group data was used in the development of the survey. The survey stood to expand the existing available data on the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the Driving Park community to similar neighborhoods across

the State of Ohio. Without the additional data collected through the implementation of the survey, understanding the broad implications for communities experiencing concentrated reentry remain difficult. Just as the administrative data provided a larger context for understanding the environment into which a majority of offenders return; the data obtained in the survey provided statistical information about the broader impact of the phenomena.

The survey design called for responses to statements that assisted in the understanding of attitudes of individuals living and working with the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry. The survey was administered online through Survey Monkey in easy to follow conversational language. Several of the statements came directly from verbiage obtained in the focus groups.

The Competing Values Framework is an ideal model for communities in the midst of cultural change. This theoretical model for competing values identifies a tendency for individuals, organizations, and communities to hold fast to or desire outcomes that pose a seeming paradox. In the context of prisoner reentry, a majority of citizens value the idea of a second chance for returning prisoners to reintegrate into society without the encumbrances associated with a criminal conviction. While this is an agreed upon value, the legal barriers that exist to successful reintegration expose a contrasting value of retribution. In the mode of the Competing Values Framework, the survey sought to uncover the community values with respect to the returning ex-prisoners, community services, and resident quality of life.

**Study survey design.** The survey included themes drawn from the community residents, service providers, and ex-offenders focus groups in the Driving Park neighborhood. The fundamental elements of the survey are outlined here. The survey included four sections. The first section was the introduction, which provided an overview of the survey, briefly discussed the significance of the study, covered the goals of the survey, and presented a brief description of

the phenomena to be examined. The second section of the survey asked specific questions relative to the participant relationship to the community and their official job classification. In this section participants were asked to select among several potential community roles. The third section of the survey asked respondents to assess their level of agreement or disagreement with statements along a corresponding Likert-type scale. The statements are derived directly from specific comments captured during the focus groups. The third section of the survey assisted in the identification of specific transferable attitudes related to the phenomenon that is the subject of the case.

The fourth section of the survey captured specific demographic information from the survey respondents. The requested information included; gender, age, ethnicity, and race. This information further characterized the community context of ex-prisoner reentry, and provided an enhanced understanding of the individuals impacted by the phenomenon.

Alwin and Krosnick (1991) cite four key factors that should be addressed relative to reliability when developing a survey instrument. These factors include: the characteristics of the survey respondents, the topics addressed by the survey, the wording or design of the questions, and the mode of administering the survey. These factors were a major consideration in the design of the survey and the distribution of the survey to potential respondents.

**Survey distribution.** Survey distribution occurred online via email through Survey Monkey. The distribution of the emails was accomplished with the assistance of the Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition Association (OERCA). The OERC Association is a network of aligned local reentry coalitions that include state government agencies, local organizations, and community partners from both the public and private sector. Participant email addresses were requested and obtained through my current relationship with the OERC Association leadership.

The members of the OERC Association provided a broad cross-section of constituencies that reflected staff that work in social service agencies, non-offending residents, and ex-prisoners. Members of the reentry coalitions are representative of the individuals that comprised the focus groups outlined in Phase II of the research strategy.

**Survey data analysis.** Data collected from the surveys was processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS was used on all closed ended survey statements for analyzing all categorical and quantitative variables.

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and percentage distributions were used to describe demographic and attitude variables. A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to measure differences in responses across all four groups (community residents, service providers, ex-prisoners, and justice professionals) for selected attitude statements. The development of patterns assisted in the identification of themes derived from the focus groups as interconnected statements and sentiments from participants were identified.

### **Summary**

Yin (2009) posits that this form of case study analysis is well positioned to provide answers to how or why something occurred. Due to the inability to precisely ascribe measures to causal links the explanatory narrative provides support or explanation for the statistical evidence. In this study, quantitative data analysis was used to interpret and expand upon the findings in the qualitative data. In summary, this study is a partially mixed, sequential design that is equally a quantitative and qualitative study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009). There was an equal emphasis on both methodological approaches in this study. The qualitative data was used to explore the phenomena, followed by the application of a quantitative procedure with a large sample in order to allow the results to be generalizable to the larger population (Cresswell, 2003). Conversely,



the quantitative data provides more detail, and appropriate context for concepts examined in the larger sample.

Ex-prisoner reentry is a complex phenomenon that occurs in the context of neighborhoods as experienced by community residents, service providers, local organizations, and ex-prisoners themselves. For this reason, a strategy of inquiry into the impact of reentry on community structural factors incorporated an in-depth approach that utilized multiple data collection procedures from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives.

This chapter provided a description of the research methods used to investigate the interactive impact of prisoner reentry on specific community structural factors. In the following chapter, the results and analysis of the data will be examined to address the question, “What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (characteristics) in a community where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing?”

## Chapter IV: Findings

This chapter covers the results of the study through analysis of the statistical information, discussion of the narrative data, attitudes of respondents, and findings as they relate to the research questions. The review of the findings includes an analysis of the quantitative administrative and survey data and of the qualitative data collected during the focus groups. The research findings are intended to provide an understanding of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the community identified in the study. The data collection and analysis for this study was conducted in three separate phases. These phases included the collection of administrative data, three focus groups, and a survey based on themes that emerged from focus group discussion.

The administrative data details the characteristics of several communities with higher than average rates of ex-prisoner reentry. Through analysis of existing administrative data, a profile of a community with a high rate of reentry emerges. The second phase of the data collection included focus groups with three community elements important to the ex-prisoner reentry discussion. Focus groups were conducted independently with community service providers, neighborhood residents, and ex-prisoners.

This chapter will begin with an overview of the administrative data collected during the first phase of the data collection process. The subsequent sections of the chapter will delineate the findings from the second and third phases of the collection of data.

### **Phase I: Administrative Data Collection**

The first phase of the data collection process included the compilation of administrative data in order to provide a statistical description and a contextual backdrop of the conditions in

which the phenomenon examined in this study occurs. Prisoner reentry occurs disproportionately in communities that have persistently high percentages of unemployment, minorities, and crime. The individuals in these communities are typically on the lower end of the socio-economic scale.

Information provided in the tables includes a description of community conditions highlighting several community characteristics. These data include State of Ohio and national statistics, including data from several disadvantaged communities in Ohio, that are similar to the Phase II focus, the Driving Park neighborhood in Columbus, Ohio. While the reentry rates vary across the disadvantaged neighborhoods, there are several key indicators for structural factors that serve as descriptors for neighborhoods impacted by reentry. All of the statistical data acquired during the first phase of the research strategy were found in sources available to the general public. The data descriptors of the characteristics of individuals living in the community were found through the U.S. Census Bureau. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation was the source for information on ex-prisoners and offender supervision levels.

According to previous studies, the majority of ex-prisoners return to large metropolitan areas. Ohio is the seventh most populous state in the country (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Data from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Bureau of Research indicates that Franklin, Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Summit, Lucas, Lorain, and Montgomery counties accounted for 50.7% of the 22,567 total offender releases to the community from state prison during calendar year 2011 (ODRC, 2012).

Previous studies by the Urban Institute relative to offender returns to the community in Ohio state that 95% of all prisoners exiting state prisons return to live in communities within the state. Of that number 62% returned to the most populous counties with dense urban centers. These counties include Franklin (Columbus), Hamilton (Cincinnati), Cuyahoga (Cleveland),

Montgomery (Dayton), Summit (Akron), Lucas (Toledo), and Lorain (Lorain) (LaVigne & Thomson, 2003). “These counties accounted for 45% of the state’s total population” while accounting for a majority of the ex-prisoner population returning to the community (LaVigne & Thomson, 2003, p. 60). The LaVigne and Thomson (2003) study also found the concentrated return of ex-prisoners to urban cities to be true in Illinois where 53% of ex-prisoners returned to Chicago and in Maryland where 59% of ex-prisoners in the state returned to Baltimore.

The data captured by ODRC, as shown in Table 4.1, relate to offender release reports for the county of commitment for each of the offenders released for the year. The counties listed in the table below have historically contributed an overwhelming majority of the incarcerated population within the Ohio prison system. The counties appearing in the table continue to reflect the majority of offender releases just as they did in the findings presented by LaVigne and Thomson (2003).

Table 4.1

*2011 Prisoner Releases by County (ODRC, 2011)*

County	Male	Female	Total
Franklin	1622	200	1822
Hamilton	1865	164	2029
Cuyahoga	3655	396	4051
Montgomery	1035	175	1210
Summit	1082	154	1236
Lucas	618	39	657
Lorain	419	40	459

As indicated in the literature review, offenders released from prison in Ohio tend to return to large metropolitan population areas and they also disproportionately return to specific neighborhoods within these cities. The cities identified in Table 4.2 include specific neighborhoods that are characterized by significant ex-prisoner populations. In Columbus,

prisoner returns are concentrated within zip codes that include, among other neighborhoods, the Driving Park community (Franklin County Reentry Task Force, 2009). It is difficult to identify all ex-prisoners living within set neighborhood boundaries since all prisoners are not required to be placed under the supervision of the adult parole authority upon release; however, a key indicator of the level of ex-prisoners returning to a specific community is found in the number of individuals living in a neighborhood currently under parole supervision.

Table 4.2

*Parole Supervision Population in Areas with Highest Reentry Rates (ODRC, 2011)*

City/County	Supervision Population
Columbus/Franklin	4691
Cincinnati/Hamilton	2265
Cleveland/Cuyahoga	5205
Dayton/Montgomery	2477
Akron/Summit	1257
Lorain/Lorain	1580
Toledo/Lucas	835

The Urban Institute study examining reentry in Ohio utilized offender pre-incarceration addresses in combination with the known location of ex-offenders under parole supervision as a reliable indicator of ex-prisoner population levels in specific neighborhoods. Ohio is home to several neighborhoods that account for the majority of ex-prisoner returns. These neighborhoods represent a disproportionate population of ex-prisoners in comparison to other community and overall county rates. The neighborhood ex-prisoner population rate is calculated as those returning to the community from prison per 1,000 adults. The overall rate for prisoner releases in Ohio is 3.48 per 1,000. ODRC reports prisoner release data according to zip code.

The figures in Tables 4.3 reflect neighborhood data found within the indicated zip codes compiled by ODRC. These communities represent the broad spectrum of neighborhoods

impacted by prisoner reentry. There are neighborhoods within this spectrum like Bond Hill in Cincinnati that reflect communities where the ex-prisoner reentry rate has the potential to grow based on several demographic factors that are found in communities with high prisoner reentry rates. While the ex-prisoner population in Bond Hill is 7.18, which is low in comparison to other communities on the list, it still represents a rate that is nearly double the ex-prisoner rate for Hamilton County in which it is situated.

In Lorain, Ohio the concentration of ex-prisoners is far less than in communities in nearby Cleveland and Akron, however, with a population of just under 65,000 residents the rate of 8.7 is significant relative to the overall state rate of 3.48. The ex-prisoner populations within the communities experiencing growing rates of reentry all represent neighborhoods with rates more than twice the state average. In the attempt to answer questions about the interactive impact of prisoner reentry on community structural factors in neighborhoods where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing, we must examine some communities that are currently experiencing higher rates of reentry in comparison to neighboring communities.

Table 4.3

*Ex-Prisoner Population Rates for Selected Neighborhoods in Most Populous Ohio Cities*  
(ODRC, 2011)

<b>Akron (Summit County)</b>	
Neighborhood	Rate
Lane – Wooster	22.82
Downtown Akron	18.93
East Akron	14.66
West Akron	14.01
<b>Cincinnati (Hamilton County)</b>	
Neighborhoods	Rate
West End and Queensgate	19.71
Evanston	17.39

Over the Rhine	16.37
Bond Hill	7.18
<hr/>	
<b>Cleveland (Cuyahoga County)</b>	
Neighborhoods	Rate
Downtown Cleveland	34.34
Central	23.12
Union-Miles	22.94
Glennville	21.66
<hr/>	
<b>Columbus (Franklin County)</b>	
Neighborhoods	Rate
South Linden	16.39
Driving Park	15.07
Near Eastside	13.29
Brittany Hills Area	10.93
<hr/>	
<b>Dayton (Montgomery County)</b>	
Neighborhood	Rate
Roosevelt	57.35
McFarlane	18.89
Burkhardt	13.03
Princeton Heights	11.83
<hr/>	
<b>Lorain (Lorain County)</b>	
Neighborhoods	Rate
East Lorain	8.72
Harvey D Cornwells	8.72
<hr/>	
<b>Toledo (Lucas County)</b>	
Neighborhood	Rate
Old West End	15.53
Warren-Sherman	14.20
LaGrange	12.64
Scott Park	9.25
<hr/>	

The Driving Park neighborhood had a rate of 15.07 ex-prisoners per 1,000 adults in the community. In Columbus, that rate was second only to the 16.39 per 1,000 adults in the South Linden neighborhood on the north side of the city. In order to put these rates in context with surrounding communities, Franklin County, which is home to both Driving Park and South

Linden, had an overall rate of 3.02 per 1,000. The concentration of prisoners released to Driving Park was significantly higher than in the majority of neighborhoods in the city of Columbus and the county.

In comparison to communities around the state, the rate of released prisoners in Driving Park falls well below the Cleveland neighborhoods. Cleveland provides a good snapshot of the increased rate of the ex-prisoner population in Ohio. In 2001, the rate of returning prisoners to Glenville and Union-Miles was 9.6 and 12.2 respectively (Brooks, Visher, & Naser, 2006). The current rate of the ex-prisoner population in these neighborhoods has significantly increased to 21.66 and 22.94, respectively. These current ex-prisoner rates are much higher than the 6.11 rate in Cuyahoga County, the county in which Cleveland is located.

In Dayton, the Driving Park neighborhood (15.07) has a much lower rate than that of the Roosevelt community (57.35), but similar to the McFarlane (18.89) and Burkhardt (13.03) neighborhoods in the Midtown section of Dayton. The overall rate in Montgomery County (Dayton) was a much lower 4.49. Roosevelt is a neighborhood that has been impacted by mass incarceration, coercive mobility, and urban blight. While it is a relatively small neighborhood in comparison to Driving Park, the Roosevelt (population 1,078) is a neighborhood that exemplifies a community that has an extreme concentration of ex-prisoners returning to a specific area. Roosevelt provides an example of the potential future condition of communities if action is not taken. There were 1 in 31 adults in the United States under some form of correctional supervision. The era of mass incarceration as discussed in the literature review provides a snapshot of the realities that exist in this country. The stark reality is that there are some communities in this country that have very few individuals returning from prison and there are some neighborhoods, like Roosevelt, that have extremely high populations of returning



prisoners. The ODRC 2012 Intake indicates that out of 2563 offenders Cuyahoga (Cleveland) 15.9%, Hamilton (Cincinnati) 10.1%, Franklin (Columbus) Summit (Akron) 6.3%, and Montgomery (Dayton) 4.2% accounted for the vast majority of offenders entering and will therefore constitute the vast majority of prisoners exiting the system back into their local communities. No other counties others than those mentioned among Ohio's 88 counties had more than 80 individuals entering the prison system during 2012. The ODRC Intake Study provides the most comprehensive overview of the characteristics of persons entering the Ohio prison system.

The return of ex-prisoners to the community takes place within the boundaries of communities that have specific identifying characteristics. In addition to the number of ex-prisoners living within their boundaries the neighborhoods that these ex-prisoners return to are typified by lower employment rates and educational achievement, lower home values, high minority populations, and higher crime rates than state or national averages.

A high rate of ex-prisoner reentry is not exclusive to Ohio or several of its neighborhoods. Outside of Ohio the rate of ex-prisoners living in Driving Park would rank the neighborhood second only to the area that includes the Indian Village section of Detroit which had a rate of 23.12 per 1,000 (Justice Atlas of Sentencing and Corrections, 2008). Driving Park is comparable to the ex-prisoner population rate of 18.93 in the Fairhill neighborhood of Philadelphia (Justice Atlas of Sentencing and Corrections, 2008). Fairhill had the highest rate of ex-prisoner returns in Philadelphia. Driving Park's rate of 15.07 would rank second in the city. The data on prisoner returns to specific neighborhoods provides some contextual background to the discussion of the possible impact of reentry on neighborhood characteristics.

Ohio has several large metropolitan areas that center around the cities of Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dayton. The general neighborhood characteristics of communities experiencing significant ex-prisoner returns will be examined in detail for four selected neighborhoods. The communities listed in Table 4.4 were selected for the comparable size to Driving Park.

Table 4.4

*City, Metro and High Reentry Neighborhood Populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)*

State Population	City	City Population	Metro Population	Neighborhood	Neighborhood Population
11,536,504	Columbus	787,033	1,836,540	Driving Park	6,500
	Cincinnati	296,943	2,130,151	Bond Hill	6,972
	Cleveland	396,815	2,077,040	Union-Miles	10,266
	Dayton	141,527	841,502	Roosevelt	1,072

Based on the data collected and based on the literature relative to reentry, these communities are typical neighborhoods experiencing concentrated prisoner reentry. Each city and neighborhood represents a significant portion of prisoner returns to communities in the State of Ohio. Tables 4.5-4.9 provide an overview of the general characteristics of neighborhoods experiencing concentrated prisoner reentry.

In comparison to state averages, the cities and neighborhoods with a high concentration of returning ex-prisoners also have higher than average proportions of African-American residents. In each instance the African-American population rate is double the state average of 12.2%. The African American population rate is significantly higher than state averages and the city rate in the neighborhoods identified as having substantial ex-prisoner residents.

Table 4.5

*Racial Composition of Selected Ohio Neighborhoods Compared to City and State Percentages*  
(U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Race	State	Columbus	Driving Park	Cincinnati	Bond Hill	Cleveland	Union-Miles	Dayton	Roosevelt
Black	12.2%	28%	84%	44.8%	94%	53.3%	95.5%	42.9%	98.2%
White	82.7%	61.5%	10.9%	49.3%	4%	37.3%	2%	51.7%	.01%
Asian	1.7%	4.1%	.58%	1.8%	.02%	1.8%	.1%	.9%	-
Latino or Hispanic	3.1%	5.6%	2.09%	2.8%	.01%	10%	.8%	3%	.01%

Employment figures obtained from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show consistently low employment rates in these neighborhoods. The Bureau of Labor Statistics calculates the rate of employment by first accounting for individuals not eligible for the workforce—those under 16 years of age and residents who have retired—and then calculating the rate based on those residents eligible and capable of being employed. The employment rate provides an indication of economic viability versus the unemployment rate which measures that number of individuals looking for employment against the total number of individuals in the workforce (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). A community employment rate gauges the ability of the economy to create jobs, and evaluates the employment condition of the population eligible to work.

As indicated by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment statistics for the state of Ohio exceed by a small margin the national employment rates for both males and females. Figures for the identified population indicate the neighborhoods (see Table 4.6) did not fare so well. In most cases the neighborhood employment rates fall below both national and state employment numbers. The exception is the female employment rate in the Bond Hill section of Cincinnati. Interestingly, in 2010 the same year of the employment figures compiled in the employment rate Table 4.6, the average age of offenders in Ohio prisons was 35.25 years old. The average stay of incarceration was two and a half years (ODRC, 2010). The average age and

length of stay in correctional facilities in Ohio is significant in that it demonstrates the lasting effects of a criminal conviction on employment opportunities (Western, 2007).

Typically, periods of incarceration do not last long enough to preclude ex-prisoners from employment opportunities because of age. Previous studies have indicated that the lasting effects or the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction are far more likely to impede employment opportunity. This fact provides a plausible explanation for the low employment rates in each of the designated neighborhoods. The data indicates that in areas of high ex-prisoner population employment rates are significantly lower.

Table 4.6

*Comparative Employment Rates for Selected Ohio Neighborhoods with State and National Rates* (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010)

National		State		Union-Miles		Bond Hill		Roosevelt		Driving Park	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
32.21%	28.09%	32.97%	29.37%	15.45%	21.92%	27.05%	33.3%	17.2%	22.43%	26.07%	23.79%

Information from the 2010 U.S. Census shows the national average household income was \$74,974. Among the reviewed communities with concentrated ex-prisoner returns in Table 4.5 the average 2010 household income was \$41,657. The 2010 income of residents in these communities was on average \$33,300 less than the national average and nearly \$ 25,000 less than statewide averages for household income (U.S Census Bureau, 2010). Data from each of the neighborhoods listed in Table 4.7 represent communities with high rates of reentry. In examination of the data we see a broad range of average household incomes across these specific neighborhoods. While there is obvious disparity in the averages of household incomes, the neighborhoods are across the board below state and national income figures.

Table 4.7

*Average Household Income for Ohio and Selected Neighborhoods* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

State Average	Driving Park	Bond Hill	Union Miles	Roosevelt
\$66,568	\$41,488	\$56,641	\$28,106	\$40,396

A key indicator of socio-economic distress is the education level of community residents. A review of national and state average education levels indicates that the identified communities in Ohio have lower than average education levels among neighborhood residents. Residents in the Driving Park neighborhood (Table 4.8) completed high school at a rate higher than the national average and received bachelor's degrees at a lower than average rate. Across the board, the Ohio neighborhoods had higher high school graduate percentages among residents than the national average. However, the education levels of residents in neighborhoods with high rates of re-entry are characterized by low percentages in the other listed categories with the exception of Bond Hill and Roosevelt.

Table 4.8

*National Education Levels Compared to Selected Ohio Neighborhoods With High Reentry Rates* (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)

Highest Education Level	National Average	State Average	Driving Park	Bond Hill	Union-Miles	Roosevelt
Did not complete High School	15.35%	12.88%	24.69%	16.89%	34.35%	26.62%
High School Graduate	29.24%	36.65%	31.65%	31.87%	35.28%	37.4%
Bachelor's Degree	17.52%	15.77%	13.26%	13.79%	3.7%	6.9%
Graduate School	9.84%	8.42%	5.49%	9.59%	1.9%	9.8%

Neighborhoods that have a significant ex-prisoner population experience higher rates of crime as compared to communities with fewer ex-prisoners (Defina & Hannon, 2010). In the

selected Ohio neighborhoods the rate of crime was elevated in comparison to state and national crime rates. The data analysis included in Table 4.10 shows the 2010 violent crime rate in the U.S., Ohio, and by neighborhood. While the violent crime rate in Ohio is significantly lower than the national average, the communities and municipalities that have been shown to have significant returning felons have higher violent crime rates than state, city and national averages. The data was obtained from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Report. The crime rates show instances of murder, non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault per 100,000 people. These crime rates are consistent with the findings of Raphael and Stoll (2004), and scholars such as Clear (2007) who have shown that areas of high crime rates are a persistent condition of the community into which ex-felons return.

Table 4.9

*Violent Crime Rate per 100,000 Residents in Ohio and Selected Neighborhoods (FBI Uniform Crime Report, 2010)*

U.S.	Ohio	Columbus	Driving Park	Cincinnati	Bond Hill	Cleveland	Union-Miles	Dayton	Roosevelt
467.2	385.1	658	909	1,032	1,134	1,366	1,786	957	1,443

In Chapter II of this study it was noted that research indicated that communities with high ex-prisoner populations generally had difficulty obtaining access to necessary resources (Hipp et al., 2010). One of the primary resources potentially impacted by prisoner reentry is in the area of healthcare services. The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) captures information related to accessible healthcare services for communities. HRSA tracks neighborhoods that are described as medically underserved. These communities are typified by high poverty rates, high infant mortality, and an insufficient number of primary care facilities for the population. Of the examined neighborhoods in phase one of the study Driving Park

(Columbus) and Roosevelt (Dayton) were the only neighborhoods classified by HRSA as medically underserved. Thus, access to health resources is not a general characteristic of communities with high rates of ex-prisoner reentry.

While communities may have adequate access to healthcare, the increase in ex-prisoner populations requires the continued examination of infectious disease rates in these neighborhoods. Previous studies have provided evidence that ex-prisoners return to communities with higher than average infectious disease rates (Farmer, 2002; Massoglia, 2008a). In general, the counties to which offenders in Ohio predominately return experience higher rates per 100,000 persons of HIV and chlamydia than the rate for the entire state.

In addition to low employment rates, previous studies indicate that neighborhoods experiencing significant ex-prisoner returns exist in persistent poverty.

Table 4.10

*Percentage of Population Living in Poverty for U.S., Ohio and Selected Neighborhoods* (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011)

U.S.	14.3%
Ohio	14.75%
Driving Park	42.03%
Bond Hill	4.4%
Union-Miles	58.78%
Roosevelt	31.49%

The research literature examined in Chapter II posits that socially disorganized communities have high rates of individuals living in poverty and receiving government housing assistance (Table 4.11). The percentage of residents receiving Section 8 housing is an indicator of the number of low-income households in a particular community. The Section 8 program provides landlords a government subsidy for the purpose of creating affordable housing for low-income households (U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2011).

Table 4.11

*Percentage of Section 8 Housing Recipients for State of Ohio and Selected Neighborhoods (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2011)*

Ohio	Driving Park	Columbus	Bond Hill	Cincinnati	Union Miles	Cleveland	Roosevelt	Dayton
6.59%	13.48%	6.58%	19.84%	8.87%	Not available	8.16%	13.48%	6.21%

The administrative data collected from public sources clearly demonstrates that communities experiencing high levels of ex-prisoner reentry have some common characteristics. These communities experience: (1) a high percentage of minority residents, (2) lower than average education levels, (3) a high percentage of the population living in poverty, and (4) lower than average household incomes. These factors, coupled with high violent crime rate and low employment rates provide impediments to successful prisoner reentry and socio-economic affluence for these neighborhoods.

Driving Park fits the profile of a community with a high rate of prisoner reentry. The second phase of this study moves from a broad perspective to a more narrow interpretive view of prisoner reentry by capturing the attitudes and opinions of those living, and working, in a neighborhood experiencing the interactive effects of prisoner reentry. The attitudes and opinions of those experiencing this social phenomenon were captured during a series of focus groups with community service providers, residents, and ex-prisoners who have returned to the neighborhood. Subsequent to the focus groups attention is turned back to the broad perspective of those living in communities highlighted in the administrative data. These communities located in the other large Ohio cities share with Driving Park the fundamental elements of communities impacted by prisoner reentry. The survey will assess the transferability of the Driving Park experience to other communities facing high rates of prisoner reentry.



## **Phase II: Focus Group Findings**

Three focus groups were conducted over a two-week period in July/August 2013. Each focus group consisted of individuals representing a specific segment of the community as depicted in the tables in this section of the study. The groups were categorized as service provider, community resident, or ex-prisoner. The service provider, community resident, and ex-prisoner focus groups were convenience samples consisting of individuals matching the requirements outlined in the methodology.

The purpose of the meeting was explained at each focus group. Each participant was asked to fill out an information sheet with demographic information that included age, race, occupation, and employer. All participants were required to sign an informed consent document. Due to the nature of the discussions, the profession of participants, and their status in the community great care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of participants. Information shared from the focus groups is presented in a manner to prevent the identification of the focus group participants for their personal and professional protection. Finally, all of the focus groups were audio taped and then professionally transcribed. After the audio data was transcribed, the data was reviewed and an initial coding conducted. The final part of the focus group analysis phase was the review of the focus group data for the identification of themes and relevance to the basic research questions.

Themes and their descriptions were derived from carefully reviewing the data for similar and like statements. The data from each of the focus groups was submitted for transcription. During the transcription process copies of the audio recordings of each focus group were reviewed for familiarity. For approximately one week the audio recordings were listened to daily and written notes from group observations were reviewed in order to become familiar with the

data. After the transcription of the data general themes were identified and theme descriptions were developed based on the content of group discussions.

In order for the themes to develop naturally from the focus group participants, responses were reviewed for similar and like statements in response to the focus group questions. Each time a similar or like statement was observed a notation was made. The responses were tallied for each focus group respectively. The statements were labeled according to the meaning of each statement as derived from the data. For example, participant statements that reflected feelings of being treated disparagingly by law enforcement because of their association with the neighborhood were listed under the category of negative labeling. The most frequently noted statements formed the themes for each focus group. Subsequent to the development of categories, theme descriptions were constructed from an analysis of the actual statements from the respondents. Meaning was derived from both the content and context of the statements, and a description was ascribed to each theme.

The process of identifying themes and constructing theme descriptions was repeated for each focus group. The same process was utilized to conduct an integrated analysis combining statements and descriptions from each group.

The following paragraphs present an overview of each focus group beginning with the questions followed by a presentation of the data. The identified themes and a description of the themes are presented along with a general description of each theme. It should be noted that while the questions posed to the focus group participants were direct and specific, some of the opinions expressed by participants may appear to be inconsistent since the statements express the sentiments of the participants. The information shared in the following overview of the focus group data represents the most pertinent information in order to present a manageable

representation of the data. Ultimately, the design of the focus groups provided the opportunity to explore the experiences of the participants in an interactive group environment.

**Service providers.** A total of eight individuals participated in the focus group for service providers. These participants represented elements of the community structural factors examined in the study. Participants in this focus group included organization leaders, middle managers, and frontline staff. In order to maintain complete anonymity several characteristics of the participants are not reported. The excluded characteristics were gender and years of experience in the current position. All participants had at least some college education. Three of the participants held advanced college degrees. Five of the participants were female. The participants averaged eight years of service in their current positions. An overview of the participants in the Service Provider group is provided in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

*Service Provider Group Demographic Profile*

Occupation	Area of Employment	Race	Education
Leader	Community Development	African American	Advanced Degree
Leader	Housing	African American	Advanced Degree
Assistant	Healthcare	African American	Some College
Case Worker	Health Care	African American	Associate Degree
Intake Coordinator	Employment	African American	Some College
Case Manager	Employment	African American	Bachelor Degree
Leader	Social Services	African American	Advanced Degree
Clerk	Social Services	African American	Some College

The participants responded to the following questions:

- In general, how do you think this returning population will affect (employment, housing, crime, healthcare, poverty, and family)?
- How does your agency manage the tension created by problems associated with service to customers?
- What methods should your organization use to identify and address problems being experienced by customers or colleagues in performance of service?
- What, if any, expectations do you as a service-provider have of the returning ex-prisoner population? How do these expectations affect the delivery of services?
- How might an increased offender population within the community affect your interaction with other organizations?
- What can your organization do to foster collaboration with other agencies, solve problems, and create new ideas?

Based on the discussion among the participants in the service provider focus group there were eight themes identified as depicted in Table 4.13. After the themes were identified and coded, theme descriptions were developed based on the context of the focus group discussion. This process was repeated for each of the subsequent focus groups.

Table 4.13

*Service Provider Focus Group Themes, Definitions, and Number of Supporting Statements*

Theme	Definitions	Number of supporting statements
Self-agency or hopelessness of ex-prisoners	The motivation of ex-prisoners to do for themselves or seek assistance on their own	20
Self-agency or hopelessness of residents	The motivation of community residents to work and seek employment or assistance on their own	25
Disruption of family life	The creation of instability in the home caused by the return of ex-prisoners to the family	30
Influence of prison culture	The lack of respect for authority/civic responsibility, form of dress and language associated with life in prison in the neighborhood	42
Negative labeling	The negative association of residents or ex-prisoners with a neighborhood with high ex-prisoner rates	18
Increased hopelessness of customers	The sense of apathy among customers	15
Territorial disputes among leaders	Adversarial relationship among service agencies that result from the competition over scarce resources	22
Influence of leaders on staff	The connection between staff behavior and organizational leader	16

***Self-agency and hopelessness.*** Participants in the service provider group noted an overwhelming sense of hopelessness among the residents that they serve in the community. The service providers recognize that ex-prisoners are often limited in the amount of services and employment opportunities afforded them because of their criminal record. “They’re hopeless

because they can't get a job, can't get housing, combined with the fact that they have a lot of stress from family or parole officers. It's tough out there." The hopelessness experienced by returning ex-prisoners extends to the family of these men and women. "There are more families in need but fewer resources." With limited resources and great need community organizations are experiencing unprecedented challenges as families face the struggles related to incorporating family members returning from prison that cannot contribute to the economic stability of the family unit.

Unfortunately, what we are seeing is the man is gone, mama's trying to find herself, grandma's stuck raising the kids...like I said, if you are coming back to the same environment, you are going to end up doing what you did before you went to prison. There are not enough of us out here to help. So when they come home, how do I get a job? If I don't have a job, how do I get a house? I don't qualify for services from Jobs and Family Services. So how do you help that person? Then there is the health issue, how do you help them become a holistic person? (Service provider focus group participant)

Participants expressed that the lack of employment opportunities and the seemingly endless challenges posed to individuals in the neighborhood have left people in this area hopeless. This was stated in particular by a case manager with one local employment organization in the area. Participants felt that individuals in the area must take the initiative in some instances to improve their own lives.

***Disruption of family life.*** Study participants in this group explained how they saw firsthand the disruption that incarceration and reentry caused within families. The return of ex-prisoners was seen as upsetting the new established norms that were put in place during the absence of the individual sent to prison. One participant who works in the area of housing stated; "we often see an increase in issues of intimate partner violence in families where the boyfriend or husband returns from prison." Several participants agreed that they experienced the same thing. "Families establish a new normal when an incarcerated family member is put away. Then

they come back. Especially if it's the so called man of the house; when he comes back he wants to run the show, but he's been gone for a while and it is hard for the entire family to adjust."

***Prison culture.*** The participants agreed that the influence of ex-prisoner "culture" influenced the way that services were provided to certain customers. "I saw a pick out a felon poster, and it was people that looked like you and I. So the concept of a felon looking a certain way is out the door. We don't know who he or she is anymore. So it's like we have to learn how to change our attitudes toward individuals who have been away." The intended effect of the poster, the demonstration of the fact that a felon cannot be detected based on the way they looked has resulted in everyone being treated like a felon instead of everyone being treated like a non-felon.

The participants observed that the influence of street slang, the manner of dress of customers perpetuated the stigma of being an ex-prisoner on to non-offending customers that exhibited the same outward characteristics as individuals that had been to prison. There was a consensus among the participants that the ex-prisoner population had a negative effect in general on the community characteristics of the neighborhood. The inability to find employment and housing contributes to increases in crime. Further, the high-risk behaviors that include drug use and sexual promiscuity contribute to both healthcare issues and the deterioration of families.

***Influence of organizational leadership.*** In regard to how organizations could work collaboratively to foster ideas that address the negative impact of reentry, participants felt that territorial issues fostered by organizational leaders would prevent meaningful collaboration. One neighborhood service provider expressed concern over the inability of organizational leaders to get beyond their own personal agendas. Another service provider talking about territorial issues stated her concerns this way

You know I don't want to share my piece (of the pie) with you. We're scared of, here pick my ideas, let me have your ideas, let's come together and make this one idea, instead of saying here's your piece, here's my piece. We've got to stop being intimidated by each other and learn to come together.

Unfortunately, the way organizational leaders engage in a winner takes all attitude extends to the staff of the service providing agencies.

The majority of the group participants felt that staff members reflected the personality of the organizational leader. It was thought that agencies that demonstrated more collaborative approaches did so because of the personality of the organizational leader. The staff of these organizations followed suit because of the leadership style of the executive.

Unexpectedly, two members of the focus group cited historical perspectives rooted in the slavery of African Americans as a reason for the inability of organizations to collaborate to address neighborhood issues. The participants posited that African Americans were trained during slavery to distrust one another, thus making it difficult even today for them to work collaboratively. This premise, while not prevalent in the academic discussion on prisoner reentry is supported in the work of Alexander (2010) who cites the historic oppression of African Americans during slavery and during the era of U.S. segregation in the South as influencing contemporary leadership practices.

In order to address the inability of organizations to work collaboratively participants felt that there must be a formalized process to assist organizations and residents. "We need a mechanism that will allow us to work together even though we come from different agencies. Medical care professionals should be able to work with employment, law enforcement, and churches. All we need is some help ourselves."

**Negative labeling.** The majority of service providers readily admitted that it is easier to have negative thoughts about the people they serve. Several participants noted that conclusions



about customers have come as a result of negative experiences and note an increase in the negative attitudes of customers seeking services.

In response to the question, “How does your agency manage the tension created by problems associated with service to customers?” one respondent stated, “It goes back to being judgmental, goes back to misconception, goes back to us being critical of those that we call lazy, shiftless and there’s always barriers that we can face, that we can’t grow or there’s no assistance. We can’t go to nobody and say, ‘Hey, help me.’”

One participant summed up her comments by stating “I felt sorry for many of my clients. The increased need for resources and the lack of resources has created a strain on the relationships between us and them.”

**Territorial disputes among leaders.** When asked to answer the question; what can your organization do to foster collaboration with other agencies, solve problems, and create new ideas study participants painted a picture of the current relationship between organizations that leads to questions whether organizations can or will be able to work collaboratively. One organizational leader stated, “Organizationally, we’re scared of each other. We don’t want to share ideas because there is a feeling that our funding levels will be cut. We must move beyond that but I don’t know that we can. We’ve got to stop being intimidated by each other and come together.”

Funding levels were seen as driving the competition between organizations. The lack of funding creates instability in the internal systems within the organization and prevents these agencies from seeing beyond their internal environment in order to work collaboratively.

***Influence of leaders on staff.*** The influence of the personal characteristics of organizational leaders on staff was another theme that emanated from the service provider focus group that was drawn directly from the responses to the question about what could be done

within organizations to foster collaboration, solve problems, and create new ideas. Study participants collectively expressed the idea that local organizations were influenced by the personality of the executive leader of their respective agencies. Participants also stated that they felt that the majority of the organizations were in the same predicament in this regard. One participant stated, “Collaboration from where I am is impossible. Our chief has offended so many people that nobody wants to work with me.” Some participants painted a more optimistic portrait, stating that collaboration and collegiality between organizations was possible if the executive directors promoted it. “The way in which staffs engage in collaborative projects is a direct result of the type of leadership demonstrated within these agencies,” stated a participant who works in social services.

**Summary.** Neighborhood service providers viewed an increase in the ex-prisoner population as being detrimental to the characteristics or community structural factors being examined. The increase in the ex-prisoner population is seen as increasing a prison culture in the neighborhood. The culture is seen as being adverse to pro-social activities and the responsible civic engagement of customers in the neighborhood. The service providers admitted to the difficulty in viewing many of the persons seeking services in a positive way. Customers are viewed as apathetic and described as exhibiting an overwhelming sense of hopelessness in their condition or poor quality of life.

Interestingly, participants went straight into the issue of organizational leadership, and the importance of strong leaders impacting the community. Participants felt that while they did not know specifically what organizations could do to mitigate the negative impact of reentry, they did believe that there should be more interaction among criminal justice, community, and organizational leaders.

**Community residents.** All of the members of the community resident focus group knew someone or had someone in their family that had gone to prison at some point. Nearly all of the participants felt that the concentrated return of ex-prisoners to the neighborhood had a negative impact on the community characteristics being examined. The community resident focus group had a total of eight participants. All of the residents were over 40 years of age with the eldest resident being over 70 years old. Residents who participated in the focus group were all well acquainted with the neighborhood. The newest member of the group had lived in the community for seven years. One resident had lived in the neighborhood since 1957. The residents were comfortable speaking about the community and providing valuable insights into the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the neighborhood. Table 4.14 gives an illustration of the community residents who participated in the focus group.

Table 4.14

*Community Resident Group Demographic Profile*

Gender	Race	Age	No. of Years at Residence
Female	African American	55	35
Female	African American	46	30
Male	African American	45	36
Male	African American	74	56
Male	African American	65	44
Female	African American	60	44
Female	Caucasian	63	7
Female	African American	65	42

The community residents were asked to respond to the following questions:

- In general, how do you think the returning population will affect employment, housing, crime, healthcare, poverty, and family services?
- What role should (formal) leaders play in making sure ex-prisoners are successfully integrated into the neighborhood?
- How will the increased presence of criminal justice professionals affect the relationships among community residents? How will it affect the relationship between ex-prisoners, and other community residents?
- How do your ideas for neighborhood improvement get to policy makers, or formal community leaders?
- Are you concerned about the ex-prisoner population in your neighborhood? Are you concerned about your personal safety? The safety of family members? Does the potential for an increase in the ex-prisoner population in your neighborhood make you want to move out of the neighborhood?

Table 4.15 depicts the themes that were constructed from the resident focus group data. Defining the terms associated with the themes results in a better understanding of the perceived effects of prisoner reentry on residential life from the perspective of the individuals that live in the environment.

Table 4.15

*Community Resident Focus Group Themes, Definitions, and Counts*

Theme	Definitions	Number of supporting statements
Negative influence of prison culture	The influence of behaviors associated with crime, criminals, and prison. A general lack of respect for residents, and authority	30
Neighborhood stigma	The perceived responses of others based upon an association with the neighborhood	26
Increased tension between residents and ex-prisoners	The response of residents over the negative behaviors, acts and influence of ex-prisoners	18
Increased criminal justice presence	Increase in harassment of community residents by law enforcement and unnecessary focus on neighborhood by justice agencies	22
Disconnect between leaders and resident needs	Lack of inclusion of residents by organizational leaders in decision making about what is best for the neighborhood	32

***Influence of prison culture.*** Residents expressed concern over the influence of prison “culture” on the youth in the neighborhood. Prison culture was defined by the group as the disrespectful way that the youth communicated, i.e., vulgar language and disrespectful behavior toward authority and their elders in the community.

The fact that the prison culture had permeated the behavior of non-offending residents, specifically the youth, was of great concern. Many of the residents felt that the increase of ex-prisoners in the neighborhood coupled with the influence of the prison culture has led to an increase in the presence of law enforcement in the neighborhood. Some of the participants felt that they were under increased scrutiny from law enforcement and treated differently because

they were from the neighborhood. The stigma associated with being an ex-prisoner also extended to these residents. However, some residents felt that the close scrutiny was warranted.

Well you don't feel safe. You never know who's living next door to you or across the street...I think the biggest impact of the increase in ex-prisoners is the safety issue. You know, you have to watch your children even more and you have to be careful even when you're going to the store to buy a loaf of bread.

Another resident in full agreement about safety concerns added this comment.

I just saw on the news where somebody pickpocketed a ninety year old man at the gas station. You've got all these criminal elements around, and you're right, because of the work I do, I can spot it and see it. So you can be right in the neighborhood, you know what's going on. You can know when you're seeing prostitutes walking up and down the street. You can see when people are making drug deals. You can see criminal activities going on.

In addressing the question about the effect that ex-prisoners would have on community structural factors one longtime resident stated:

Well, my take on it, and I'm sure everybody else, too, I come from this neighborhood, so I know that them coming back is not good on the things we're talking about. In this neighborhood we have boarded up houses, can they help with that? No. We got prostitution, you've got young girls trickin' at a young age. I lived here through the eighties when crack hit, and the neighborhood was good then. But now you've got young girls 11 and 12 years old involved in prostitution. A lot of ex-prisoners coming back to the neighborhood won't work at all.

When asked further about the impact of returning ex-prisoners on the community group participants acknowledged that many ex-prisoners return to the community because this is the base of their support when returning from prison.

In general, it was thought that the decline of the neighborhood was not the fault of the ex-prisoners entirely; however, they did not feel that there could be any positive outcomes from them returning without jobs, and in need of so many services. "When I see someone returning from prison it seems like somehow that is glorified in the eyes of the youth around here. It's

almost like a rite of passage,” stated one longtime resident of the neighborhood. Residents felt that the impetus for the negative impact of reentry on the community was the inability of ex-prisoners to find sustainable employment.

Well I guess what we do know is that typically there is a negative impact (when ex-prisoners return to the community). They negatively impact the neighborhood, so you see an increase in crime. You can't get a job cause you have a record; if I can't get a job, I can't eat; I can't find good housing. What it does, it forces you to the black market. What it also does is bring more surveillance of what you're doing.

*Neighborhood stigma.* Several residents noted the changes to the neighborhood on its western border that have been ushered in with the reconstruction and development of the Nationwide Children's Hospital. While the focus group participants commented favorably with regard to the appearance of the facility and the availability of the hospital as a resource for the community, consensus among the group was that the majority of the community remains overlooked and neglected by city officials.

Participants pointed to the recent announcement of the construction of a new library in the Driving Park Neighborhood as another example of the negative feelings about the community around the city. Several neighborhoods in the city have had new libraries built in areas around the neighborhood. Driving Park residents felt that the construction of a new library was long overdue. “Our needs and the need for the library have been ignored for a long time, stated one long-time resident.”

Residents sensed that there is a negative perception of the neighborhood that shapes interactions with city officials and criminal justice leaders. People act like we are all criminals, just because we live in Driving Park. As an example, several residents mentioned a recent state highway patrol program that seemingly targeted the inner-city community. Traditionally, the state highway patrol provides oversight of the state highway system. It was found that from

January 1, 2013 through June 30, 2013 the patrol had issued nearly 700 tickets in the neighborhood (Ludlow, 2013). The unprecedented enforcement action of the highway patrol was in the opinions of residents an example of the negative thoughts or perceptions about citizens living in the neighborhood.

*Ex-prisoner and community resident relationships.* When asked if there were tensions in the community between returning ex-prisoners and other residents, several residents expressed anger over the lack of assistance from area leaders. The residents acknowledged that there is sometimes a tension between non-offending residents and the returning population. While there are significant challenges posed to community members the majority believe that most residents attempt to be good citizens. There are feelings of resentment from residents that have built their lives and raised families in the neighborhood, and then a substantial number of men and women enter the community from prison and are unconcerned about the welfare or improvement of the surrounding conditions.

Generally, residents felt that the tensions between ex-prisoners and residents could be remedied with the assistance of organizational and community leaders. It was expressed during discussions that organizations should make a concerted effort to engage all members of the community. It was felt that government agencies, i.e., city government, law enforcement, often select certain community organizations or residents to work with leaving out other concerned segments of the neighborhood population. Additionally, it was stated by several participants that agency leaders, private business owners, and corporations should seek to employ more residents. One resident expressed it in this way.

Well, I think organizations got to be wary of the people they hire. They've got to have people that's sensitive to the people. They've got to have some people that have been through what we have been through. You know, you just can't block everybody out just because you might have a DUI or a police record. Some of the people have got the



experience that you need. Just like they started the violence prevention program at the Urban League to be out on the streets before the violence starts. Anybody just can't do that. You've got to have people with that expertise that knows streets that know the community and the population they serve. They can have the educational background or be the director, but you've got to have some people in charge that have the ear and the heart on the streets. You have to have a complex or twofold type organization.

Nearly every resident had very strong feelings of nostalgia when talking about the neighborhood. On average residents lived in the community for 36.7 years. All of the residents agreed that the community is facing unseen challenges in the history of the Driving Park neighborhood.

***Increased criminal justice presence.*** Community residents noted the increased presence of law enforcement officers in the community. Several residents attributed the increased presence of police to the high rate of crime that has plagued the community in the recent past. One long time community resident stated, "The community attracts more police because of a few incidents that have occurred in the past. The reason the police continue to heavily patrol the area is racially motivated." Several community residents agreed, adding, "There is more crime on the Hilltop (another Columbus neighborhood with a lower African-American population) but you don't see police swooping down on the neighborhood like you do over here." There was a sense among residents that the heavy surveillance in the neighborhood was not in proportion to the amount of crime in Driving Park and in comparison to other neighborhoods where crime is prevalent.

Residents again cited the newspaper article that focused on the high rate of traffic tickets given by the highway patrol to residents. Neighborhood residents were interested in reducing violent crime rates in the community, however, the increase in criminal justice presence seemed to increase cases where officers used discretionary authority to issue citations, and not address

growing neighborhood violence. It is the hope of residents that increased interaction with the criminal justice system will ultimately lead to reduced crime rates.

***Disconnect between leaders and resident needs.*** The residents of Driving Park were adamant about the need for inclusion in the decision-making processes of local organizations regarding ideas or issues pertaining directly to the neighborhood. It was felt that the concerns of residents were dismissed by organizational leaders far too often. Many residents expressed concern that leaders were not in tune with community needs because they did not spend much time in the neighborhood after business hours. Additionally, there were not enough opportunities for residents and the leadership within agencies to discuss the real issues faced by those living in the area. One resident offered the following: “Leaders don’t seem to be interested in what we think. Even though we live here, they think they know what’s in our best interest. I think there are people around this neighborhood who have great ideas and could help out.”

**Summary.** Overall, community residents shared a concern about the influence of negative behaviors on community life, and the overall influence of a prison culture permeating the community. Resident perceptions associated with the increase in the ex-prisoner population and the apparent adoption of behaviors associated with prisoner stereotypes has made it difficult for non-offending community residents to find jobs. The prevailing attitude among residents is that the increased influence of the prison culture has made it more difficult for residents and ex-prisoners attempting to turn their lives around when interacting with community service providers.

Another pervasive theme discovered during the focus group discussion was the feeling that organizational leaders did not include community residents in decision making as it related to the needs of residents. Outside of neighborhood civic association meetings there seemed to be

no formal mechanism to promote the interaction of community residents and organizational leaders.

**Ex-prisoners focus group.** The final focus group convened consisted of men and women who have returned to the community from prison. Although all of the ex-prisoners in the focus group were African American the diversity in the experience of the participants add depth to the discussion and varying perspectives on the effects of ex-prisoner reentry on the neighborhood. A total of 13 ex-prisoners participated in the focus group. Of the total participants nine were male and four were female. All of the participants in the group were from the community; however, in order to maintain anonymity information about residence within Driving Park and crime committed were omitted from the description of participants. Table 4.16 provides an overview of the focus group participants.

Table 4.16

*Ex-Prisoner Group Demographic Profile*

Gender	Race	Age	Total Years in Prison	Number of Incarcerations
Male	African American	34	7	1
Male	African American	52	5	1
Male	African American	45	23	3
Male	African American	40	12	3
Female	African American	52	30 years	1
Female	African American	21	18 months	1
Male	African American	24	3	1
Male	African American	35	13	1
Female	African American	25	2	1
Female	African American	32	10	2
Male	African American	49	15	1
Male	African American	29	9	2
Male	African American	20	1	1

These participants were asked to respond to the following questions:

- How do you gain access to the resources necessary for you to successfully transition back into the community?

- In what ways do the characteristics of this community affect your ability to remain crime free and contribute to the community?
- What effect does the existing ex-prisoner population have on this community? What effect would an increase in the ex-prisoner population have on the community and on you individually?
- How do you think community/justice leaders could increase the positive influence of ex-prisoners on neighborhoods and vice-versa? How can the negative influence be decreased?
- In what ways do you feel welcomed or rejected by the residents of Driving Park?

In a review of the developed themes this group presented the only case for a potential benefit to an increase in the ex-prisoner population in the neighborhood. In the listing of themes in Table 4.17 we see a repeat in the important role of leadership, and a connection with themes from the other two focus groups.

Table 4.17

*Ex-Prisoner Focus Group Themes, Definitions, and Counts*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	<b>Number of supporting statements</b>
Self-agency of ex-prisoners	The reality that ex-prisoners must seek help or assistance on their own	28
Negative labeling	The stigma associated with being an ex-prisoner	41
Help versus service	The distinction between resources that position ex-prisoners for success and those that do not lead to sustained success	33
Disengaged leaders	The absence of leaders in the overall discussion of ex-prisoner reentry	23
Potential for enhancing the neighborhood	The ability of an increase in the ex-prisoner population to enhance community conditions	29
Lack of opportunity	Collateral consequences of a felony conviction that inhibits the ability to gain meaningful employment, and housing	37

The themes from the ex-prisoner focus group are discussed in the following paragraphs. While each theme is not discussed separately, elements of each theme are included in the overview of the focus group highlighted below.

***Self-agency.*** When asked about gaining access to the necessary resources for successful reentry, focus group participants indicated that there are a few programs designed to assist individuals returning to the community; however, the majority of the focus group members implied that these programs are rare.

I just got dropped off at the bus stop, but I was determined not to go back to where I came from (prison), so I was just here. I had to find out where the shelter was, so it was just not really knowing anything. They didn't tell you where to go or how to do it or anything. You just had to keep talking and moving.

Many of the participants recognized improvements being made by state and county officials in the area of prisoner reentry. However, the group suggested that improvements should be made in the transitional process from prison to community. One recommendation was that case managers in local prisons and community organizations work in partnership to make sure prisoners are made aware of the resources in the neighborhood prior to release. In sharing his story of returning back to the community one participant said:

I can only speak for myself, the guys that I was coming home with had been locked up for five, six, or seven years, didn't have physical addresses of where they were going. We dropped these dudes at a place, that night they were going under a bridge. You come out after seven years inside an institution, \$75 and two- weeks' worth of medication, and if you're coming back to Driving Park or South Linden you can take a bad turn immediately.

As everyone nodded in agreement, another participant added, "You can walk up Oakwood to Whittier and go a get you a sack of dope... in six hours you're out of that drug but back into a criminal element and haven't been home eight hours."

The scenario presented by participants led to a brief discussion about the ways in which the existing community characteristics affect the ability of the group to remain crime free. The common thought among the group members was that communities were not equipped to handle the needs of returning citizens (ex-prisoners). The conditions of the community have remained consistent in the neighborhood. It was felt that the availability of drugs and a criminal element were always present and readily available.

The characteristics are so negative that it really, really decreases your ability to remain crime free. You know, when you talk about the characteristics, there's no leadership, and the church has been completely disassembled from what is used to be. It used to be when you came home from prison your family would take you to church. Now days churches are too big or too small. So the church piece that was in place, they're demolished. That goes to the leadership. There's no leadership in the community.

All of the respondents agreed that leadership should be a community characteristic that should have been included in the study. It was felt that communities that are doing well exhibit or have in place good leaders.

***Community enhancement.*** In response to the question how will an increase in the ex-prisoner population impact community characteristics, several of the participants stated that an increase in the ex-prisoner population could enhance the community. These participants believe that an increase in ex-prisoners dedicated to becoming contributing members of the community could bring stability and order to several neighborhood areas. Men and women returning from prison could serve as role models or mentors to at-risk youth. Further, those with employable skills could contribute to the economic stability of the neighborhood and the political capital by increasing the number of eligible voters in the area.

You know what's the deal, there's an opportunity for the community to become stronger with this population coming home and transitioning back to the community. What I mean by that, the reason I say that is because I think most ex-offenders that's done time can relate is that during our incarceration we had to figure out how to survive without

anything. Whatever we had to do; the food we had to cook to make it where we could remain healthy. Those are skill sets. When you look at it, what the community lacks and really that looks like as things get worse in the community, they're going to need people in the community that know how to make it happen. And that's why I say there's a real big opportunity and then it can have a positive impact with the more people coming back if you utilize that as a resource and not a handicap.

However, a few of the participants disagreed, stating that an increase in the ex-prisoner population would serve as a negative influence on the neighborhood.

If I had to put a number to it, it would be fifty—fifty good and bad. When you talk about the increase it is the same. The scary part is this: that could turn bad very quickly. Without having enough positive ex-offenders in the community, that could turn bad very, very quickly.

The focus group members all agreed that the impact of ex-prisoners on the community can be managed with enhanced interactions between the community of ex-prisoners, community residents, and formal leaders in local and state agencies.

***Negative labeling.*** While the group members disagreed about the impact of ex-prisoners on the structural factors being examined, all of the participants felt that sting of the stigma associated with being a felon when returning to the community. Each person felt that they were treated fairly by residents in the neighborhood but felt the effects of the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction when applying for jobs or resources from service providers.

I've had no rejections. I can't think of one residence in the community I went back to, that showed any form of rejection at all. You know that question, I'm looking at it, and I just can't imagine a resident doing that. Now the community leaders, the new community leaders, something like that, I can't answer. I didn't talk to them. My reputation kind of preceded my return, so the community leaders could have thought, Oh, my goodness, he's coming back out. The community's going to go further downhill, but I wouldn't know that. I didn't get a chance to talk to them. But as far as the residents, I was completely welcome.

In the final question posed to the ex-prisoners the focus group participants were asked to discuss thoughts about the ways in which leaders could increase the positive impact of prisoner reentry on communities. The respondents noted that formal leaders must have a more positive view of ex-prisoners. Several participants felt that leaders must create an environment within their respective organizations that will promote collaboration among agencies, and assist in helping ex-prisoners become productive members of the community. When asked to respond to the question one respondent stated the following.

It's set up for failure, for most people getting out of prison. Judges and police officers, they want to write tickets that keep you locked up. It is what it is. I can't candy-coat that. It's set up for failure. White or Black, you know what I'm saying? Being in situations to hear from you, to get the info from you, to get the help.

Several of the participants agreed that leaders are not interested in changing the status quo of high incarceration and re-arrest rates in the neighborhood. These individuals felt that while leaders in the local government and within community organizations could make a difference they would not put forth the effort to do so. There was some disagreement on this point. One of the respondents highlighted examples of two leaders who were committed to addressing the issue of prisoner reentry.

It was on a Saturday and I went to this gathering that United States \_\_\_\_\_ Department was putting together at a church. Me coming out of the system, I understand who the U.S. Southern District of Ohio Prosecuting Attorney, the person in that position, I know what that means. This person has a lot of power and a lot of people will appear. Maybe more power than judges. When I seen him there sitting beside a guy just like him, I couldn't believe it. Eating lunch, talking. Whether or not it was genuine or not, I said, Wow, this is unbelievable. I haven't seen anything like this since I've been home. Probation officers sitting there with people that they actually supervise – or some people they didn't know but were ex-offenders, just talking, just having a gathering. It was more or less shaped like, "Okay, here's resources in the community." And I thought that kind of goes against what my man down there said is that there's, you know, it's only one way. I see it changing. The reason it's changing, I don't think it's a genuine change in people, I think it's a money issue.



The respondent emphasized the necessity of leaders to create the opportunity for ex-prisoners to engage other segments of the community. These segments included criminal justice professionals, organizational leaders' staff, and other residents. These opportunities contribute to breaking down the stereotypes associated with ex-prisoners. The second example of a leader working to assist ex-prisoners was described in the following way.

I've met with the Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction now three or four times. This man's incredible. I know good people when I see them and this man's good people. I mean he's really on this piece about humanity and that's what it's going to take. We've got to quit feeding that stereotype. When I got arrested, no one told me—when I got my sentence, no one told me that I had a second sentence.

**Help versus service.** This statement led directly into some discussion about recent legislative changes seeking to address the collateral consequences of a criminal conviction. Specifically, group members talked about the legislation potentially opening the door for more help versus the continuation of a service oriented industry built around returning citizens and the poor. One respondent said that leaders need to redirect agencies from being focused on service to becoming focused on helping ex-prisoners.

When I think of the word service, I think of the old gas stations that we used to go to. You'd pull up and they'd give you full service, pump your gas, and wash your windows, all of it. Now, let's think about that. That's something that I could actually do myself. I really don't need help putting the oil or gas in my car or washing my windows. So when I think about the word "service" as it pertains to this industry, I think that's where we kind of get it all mixed up. It's like everything is a service. I don't need a service. I need help. Do you follow me? That's why the terminology we use here is helpful services, use services. Now using that same analogy, if my car ran out of gas a block away from that gas station, the service station can't—I need help.

**Disengaged leaders.** Participants in this group felt that leaders from organizations and the community were dismissive of ex-prisoners. They did feel that in recent years leaders from the criminal justice sector had made significant strides in including ex-prisoners but much

improvement was needed. While some community leaders and those from local organizations have developed programs designed to assist ex-prisoners, the group did not feel leaders were engaged at levels necessary to solve problems faced by the population. Several of the focus group participants echoed the sentiments of one member that stated, “Unless there is funding tied to programs that are for us or people like us, I don’t think anyone cares. People will work with you until the program ends and when it’s over; you are on your own.”

***Lack of opportunity.*** The ex-prisoner focus group participants believed that individuals coming back home from prison, who they referred to as “returning citizens” are placed in a precarious position if they have to return to the same communities they came from originally.

Participants also indicated that the ex-prisoner had a high acuity for the consequences or collateral sanctions of a criminal conviction on socio-economic opportunity. As one group member stated “When I got arrested, no one told me—when I got my sentence, no one told me that I had a second sentence.” Although stated previously, this statement provides a glimpse into the realization experienced by a returning citizen who learns that his prison sentence foreshadows the lifelong barriers to employment, housing and educational opportunities that are afforded to non-offending citizens.

At the conclusion of the three independently held focus groups I combined all of the collected data for an integrated analysis using the same procedures for theme development as I used with the individual focus group analysis. The goal of the analysis was to discover if there were common themes across all groups.

**Integrated analysis of the three focus groups.** Four themes emerged from the integrated analysis of the data: (1) negative labeling, (2) self-agency, (3) influence of prison culture, and (4) disconnect between leaders and community. As shown in Table 4.18, these

themes dominated the discussions for each focus group, thus indicating a consensus of opinion from the participants across all three focus groups. The themes presented in Table 4.18 emerged from the focus group data and represent the most commonly cited references. Further, the themes reflect the most common pattern responses across groups. The descriptions of the integrated themes remained consistent with the descriptions from the individual groups. The integration and analysis of the focus group data revealed the common ground among all the participants living and working in an environment experiencing a high rate of ex-prisoner reentry. In the subsequent paragraphs a review of the themes emanating from the integrated analysis is provided.

Table 4.18

*Integrated Focus Group Themes*

Themes	Number of supporting statements	Service Providers	Community Residents	Ex-Prisoners
Influence of Prison Culture	101	42	30	29
Negative labeling	96	18	26	41
Self-agency	73	45	----	28
Disconnect between leaders and community	55	----	32	23

***Influence of prison culture.*** The integrated analysis also reveals the concern that community participants have about the perceived growth in a prison culture. According to the data, this is what is being experienced by the study participants, and is a growing concern across each group. Participants noted the connection between the influence of the prison culture and the negative association with being from the neighborhood.

While the role of the participants certainly shapes their views and opinions related to the impact of reentry on the neighborhood it was clear that the participants felt that return of ex-

prisoners to the community is a social dynamic that affects the overall condition of the neighborhood.

The perceived influence of ex-prisoners on residential life is stronger than in previous years because of a vacuum in leadership within the neighborhood. One participant put it this way “back in the 70s and 80s, a person coming home from incarceration, the family would take them to church. ‘Let’s go over there and see deacon so-and-so or pastor so-and-so. We’re going to get this figured out.’” That’s not there anymore. Another participant added in reference to the role of churches,

Either they’re too big or they’re too small. They’re so big that it’s a bureaucracy now. It’s not a church. It’s a bureaucracy. Or it’s too small and they don’t have the resources. They’re struggling themselves. So that church piece that used to be in place, they’re demolished basically. That goes to the leadership. There’s no leadership in the community.

An inference made is that the lack of formal and pro-social informal leadership in the community enhances the effects of ex-prisoner reentry on the interactions among community residents, and with neighborhood service providers. The personalities that served as mitigating influences on the negative behaviors affecting neighborhoods as a result of prisoner reentry no longer exist at the levels that were experienced 20 years ago according to the focus group participants.

In response to the question about the effects of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors a member of the ex-prisoner focus group stated,

What affect does the existing ex-prison population have on the community. I always talk about its all individuals, their attitude. Now they come back to the community and they’re looking to help make a change because they were incarcerated and that can be a positive. But if they come back to the neighborhood and they’re thinking, “Man, I’m back. I want to get back to the gang, re-establish myself,” or anything he might have learned in prison as a negative, he or she brings back to the community. So I believe they can affect the community, especially the numbers that are coming back.

The fact that ex-prisoners are returning to communities in record numbers coupled with the existing conditions of the neighborhoods proposes to have a definite effect on key aspects of social life for residents. A male resident of Driving Park said “I mean the increase of the returned citizens, I mean with already the limited supplies and resources, it’s going to hurt them (neighborhoods). We don’t have a lot there anyway. So when you’re sending masses home, whatever there’s going to be is depleted.”

The influence of prison culture is directly tied to the pro-social programming opportunities that may produce the desired outcome of rehabilitation as it is tied to the destabilized structure of the communities that prisoners find when coming home.

***Negative labeling.*** An integrative analysis across groups reveals several collective attitudes about the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on the community. The collective themes revealed in the analysis show that the negative association with the neighborhood is the most influential element of the return of ex-prisoners in the minds of the focus group participants. The stigma associated with a criminal conviction affecting an entire community has been highlighted in studies examining coercive mobility and mass incarceration.

The position of focus group participants in this study is that the stigma associated with individuals returning from prison encompasses the entire neighborhood and results in limited employment opportunities for all residents. The negative labeling of the neighborhood results in collateral consequences or barriers to quality services for both ex-prisoners, and law-abiding citizens. One local resident of the neighborhood stated “I sometimes wonder if the woman from Job and Family (Services) would treat me that way if I was from Worthington,” an affluent suburb of Columbus. There is a sense that service providers do not provide quality services or care because of the reputation, or perception of the residents of the neighborhood.

*Self-agency or sense of hopelessness.* The final theme of the focus group data revealed was a relationship and an interaction between the sense of hopelessness and the need for self-agency among both ex-prisoners and residents. In the opinion of the focus group participants there is an overwhelming sense of hopelessness that is pervasive among many of the residents in the neighborhood. Study participants felt that ex-prisoners and community residents must be proactive in their engagement in seeking assistance from social service resource agencies.

A few service providers stated that they observed willingness among community residents to accept mediocrity and that many residents seemed apathetic toward the condition of the community. As stated by one leader of a non-profit organization, “Everyone in the family looked tired and hopeless.” The theme of hopelessness seems to be the direct result of the existing community characteristics which include a lack of resources available to those in need. The sense of hopelessness is intensified by the pervasive nature of violent crime, unemployment, and lack of opportunity that shapes the neighborhood.

Across groups there was a consensus that the design of programming aimed at assisting neighborhood residents and ex-prisoners promoted reliance on government assistance versus self-agency. This idea was addressed expressly in the ex-prisoner focus group as one participant outlined the differences between help and service. The existing practices among service providing agencies it was stated maintains a level of care that necessitates returning for more resources. People in the neighborhood need help to address glaring needs in order to stabilize their lives. The connotation associated with provided services from community and government based organizations is the idea of giving you just enough to make it.

With regard to self-agency, it was expressed that self-agency among both residents and ex-prisoners is necessary to change some the socio-economic dynamics in the neighborhood. The

idea that residents should be motivated to become independent of government assistance, and move from apathy to care for the community was a common theme across groups. Neighborhood residents must be self-motivated to improve the condition of the community both socially and esthetically. The Driving Park Community contains several small privately owned businesses. There are examples to draw from for the larger population and for ex-prisoners returning to the community. The dominance of hopelessness comes from years of disenfranchisement that promises to continue if the number of disaffected ex-prisoners returning to the neighborhood continues to grow.

It should be noted that the return to the community of a great number of ex-prisoners does offer the potential for the civic engagement of this population and their contribution to solving some of the existing community problems. The current reality, however, seems to point to the continuance of hopelessness and lack of agency common among residents in the area.

***Disconnect between leaders and community.*** Across groups, the issue of leadership was a prominent topic. Specifically, group participants cited the inability of leaders to identify and connect with issues being faced by community residents. There is a concern that an increase in the ex-prisoner population will only exacerbate the existing disconnect between criminal justice, community, organization leaders, and neighborhood residents.

The disconnection was described in a couple of ways. First, participants note that criminal justice and organizational leaders do a poor job of soliciting information from residents as it relates to the increasingly complex problems being experienced by residents. The perception is that leaders from these areas feel that they know what the issues are but have not communicated with residents in order to understand how problems could be addressed. These

leaders are perceived to be inaccessible with very few of them living in the community or having any familiarity with the population they serve.

Community-based leaders are seen as being very accessible, and acutely aware of the issues posed to neighborhood residents. Participants felt that the majority of the community leadership had sufficient influence to draw attention to problems such as crime and prostitution, but in some cases lacked the credibility to engage in problem solving strategies with organizational, and criminal justice leaders.

Community focus group participants provide an opportunity to gauge the self-conception of neighborhood life in a specific community with a high rate of ex-prisoner reentry. As noted in the neighborhood statistics and research literature in this area reentry occurs predominately in neighborhoods with characteristics similar to those in the Driving Park community. The study now moves to assess the findings from a larger sample of individuals who live and work in areas with high rates of prisoner reentry.

### **Phase III: Survey Data**

A diverse group of individuals participated in the survey. These participants represented an expanded collection of people who live, work, or serve in communities around the state of Ohio. The survey was distributed via email to 297 individuals allied with the Ohio Ex-Prisoner Reentry Coalition. There were a total of 109 survey respondents for a response rate of 37%. The main section of the survey asked participants to state their level of agreement to statements that corresponded to the focus group themes. The first section of the survey asked participants to identify their role in the community.

The last section of the survey continued with demographic questions that led to a comprehensive profile of survey respondents. Tables 4.20 to 4.22 provide a statistical profile of



the study participants who completed the survey. The survey is provided in Appendix D. The survey respondents were primarily female (63.1%) and most participants were between the ages of 40 to 59. Table 4.19 provides an overview of survey participant demographics. Of those that responded to the question of race 66.0% were African American and 28.2% were White. Ten individuals taking the survey did not respond to the question about race. Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they had graduated from college or attended some college. Fifty-two percent of those taking the survey had graduate degrees.

Table 4.19

*Respondent Profile*

Gender	N	Total%
Females	65	63.1
Males	38	36.9

Race	N	Total %
White	29	28.2
Black or African American	68	66.0
Asian	1	1.0
Other	5	4.9

Ethnicity	N	Total %
Hispanic/Latino	2	2
Non-Hispanic/Latino	100	98

Age Group	N	Total %
Under 25	3	2.9
25 to 39	6	5.9
40 to 59	72	70.6
60 and over	21	20.6

Education	N	Total %
Less than High School	0	0
High School	1	1
Some College	18	17.5
College	30	29.1
Graduate School	54	52.4

Study participants were asked to indicate the way in which they engaged in reentry and their formal job title. Of the listed categories 20.4% of participants identified as social workers. Several respondents (22.3%) selected the “other” job category. Job titles in this “other” category

included program administrator, public defender engineer, and activist. A full list of job titles ascribed to the category of other is in Appendix B.

In addition to their formal job titles, participants indicated their specific role in the community. This designation is distinct from the formal job title in that a participant while holding a formal title of social worker may, for example, engage in reentry work as a community resident and or as an ex-prisoner. Often individuals indicated that they held multiple roles in the community.

Table 4.20

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Role in Community and Job Title*

Job Title	N	Total %
Social Worker	21	20.4
Educator	13	12.6
Private Industry	10	9.7
Employment Services	9	8.7
Parole/Probation Officer	6	5.8
Housing Specialist	5	4.9
Victim Advocate	4	3.9
Judge	1	1.0
Other	23	22.3
Role in Community	N	Total %
Community Resident	35	31.3
Non-profit Leader or Staff	34	30.4
Criminal Justice Leader or Staff	22	19.6
Govt. Leader or Staff	19	17.0
Victim Advocate	12	10.7

Ex-Prisoner	12	10.7
Private Business Leader or Staff	6	5.4
Other	2	1.8
<u>Recoded Role in Community</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Total %</u>
Community Resident	29	26.6%
Criminal Justice Leader or Staff	22	20.0%
Govt. Leader or Staff	19	17.4%
Victim Advocate	12	11.0%
Ex-Prisoner	21	19.0%
Private Business Leader or Staff	6	5.0%
Other	2	1.0%

After a review of participant responses to the question about their role in the community; a recoded listing of community role was completed. For example, participants that identified as a community resident and ex-prisoner were categorized as an ex-prisoner. This was also done in the case of non-profit leaders or staff if the service provider indicated that they were also an ex-prisoner.

Study participants indicated that they were very familiar with ex-prisoners. Nearly forty percent of respondents said that they had daily interaction with ex-prisoners. Some survey respondents saw ex-prisoners daily because they were ex-prisoners themselves or community residents who were also family members of ex-prisoners.

Table 4.21

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents Contact with Ex-Prisoners*

Contact	N	Total %
Daily	44	39.3
Two or Three times a week	21	18.8
Once a week	12	10.7
Monthly	15	13.4
Almost never	11	9.8
Other	9	8.0

Overall, the demographic information obtained in the study provides a broad overview of individuals living and working in communities experiencing high levels of ex-prisoner reentry.

**The impact of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors: Item analysis.**

The remainder of this chapter will examine the survey results related to the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on specific community structural factors. The study sought to determine the answer to the following research questions:

- What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (characteristics) in a community where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing?
- How can complexity leadership theory assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry?

The survey design follows the research strategy described in Chapter III of this study. The questions were developed from the themes that emerged from the focus group discussions. These themes provide a framework that undergirds the structural factors or community characteristics

examined in the study. Thus, the questions posed to the survey respondents follow with the initial questions about the impact of reentry on the community structural factors that include crime, employment, housing, healthcare, poverty, and family.

Survey items 5 through 9 consist of statements about the impact of reentry on community structural factors that relate to the themes of (1) the influence of prison culture, (2) negative labeling, and (3) self-agency that were derived from the focus group discussions. Questions 10 through 12 include items about the role of leadership, and the way in which leaders engage elements of the community in relation to the issue of prisoner reentry. These leadership questions are framed by the themes developed from the integrated analysis of the focus group data. Regarding issues pertaining to ex-prisoner reentry, the data implied that there is a disconnect between the leadership and the community.

**The impact of reentry on structural factors.** The survey asked specific questions related to the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on specific aspects of quality of life in the community. In the data analysis questions were grouped according to the intent of the investigation of the community structural factor being examined. In some cases the data includes a subset of responses from service providers, community residents, ex-prisoners and criminal justice professionals. Where appropriate, the examination of the impact of reentry includes an additional analysis of variance across all groups responding to the survey.

**Crime.** The first community structural factor examined was crime. The administrative data indicated that neighborhoods experiencing high rates of reentry also experienced high rates of crime. Crime is a relevant community structural factor in regard to prisoner reentry as ex-prisoner recidivism rates are a measure of the successful reintegration of the formerly incarcerated into the community. The fear of crime and its impact has a bearing on the way in

which a neighborhood is viewed by the people who reside in the community and provide services to residents. Survey participants were asked to respond to the following statements: (1) Because of the increase in the ex-prisoner population my neighborhood is less safe; and (2) People are more afraid that they are going to be a victim of crime. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with these statements thinking about the effect of prisoner reentry on the neighborhood where they live, work, or volunteer.

In response to whether an increase in the ex-prisoner population would make the neighborhood less safe, 39% of respondents agreed on some level (somewhat agree, agree, or strongly agree) that the increase in the ex-prisoner population makes their neighborhood less safe. Sixty-one percent of the respondents disagreed. These findings are interesting in light of responses about potential victimization. A high 83% of those surveyed somewhat to strongly agreed that when there is an influx of ex-prisoners people are more afraid of being a victim of crime. As shown in Table 4.23 the majority of participants do not agree that an increase in the ex-prisoner population leads to feeling less safe about their community, but they do believe that people are more afraid of being a direct victim of crime as a result of the influx of ex-prisoners returning to their neighborhoods. The final statement in the crime category asked respondents to share their feeling about the impact of community characteristics on crime. Respondents were asked their opinion about the following statement: community characteristics determine the success of ex-prisoners remaining crime free. Those surveyed agreed at a rate of 78% that the characteristics of a community as outlined earlier in this chapter play a role in the success of ex-prisoners in remaining crime free.

Table 4.22

*Descriptive Statistics for Impact of Reentry on Crime Statements for All Survey Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Because of the increase in the ex-prisoner population my neighborhood is less safe. (N = 106)	3.2	1.11	5.7%	19.8%	35.8%	26.4%	10.4%	1.9%
People are more afraid that they are going to be a victim of crime. (N = 106)	4.2	.99	.9%	3.8%	12.3%	48.1%	24.5%	10.4%
Community characteristics determine the success of ex-prisoners remaining crime free.	4.4	1.24	3.7%	10.1%	8.3%	22.9%	33.9%	21.1%

Because there was a spread of responses on the strongly disagree to strongly agree scale for the statement that an increase in the ex-prisoner population makes my neighborhood less safe, I conducted a sub-group analysis for the previously defined sub-groups—service providers, community residents, ex-prisoners, and justice professionals. The sub-group data are shown in Table 4.23.



Table 4.23

*Descriptive Statistics for Impact of Reentry on Crime Statements by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Because of the increase in the ex-prisoner population my neighborhood is less safe. (N = 106)	3.2	1.11	5.7%	19.8%	35.8%	26.4%	10.4%	1.9%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.5	1.35	0%	0%	0%	0%	100.0%	0%
Residents (N = 29)	3.7	1.05	3.4%	31.0%	37.9%	20.7%	6.9%	0%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	2.5	.726	0%	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	2.8	2.82	18.2%	13.6%	36.4%	18.2%	13.6%	0%

Not surprisingly, all of the ex-prisoner survey respondents disagreed with the statement. In the opinion of the responding ex-prisoners an increase in the returning ex-prisoner population would not contribute to a less safe neighborhood. Community residents (72%) and justice professionals (68%) tended to align with the ex-prisoners, disagreeing that the neighborhood would be less safe. In direct contrast, 100% of service providers took the opposite point of view and agreed that the neighborhood would be less safe with an increase in the ex-prisoner population. The survey results for the sub-group categories were found to be consistent with the focus group findings. There was a small difference across mean scores for the four sub-groups

for the perception of neighborhood safety statement and the difference was statistically significant at the  $p < .10$  level,  $F(3, 96) = 1.71, p = .097$ .

Overall, participants did not feel that an increase in the ex-prisoner population would make the neighborhood less safe, however, the survey respondents did agree that people would be more afraid of being a victim of crime. These findings are interesting in light of the information from the administrative data that indicates a high rate of crime in neighborhoods with high rates of ex-prisoner reentry. The respondents did not conclude that there is a connection in this regard but did express a concern about personal victimization as a result of high rates of reentry.

**Employment.** Study participants were asked to respond to three statements specifically related to the effects of prisoner reentry on employment. The stigma associated with being an ex-prisoner often inhibits the ability of men and women returning from prison the opportunity to gain meaningful employment. The survey asked participants to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements: (1) Ex-prisoners contribute to higher unemployment rates in the neighborhoods to which they return; (2) The high rate of reentry inhibits new business and economic growth; and (3) Living in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry makes it difficult for other residents to find a job.

Descriptive statistics for responses to these statements are shown in Table 4.24. Seventy-six percent of survey respondents were in some level of agreement with the statement that ex-prisoners contribute to higher unemployment rates in the neighborhoods to which they return; 28% somewhat agreed, 27% agreed, 21% strongly agreed. Responses to this statement are in alignment with indications from the administrative data which show that neighborhoods with high rates of reentry are characterized by high unemployment rates. Survey respondents by

their agreement with the statement seem to be saying that ex-prisoners contribute to these high neighborhood unemployment rates.

The second statement asks respondents to consider the impact of reentry on an essential to the collective efficacy of a community. It is imperative that neighborhoods have the capacity to attract businesses for the economic development of the area. Specifically, survey participants were asked to provide their level of agreement with the statement: The high rate of prisoner reentry inhibits new business and economic growth. Of those surveyed, 66% expressed some level of disagreement with the statement. The majority of survey respondents did not feel that a significant population of ex-prisoners was a deterrent to new business development or an impediment to economic growth. While 34% of respondents agreed with the statement, more than half of these only somewhat agreed. Although participants agree that a high rate of ex-prisoners in a particular neighborhood contribute to high rates of unemployment, survey respondents do not see this ex-prisoner population as an inhibitor to economic growth and development.

Table 4.24

*Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Reentry on Employment for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ex-prisoners contribute to higher unemployment rates in the neighborhoods to which they return. (N = 109)	4.3	1.31	1.8%	10.1%	11.9%	28.4%	26.6%	21.1%
The high rate of prisoner reentry inhibits new business and economic growth. (N = 109)	2.9	1.38	15.6%	23.9%	26.6%	18.3%	11.0%	4.6%
Living in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry makes it difficult for other residents to find a job. (N = 106)	2.9	1.19	7.5%	35.8%	27.4%	17.0%	10.4%	1.9%

In assessing attitudes about the impact of reentry on resident employment, the third statement asked for a response relative to the effect of reentry on the ability of other community residents to find a job. Seventy (70%) percent did not agree that living in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry makes it difficult for other residents to find a job. While the administrative data on employment rates is clear and study participants seem to agree that there is a correlation between high unemployment rates and high ex-prisoner populations, survey respondents, did not feel that ex-prisoners prevent other residents from gaining employment.

Across all four sub-groups mean scores did not differ significantly for the employment statement that ex-prisoners contribute to higher unemployment rates in the neighborhoods to which they return. Study participants clearly understand the barriers associated with gaining employment for men and women returning to the community from prison. While survey respondents indicate that ex-prisoners contribute to high neighborhood unemployment rates they do not place blame for the lack of economic development or the lack of personal employment opportunities for other neighborhood residents.

**Housing.** A participant in the ex-prisoner focus group discussed the experience of being returned to the community from prison and described life without having a physical address as being a significant barrier to his successful reentry to the community. The existence of affordable housing is an important characteristic of every neighborhood. Nearly 90% of those surveyed agreed that there were not enough housing resources in communities experiencing high rates of prisoner reentry.

There was a high level of agreement among all participants in regard to the importance of the need for adequate housing resources and opportunities for ex-prisoners as illustrated in Table 4.25. Of those responding to the survey statement: Increased opportunities for affordable housing would assist ex-prisoners with a successful transition to the community; 96% agreed that increases in the availability of affordable housing would greatly assist ex-prisoner success.

Table 4.25

*Descriptive Statistics for Responses to the Impact of Reentry on Housing for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
There are not enough housing resources in the community to assist returning ex-prisoners. (N = 109)	5.0	1.32	5.5%	1.8%	2.8%	9.2%	31.2%	49.5%
Increased opportunities for affordable housing would assist ex-prisoners with a successful transition to the community. (N = 109)	5.3	.897	.9%	0	2.8%	11.9%	33.0%	51.4%

The sentiment was strong across the board about the need for housing resources and its importance in the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners. Over 90% agreed on some level with both of the statements about housing. The mean scores ( $M = 5.0$ ) and ( $M = 5.3$ ) certainly provide a clear indication that those who live and work around the issue of prisoner reentry feel that housing is a significant structural factor to be considered when examining the impact of reentry on communities.

**Healthcare.** There were two statements in the survey that asked for responses to statements associated with healthcare. The first statement asked respondents to identify what level of agreement they had with the statement: returning ex-prisoners increase the rate of infectious diseases in the neighborhood. Only 23% agreed with the statement. Conversely, 77%

did not agree that ex-prisoners contribute to increases in neighborhood infectious disease rates. In light of the data found in other studies about the high risk health activities of prisoners, the responses to the statement indicate a general lack of awareness about prisoner exposure to infectious disease and its possible effect on the community (see Table 4.26).

The second statement asked survey respondents to share their attitudes about the availability of healthcare services in the community. The administrative data indicates that there is some variability across communities relative to the level of available healthcare services in neighborhoods with a high rate of ex-prisoner reentry. Survey respondents were asked to respond to the following statement: There are not enough healthcare services in the community to assist returning ex-prisoners. Eighty percent of those responding agreed on some level that there are not enough healthcare services for ex-prisoners returning to the community.

Table 4.26

*Descriptive Statistics of Responses to the Impact of Reentry on Health for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Because of the increase in the ex-prisoner population my neighborhood is less safe.(N = 106)	3.2	1.11	5.7%	19.8%	35.8%	26.4%	10.4%	1.9%
People are more afraid that they are going to be a victim of crime. (N = 106)	4.2	.99	.9%	3.8%	12.3%	48.1%	24.5%	10.4%
Community characteristics determine the success of ex-prisoners remaining crime free.	4.4	1.24	3.7%	10.1%	8.3%	22.9%	33.9%	21.1%

Because the responses to the first statement about the impact of the ex-prisoner population on the increased rate of infectious disease in the community were contrary to the existing data found in other studies, a sub-group analysis was conducted to identify possible differences of perception across service provider, community resident, ex-prisoner, and justice professional groups. The results of the sub-group analysis are shown below in Table 4.27.

Table 4.27

*Descriptive Statistics for Impact of Reentry on Health by Sub-groups for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Returning ex-prisoners increase the rate of infectious diseases in the neighborhood. (N = 109)	2.7	1.18	14.7%	32.1%	30.3%	14.7%	6.4%	1.8%
Service Providers (N = 11)	2.9	1.51	0%	54.5%	0%	9.1%	36.4%	0%
Residents (N = 29)	2.6	1.32	6.9%	41.4%	34.5%	10.3%	3.4%	3.4%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	2.6	1.73	33.3%	33.3%	23.8%	4.8%	0%	4.8%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	2.9	1.24	9.1%	36.4%	22.7%	22.7%	9.15	0%

Descriptive statistics for the response to the statement about increased infectious disease rates show similar average scores for ex-prisoners ( $M = 2.6$ ), community residents ( $M = 2.6$ ), service providers ( $M = 2.9$ ), and criminal justice professionals ( $M = 2.9$ ). An analysis of variance across the sub-group means showed no statistically significant difference across the four sub-groups with regard to the increase in infectious disease rates as a result of higher ex-prisoner populations. While there was no statistically significant difference between sub-group mean scores, there were some observable differences in the percentage distributions by sub-group.



Service providers (46%) and justice professionals (32%) were more likely than residents (17%) and ex-prisoners (10%) to agree that returning ex-prisoners increase the rate of infectious diseases in the neighborhood. These results simply suggest that professionals working in the community may be more likely recognize the increased exposure to infectious disease while residents are less likely to make the connection. Further, the data on the availability of healthcare services suggest that there are not enough healthcare resources in these communities to adequately serve the population.

**Poverty.** The issue of persistent poverty is a characteristic of neighborhoods that experience a high rate of prisoner reentry. This study sought to investigate the issue of poverty relative to prisoner reentry through the lived experience of those living and working in these neighborhoods. Two statements about poverty were posed to survey respondents. Respondents were about evenly split between those who agreed and those who disagreed that ex-prisoners contribute to persistent poverty rates experienced by those living in communities with high rates of prisoner reentry. Table 4.28 provides an overview of the general responses of those surveyed.

Table 4.28

*Descriptive Statistics for the Effect of Prisoner Reentry on Poverty Statements for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
An increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in an increase in the neighborhood poverty rate. (N = 109)	3.7	1.32	1.8%	18.3%	22.9%	24.8%	21.1%	11.0%
A high poverty rate is an expected outcome for neighborhoods with a high ex-prisoner population. (N = 106)	3.8	1.21	1.9%	17.0%	16.0%	34.9%	23.6%	6.6%

The responses indicate that overall respondents agree (57%) that an increase in the ex-prisoner population will lead to an increase in the local poverty rate of the community.

The survey also asked for a response to the statement: “A high poverty rate is an expected outcome for neighborhoods with a high ex-prisoner population. The responses show that 65% of those taking the survey agree that an expected outcome for a neighborhood with a significant ex-prisoner population is a high rate of poverty. A review of responses for the first statement that more ex-prisoners returning to the neighborhood would result in an increased poverty rate had a more balanced response. While 57% surveyed agreed with the statement, 43% of respondents disagreed. An analysis of variance showed no statistically significant difference across the four sub-group mean scores with regard to the increase in infectious disease rates as a result of higher ex-prisoner populations at the  $p < .10$  level for the conditions.

The mean scores from respondents that identified themselves as ex-prisoners ( $M = 3.7$ ), community residents ( $M = 4.3$ ), criminal justice professionals ( $M = 3.7$ ) and service providers ( $M = 3.2$ ) give evidence to support the data from the focus groups where service providers expressed a more negative view of ex-prisoners and their impact on neighborhood structural factors, including poverty.

While there was no statistically significant difference across the four sub-groups, the sub-group percentage distributions as shown in Table 4.40 indicate that 91% of the service providers agree that an increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in an increased neighborhood poverty rate. This finding is consistent with the sentiment about ex-prisoners expressed by participants in the service provider focus group. Feelings about the statement among community residents were fairly evenly split, with 51% of respondents in agreement with the statement and

49% in disagreement. Ex-prisoners and justice professionals were also about evenly split between agreeing and disagreeing with the statement.

Table 4.29

*Descriptive Statistics for Relationship between Reentry and Poverty Rates by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
An increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in an increase in the neighborhood poverty rate. (N = 109)	3.7	1.32	1.8%	18.3%	22.9%	24.8%	21.1%	11.0%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.2	1.31	0%	0%	9.1%	9.1%	36.4%	46.6%
Residents (N = 29)	4.3	1.02	3.4%	24.1%	20.7%	17.2%	24.1%	10.3%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	3.7	1.48	4.8%	33.3%	19.0%	19.0%	9.5%	14.3%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.7	1.52	4.5%	18.2%	31.8%	18.2%	13.6%	13.6%

Responses to the second statement about the expectation of high poverty rates were fairly consistent across sub-groups with the majority in agreement that there is an expectation of high poverty rates in areas with high rates of prisoner reentry. Again, service providers were the exception. Residents (52%), ex-prisoners (57%), and justice professionals (42%) were more likely than service providers (9%) to disagree that a high poverty rate is an expected outcome for neighborhoods with a high ex-prisoner population. The descriptive statistics for this sub-group analysis are shown in Table 4.30. An analysis of variance revealed no statistical significance across the four sub-groups.

Table 4.30

*Descriptive Statistics for Expectation of High Poverty Rates in High Reentry Neighborhoods by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
A high poverty rate is an expected outcome for neighborhoods with a high ex-prisoner population. (N = 106)	3.8	1.21	1.9%	17.0%	16.0%	34.9%	23.6%	6.6%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.2	1.31	0%	0%	9.1%	9.1%	72.7%	9.1%
Residents (N = 29)	4.3	1.02	0%	37.9%	13.8%	24.1%	20.7%	3.4%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	3.7	1.48	4.8%	28.6%	23.8%	23.8%	14.3%	4.8%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.7	1.52	4.5%	18.2%	22.7%	31.8%	9.1%	13.6%

In the final analysis a majority of participants believe that there is a relationship between an influx of ex-prisoners and poverty. While respondents across all groups tend to agree that an increase in the ex-prisoner population is an indicator for increased poverty, community resident and ex-prisoner responses were somewhat less likely to agree and service providers were somewhat more likely to agree. Service providers who are presented with the problems associated with ex-prisoner reentry, i.e., obtaining housing, or employment experience first-hand the negative impact of ex-prisoner reentry on persistent poverty.

**Family.** In review of the literature it was clear that the social phenomenon of mass incarceration has disrupted family life. As noted in the literature review, ex-prisoner reentry has

had a similar effect on families. Overall responses to the statements about the impact of reentry on the family show that study participants recognized the influence that ex-prisoners have on the family unit. Results indicate that ex-prisoners can have both a positive and negative effect on members of their family. Table 4.31 shows responses to the statements pertaining to the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the family.

Table 4.31

*Descriptive Statistics for the Impact of Reentry on the Family Statements for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The return of family members from prison creates stronger family relationships. (N = 109)	3.6	1.11	2.8%	14.7%	16.5%	47.7%	13.8%	4.6%
Hopelessness experienced by ex-prisoners can extend to their family members. (N = 109)	5.1	.832	0%	0%	2.8%	20.2%	37.6%	39.4%

Sixty-six (66%) percent of respondents believed that the return of family members from prison creates stronger family relationships. Almost all (97%) of respondents agreed that hopelessness experienced by ex-prisoners can extend to their family members. Hopelessness was also a subject that came up in the Phase II focus groups. Members of the service provider focus group stated that they noticed a sense of hopelessness in both ex-prisoners and residents in neighborhoods where reentry is prevalent.

Because there was a spread of responses for the statement on the effect of the return of ex-prisoners on family relationships, a sub-group analysis was conducted to either refute or

support findings from the focus groups. Of specific interest were the responses of service providers in comparison to the other groups shown in Table 4.32.

Table 4.32

*Descriptive Statistics for the Positive Impact of Reentry on the Family by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The return of family members from prison creates stronger family relationships. (N = 109)	3.6	1.11	2.8%	14.7%	16.5%	47.7%	13.8%	4.6%
Service Providers (N = 11)	4.0	1.09	18.2%	27.3%	18.2%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%
Residents (N = 29)	3.4	1.05	0%	10.3%	17.2%	58.6%	6.9%	6.9%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	4.1	.600	0%	14.3%	9.5%	61.9%	14.3%	0%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.4	1.32	9.1%	13.6%	18.2%	45.5%	9.1%	4.5%

Overall 66% respondents agree on some level that the return of ex-prisoners to the family unit provides an opportunity for the improvement of these relationships. The sub-group analysis shows that only 36% of service providers agree with the statement. This finding is consistent with the data collected during the service provider focus group. In contrast, 72% percent of neighborhood residents agreed that the return of ex-prisoners strengthened family relationships. The responses of ex-prisoners (75% agreed) were closely aligned with community residents. Justice professionals were more evenly split, with 59% agreeing on some level and 41% disagreeing.

The survey results indicate a positive association between ex-prisoner reentry and the impact on family relationships. With the exception of service providers, survey respondents tend to agree that the return of ex-prisoners to the community enhances family interactions. An analysis of variance for differences across all four sub-group means on the statement about the impact of ex-prisoners on family relationships showed the differences were not statistically significant.

Responses to the second statement show that the negative impact of reentry is expressed through a sense of hopelessness pervade the lives of both ex-prisoners and members of their families. While believing that prisoner reentry has a benefit to family relationships survey respondents also confirm that the overwhelming sense of hopelessness that permeates the lives of many ex-prisoners extends to the family unit.

**Focus group themes and survey responses.** In addition to a statistical analysis of the impact of reentry on specific neighborhood structural factors the survey data that addressed the themes that emerged from the focus group were also analyzed. These included negative labeling, self-agency, and the influence of prison culture, as well as leadership.

***Negative labeling.*** The data from the focus group discussions revealed that those who lived in a community with a high rate of reentry felt a stigma or negative label attached to their association with the neighborhood. Those surveyed were asked to respond to several statements that came out of the discussion among focus group participants. Table 4.33 provides the responses to statements addressing the theme of negative labeling.

Table 4.33

*Descriptive Statistics to Responses to the Negative Labeling Statements for all Survey Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon. (N = 106)	3.1	1.29	10.4%	27.4%	16.0%	28.3%	17.9%	0%
Law enforcement officers view all neighborhood residents as potential criminals. (N = 106)	3.6	1.32	6.6%	16.0%	13.2%	36.8%	20.8%	6.6%
We assume that all ex-prisoners are a bad influence. (N = 109)	4.4	1.21	2.8%	3.7%	11.9%	30.3%	30.3%	21.1%
Few ex-prisoners are concerned about the surrounding condition of their neighborhood.	2.6	1.27	17.4%	37.6%	17.4%	18.3%	7.3%	1.8%

In response to the statement: “Everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon” there was close to an even split. Forty-six (46%) of respondents agreed that when it comes to living in a neighborhood with a high ex-prisoner reentry rate they often feel as though they are treated like a convicted felon.

The sub-group analysis is depicted in Table 4.34 shows (100%) community residents responding to the statement disagreed that everyone in their neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon. Sixty-seven percent of ex-prisoners disagreed with the statement. These



statistics indicate that ex-prisoners feel welcomed by community residents and that the two groups experience similarity in their residential lives. Similar to differences found for other ex-prisoner reentry issues, service providers had the opposite view, with 73% agreeing that everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon. The service provider survey responses support the conclusions drawn from the focus groups where service providers discussed the negative association placed on individuals from the neighborhood whether or not they had ever been convicted of a crime. The responses of criminal justice professionals were split evenly with 50% of the group in agreement and 50% of the justice professionals in disagreement.

Table 4.34

*Descriptive Statistics for the View of Residents by Sub-group*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon. (N = 106)	3.1	1.29	10.4%	27.4%	16.0%	28.3%	17.9%	0%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.1	1.28	9.1%	18.2%	0%	27.3%	45.5%	0%
Residents (N = 29)	3.5	1.39	0%	100.0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Ex- Prisoners (N = 21)	2.5	1.13	19.0%	42.9%	4.8%	9.5%	23.8%	0%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.5	1.39	18.2%	13.6%	18.2%	40.9%	9.1%	0%

The view that all individuals who live in neighborhoods with high rates of reentry are potentially treated like convicted felons is one aspect of the negative labeling associated with

prisoner reentry. While there were some observed differences in the sub-group percentage distributions, there was no statistically significant difference across the four sub-groups.

Another aspect of the negative association with these neighborhoods is the idea that law enforcement officers may view community residents as potential criminals. Law enforcement officers play a key role in neighborhood arrest rates and ex-prisoner recidivism rates. Sixty-five percent of all respondents indicated that they agreed with the statement: Law enforcement officers view all neighborhood residents as potential criminals. These results provide evidence that an impact of reentry on neighborhoods is the realized threat that law enforcement officers may view residents as potential criminals. The negative association with the neighborhood extends equally to both ex-prisoners and residents who have never been imprisoned.

The percentage distributions by sub-groups are presented in Table 4.35. Among service providers 82% of respondents agreed with the statement. The survey response of service providers is aligned with the data from the focus group where participants indicated that the negative labeling of residents is an impact of reentry on neighborhoods. A total of 73% of justice professionals agreed that law enforcement views all residents of high reentry neighborhoods as potential criminals.

Neighborhood residents held a distinctly different view. In response to the statement that law enforcement officers view all neighborhood residents as potential criminals, 76% disagreed with the statement. Ex-prisoners were more evenly split on the statement. Fifty-six percent of ex-prisoners agreed with the statement, while 44% were in disagreement. The analysis of variance for differences across the four sub-group means indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between groups, with  $F(3, 96) = 2.116, p = .035$ . It is encouraging to know that neighborhood resident and ex-prisoners feel that law enforcement officers do not view all

people living in the community as potential criminals. This offers hope to criminal justice leaders for increased interaction with all residents, and neighborhood groups to address community issues.

Table 4.35

*Descriptive Statistics for Law Enforcement Views of Neighborhood Residents by Sub-group*

	N	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Law enforcement officers view all neighborhood residents as potential criminals. (N = 106)	3.6	1.32	6.6%	16.0%	13.2%	36.8%	20.8%	6.6%
Service Providers (N=11)	3.6	1.07	9.1%	9.1%	0%	18.2%	45.5%	18.2%
Residents (N = 29)	4.2	1.14	0%	51.7%	24.1%	13.8%	6.9%	3.4%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	3.5	1.81	9.5%	9.5%	23.8%	28.6%	19.0%	9.5%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.5	1.58	13.6%	9.1%	4.5%	45.5%	22.7%	4.5%

Perceptions about members of the neighborhood are an essential element of the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners, and the collective efficacy of the community. A view of residents that includes the thought that all residents are potential criminals builds distrust between criminal justice professionals and neighborhood residents. The most influential factor associated with the creation of these communities is the misuse of the positional power associated with criminal justice organizations.

A significant barrier to the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners has to do with the stigma associated with being an ex-felon. Because of their past criminal behavior ex-prisoners are viewed as primary contributors to current community ills. To that end, survey respondents were asked to respond to the statement “We assume that all ex-prisoners are a bad influence.” Eighty-two (82%) percent of respondents agreed that ex-prisoners are viewed as a negative influence; a significant label for those attempting to reestablish themselves as contributors to the social fabric of the neighborhood.

Neighborhoods experiencing high rates of concentrated reentry clearly suffer from problems of high crime rates etc. It would be easy to assume that ex-prisoners do not highly regard the goal of an aesthetic neighborhood. Survey respondents were asked to respond to the statement; few ex-prisoners are concerned about the surrounding condition of their neighborhood. Only 27% of total respondents indicated that they agreed with the statement. The majority of respondents disagreed with the statement.

***Self-agency.*** Self-agency is defined in the analysis of the focus group data as the willingness of both residents and ex-prisoners to engage in practices that would lead to an improved quality of residential life. Self-agency, when applied, results in ex-prisoners and community residents engaging the local environment in a manner conducive to effective social interaction. Conversely, a lack of self-agency exhibited by ex-prisoners and neighborhood residents has the potential to negatively impact the social interaction of the community. Apathy toward civic responsibility and pro-social activities are potentially negative influences of ex-prisoner reentry. Responses to statements associated with the theme of self-agency are shown in Table 4.36 below.

Table 4.36

*Descriptive Statistics for Responses to Self-agency Statements for All Survey Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ex-prisoners should prove they are going to be good citizens before they can receive assistance. (N = 109)	2.3	1.33	33.0%	30.3%	17.4%	8.3%	10.1%	.9%
Returning prisoners increase the number of potential voters in the community. (N = 109)	4.3	1.37	3.7%	10.1%	8.3%	22.9%	33.9%	21.1%
Ex-prisoners bring resourcefulness and creativity to the neighborhood	3.8	1.16	2.8%	12.8%	19.3%	36.7%	22.9%	5.5%
Offenders offer hope to other community members that you can overcome bad experiences	4.5	1.04	0.9%	4.6%	4.6%	37.6%	32.1%	20.2%

In the experience of those participating in the focus groups, ex-prisoners seemed to demonstrate a lack of commitment toward rehabilitation. Service providers participating in the focus groups expressed the idea that services were rendered freely and contributed to the incapacitation of ex-prisoners and some residents. The discussion led to the formulation of a statement put forward to survey respondents: ex-prisoners should prove they are going to be good citizens before they can receive assistance. Of those surveyed roughly 20% agreed that ex-prisoners should demonstrate positive or contributing behaviors in the community before being allowed to receive maximum assistance from service agencies and organizations. The analysis of

variance for differences the sub-group means showed there was no statistically significant difference between groups.

A sub-group analysis of responses for service providers, residents, ex-prisoners, and justice professionals was conducted to examine differences in attitudes about the need for ex-prisoners to exhibit positive civic engagement. Considering that overall responses to the statement: “Ex-prisoners should prove they are going to be good citizens before they can receive assistance” indicate that 80% of respondents felt that ex-prisoners should not have to demonstrate good behavior for assistance. Fifty-five percent of service providers agreed that ex-prisoners should demonstrate some form of positive behavior prior to receiving assistance. Responses in the other sub-groups remain consistent with the majority of respondents indicating that ex-prisoners should not have to demonstrate that they will be good citizens before receiving assistance from local organizations and agencies. An analysis of variance among the four sub-groups indicated no statistical significance. The results of the sub-group analysis are shown in Table 4.37.

Table 4.37

*Descriptive Statistics for Self-Agency Statement by Sub-group*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ex-prisoners should prove they are going to be good citizens before they can receive assistance. (N = 109)	2.3	1.33	33.0%	30.3%	17.4%	8.3%	10.1%	.9%
Service Providers (N = 11)	2.2	1.67	18.2%	27.3%	0%	27.3%	18.2%	9.1%
Residents (N = 29)	2.8	1.53	37.9%	37.9%	10.3%	3.4%	10.3%	0%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	2.3	1.65	28.6%	28.6%	19.0%	14.3%	9.5%	0%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	2.1	1.23	40.9%	18.2%	27.3%	4.5%	9.1%	0%

The second statement addressing self-agency involves the potential for the attainment of collective efficacy for socially disorganized communities through voting. Self-agency involves the application of self-will. The statement, “Returning prisoners increase the number of potential voters in the community” is meant to gauge the perception of the potential for ex-prisoners to increase the agency of community members through the participation in the political process. Can the increase in the ex-prisoner population result in a positive contribution to self-agency in a socially disorganized neighborhood. Seventy-eight percent of all respondents felt that the return of ex-prisoners would contribute to an increase in the number of potential voters in the community.

There are several factors involved in moving members of neighborhoods with high reentry rates toward expressing self-agency. Members of the service provider focus groups saw a correlation between the hopelessness expressed in the lives of residents and the need for individuals to be motivated to change the condition of their lives. The responses of the service providers seemed to be rooted in their collective experience with those who daily engage organizations in pursuit of services to address the pressing needs associated with life in the community. These neighborhoods as characterized in Phase I of the research strategy are theoretically described as socially disorganized. The stress of dealing with limited resources and the complexity of the challenges posed to service providers seemingly shape the expressed attitudes toward members of the community.

The ex-prisoner focus group provided a unique perspective on self-agency and the potential for change from the perspective of those who have had an experience with incarceration. The ability to survive incarceration and make due with limited resources developed into a theme from the ex-prisoner focus group that was expressed in the statement; ex-

prisoners bring resourcefulness and creativity to the neighborhood. Sixty-five percent of respondents agreed that ex-prisoners contribute a level of resourcefulness and creativity to the neighborhood. To that end respondents were asked to respond to the statement: offenders offer hope to other community members that you can overcome bad experiences. This statement, which comes directly from the ex-prisoner focus group, received a 90% agreement rating. In neighborhoods experiencing a deep sense of hopelessness among residents the prospect that ex-prisoners can inspire hope is promising.

***Influence of prison culture.*** The influence of prison culture was found to be the most pervasive theme emerging from the Phase II focus group discussions. The impact of the culture coming out of the prisons was thought to be shaping the values of residents in the neighborhoods where concentrated reentry is most acute. The predicament facing longtime residents as expressed by some members of the Driving Park community is the difference in values and how it can result in tensions during social interactions. Survey respondents living and working in neighborhoods with high rates of reentry were asked to respond to the statement; the returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner. The statistical distribution was fairly balanced with 47% of respondents agreeing that ex-prisoners contribute to positive social interactions with residents in the community. The analysis of differences between all four sub-groups was not statistically significant at or below the  $p < .10$  level.

The second statement in this category shown in Table 4.38 asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the statement that men and women that return from prison are considered role models. Only 25% of respondents agreed that men and women that return from prison are viewed as role models by members of the community. The view that ex-prisoners are



considered role models speaks expressly to their personal influence on others. A large part of the establishment of culture norms is facilitated by music and television. A high 84% of survey respondents agreed to the third statement about the influence of prison culture that television, movies, and music have glamorized incarceration and prison life.

Ninety-seven percent of people responding to the survey agreed with the statement that ex-prisoners can serve as mentors to at-risk youth. This statement gives further evidence of the growing influence of ex-prisoners within the community. The final statement in this category asked respondents to share their opinion about the way in which ex-prisoners are viewed by members of the community. Sixty-eight percent of respondents agreed with the statement that going to prison is considered a rite of passage in certain neighborhoods. The responses to this statement allude to the influence of the growing prison subculture and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Table 4.38

*Descriptive Statistics for Influence of Prison Culture Statements for All Survey Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner. (N = 109)	3.3	1.13	3.7%	18.3%	31.2%	33.0%	9.2%	4.6%
Men and women that return from prison are considered role models. (N = 109)	2.6	1.12	15.6%	32.1%	26.6%	20.2%	5.5%	0
Television, movies, and music have glamorized incarceration and prison life. (N = 109)	4.5	1.35	2.8%	8.3%	5.5%	29.4%	22.9%	31.2%
Ex-prisoners can serve as mentors to at-risk youth	4.8	.944	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%	33.0%	34.9%	29.4%
Going to prison is considered a rite of passage in certain neighborhoods. (N = 109)	3.9	1.38	9.2%	5.5%	17.4%	26.6%	32.1%	9.2%

The influence of ex-prisoners returning to the community is an important dynamic to consider in reviewing the impact of reentry on neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are aptly defined as complex adaptive systems. As such, the interaction among elements of the sub-system is

critical. In the ex-prisoner focus group, ex-prisoners expressed that they could have a positive influence on their respective neighborhoods. The responses to the statement: “The returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner” was fairly evenly split between those who agreed and disagreed. About half (53%) of all respondents disagreed that ex-prisoners impacted the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner and 47% agreed with the statement.

The percentage distribution by sub-groups shown in Table 4.40 did, however, continue to tell the same story as shown in the results of other items. The majority of service providers (81%) responding to the statement disagreed that the returning ex-prisoner population would have a positive effect of the social interaction among neighborhood residents. The other groups were more evenly split. Neighborhood residents were fairly balanced with 55% of those surveyed agreeing with the statement and 45% disagreeing. Slightly more than half (52%) of ex-prisoners responding to the statement felt that the return of men and women from prison could impact the social interaction of residents in a positive way. Criminal justice professionals were also split down the middle with 50% in agreement with the statement and the other eleven respondents in disagreement. The findings reveal no statistical significance among sub-groups.

Table 4.39

*Descriptive Statistics for Influence of Prison Culture by Sub-group*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner. (N = 109)	3.3	1.13	3.7%	18.3%	31.2%	33.0%	9.2%	4.6%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.2	1.00	18.2%	45.5%	18.2%	9.1%	9.1%	0%
Residents (N = 29)	3.3	1.04	0%	17.2%	27.6%	34.5%	20.7%	0%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	3.2	1.48	0%	14.3%	23.8%	38.1%	19.0%	4.8%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.5	1.06	0%	18.2%	31.8%	36.4%	4.5%	9.1%

**Leadership.** The second research question centers on the role of leadership and the potential that a specific form of leadership holds for criminal justice leaders engaged in the work of prisoner reentry. The specific question is: How can complexity leadership theory assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry? To explore the research topic specific questions were posed during the Phase II focus group Phase II. Themes that emerged from the focus groups suggested several leadership items for the survey. Questions 10 and 11 of the survey asked study participants to indicate their level of agreement with role of leaders and leadership in the community statements. These statements were crafted from the comments in the focus group that culminated in the prevailing sentiment among focus group participants that there is an existing disconnect between leaders and the community. The responses to the statements addressing the role of leaders are shown in Table 4.40.

Table 4.40

*Descriptive Statistics for the Role of Leaders in Reentry for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Criminal justice leaders should educate community leaders about the way prisoner reentry impacts neighborhood residents. (N = 105)	5.3	.852	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	6.7%	41.0%	49.5%
Organizational leaders should develop ideas to solve problems related to prisoner reentry. (N = 105)	5.5	.569	0	0	0	3.8%	35.2%	61.0%
Criminal Justice leaders could make the transition to the community easier for ex-prisoners but will not put forth the effort to do so. (N = 105)	4.0	1.29	1.9%	11.4%	18.1%	29.5%	23.8%	15.2%
Community leaders are actively working on addressing the needs of ex-prisoners. (N = 105)	3.6	1.26	4.8%	16.2%	20.0%	33.3%	20.0%	5.7%
Community leaders are engaging the whole community in reintegrating the returning ex-prisoners. (N = 105)	2.9	1.19	8.6%	33.3%	24.8%	22.9%	8.6%	1.9%
Organizational leaders should foster interaction among allied agencies to better use available resources for communities with high ex-prisoner populations. (N = 105)	5.3	.812	0%	1.0%	2.9%	7.6%	41.0%	47.6%

Over 90% of the survey respondents agreed on some level to three of the leadership statements (see Table 4.41). Respondents held very strong opinions about the role of criminal justice leaders in regard to the need for them to educate community leaders about the impact of reentry on their neighborhoods. In response to the statement, “Criminal justice leaders should educate community leaders about the way prisoner reentry impacts neighborhood residents,” 97% of those taking the survey agreed. Thus, the consensus among those working and living with reentry feel that criminal justice leaders should assume a role in the education and sharing of information to local community leaders. Respondents also indicated that organization leaders within agencies designed to assist residents should be the group responsible for the development of ideas to solve the problems associated with ex-prisoner reentry. All of the survey respondents agreed with the statement that organizational leaders should develop ideas to solve problems related to prisoner reentry. Respondents also agreed that “Organizational leaders should foster interaction among allied agencies to better use available resources for communities with high ex-prisoner populations.”

Of particular interest as it relates to the role of leaders in the criminal justice system are the responses to the statement, “Criminal Justice leaders could make the transition to the community easier for ex-prisoners but will not put forth the effort to do so.” A total of 68% of survey respondents agreed that justice leaders are positioned to assist in the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners. These same individuals also share the belief that justice leaders will not use the resources that their positions afford them to assist in the reentry effort. A sub-group analysis was conducted for this statement in order to determine the attitudes of service providers, residents, ex-prisoners and justice professionals themselves. The sub-group analysis is shown in Table 4.41 below.

Table 4.41

*Descriptive Statistics for Criminal Justice Leader Effort for All Respondents by Sub-group*

<i>s</i>	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Criminal Justice leaders could make the transition to the community easier for ex-prisoners but will not put forth the effort to do so. (N = 105)	4.0	1.29	1.9%	11.4%	18.1%	29.5%	23.8%	15.2%
Service Providers (N = 11)	4.0	1.15	0%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%	45.5%	18.2%
Residents (N = 29)	4.3	1.11	0%	17.2%	27.6%	34.5%	17.2%	3.4%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	4.1	1.36	0%	4.8%	4.8%	47.6%	19.0%	23.8%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.0	1.27	9.1%	22.7%	27.3%	22.7%	4.5%	13.6%

Only 41% of justice professional respondents agreed with the statement that leaders in the field would not put forth the effort to make the transitioning of offenders to the community less cumbersome and more successful. Ex-prisoners (90%), service providers (82%), and community residents (55%) were more likely to agree to that statement. These results may indicate a disconnect between criminal justice leaders and frontline practitioners who work more closely with ex-prisoners, community residents, and service providers. An analysis of variance for differences between means across all four sub-groups was statistically significant, with  $F(3, 95) = 2.438, p = .015$ .

There was an even distribution in response to the statement, “Community leaders are actively working on addressing the needs of ex-prisoners.” Fifty-nine percent of respondents felt that community leaders were actively engaged in the pursuit of resources to address the

needs and problems of ex-prisoners. . An analysis of variance for differences across means for all four sub-groups was not statistically significant.

Table 4.42 shows that about two-thirds of respondents in three of the four sub-groups agree that community leaders are working on behalf of ex-prisoners. Although an analysis of variance indicated no statistical significance among sub-groups, the only dissenting group was the service providers where only 45% of respondents feel that leaders in the community are working to resolve problems specific to ex-prisoner needs.

Table 4.42

*Descriptive Statistics for the Role of Leaders in Reentry for All Respondents by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Community leaders are actively working on addressing the needs of ex-prisoners. (N = 105)	3.6	1.26	4.8%	16.2%	20.0%	33.3%	20.0%	5.7%
Service Providers (N = 11)	3.8	1.13	0%	36.4%	18.2%	36.4%	0%	9.1%
Residents (N = 29)	3.1	1.23	3.4%	13.8%	20.7%	31.0%	24.1%	6.9%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	4.1	1.53	19.0%	14.3%	9.5%	42.9%	4.8%	9.5%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.8	1.21	4.5%	18.2%	13.6%	27.3%	27.3%	9.1%

A sub-group analysis was conducted on a third statement in the role of leaders in reentry category. The responses across all groups were spread fairly evenly along the strongly disagree to strongly agree continuum in comparison to most statements in this category. It is interesting to note that nearly 48% of ex-prisoners agree that community leaders are engaging the whole



community in the reintegration of ex-prisoners to the community. Fifty percent of justice professionals felt that community leaders are doing a good job at incorporating the entire community in reentry efforts. In the sub-group analysis shown in Table 4.43 service providers indicate that community leaders are not doing a good job in this area with 73% in disagreement with the statement.

Table 4.43

*Descriptive Statistics for the Role of Leaders in Reentry for All Respondents by Sub-groups*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Community leaders are engaging the whole community in reintegrating the returning ex-prisoners. (N = 105)	2.9	1.19	8.6%	33.3%	24.8%	22.9%	8.6%	1.9%
Service Providers (N = 11)	2.9	.875	0%	63.6%	9.1%	18.2%	9.1%	0%
Residents (N = 29)	2.6	1.11	6.9%	31.0%	20.7%	27.6%	10.3%	3.4%
Ex-Prisoners (N = 21)	2.8	1.45	28.6%	19.0%	4.8%	42.9%	0%	4.8%
Justice Professionals (N = 22)	3.6	1.22	4.5%	22.7%	22.7%	27.3%	18.2%	4.5%

Those surveyed agreed that it is the responsibility of leaders to solve ex-prisoner related problems in the community. The responses to the set of statements about the role of leaders provides indication that those that live and work in neighborhoods with high rates of reentry feel that the role leaders is key to addressing the interactive impact of this social phenomenon. The percentage distributions give clear indication that those living and working on the frontlines in communities that lack collective efficacy, and struggle with persistent conditions that include,

but are not limited to, poverty, crime, and unemployment want leaders to be actively engaged in providing direction that leads to better outcomes for neighborhoods.

The second set of statements in the leadership category is labeled as “leadership in the community.” These statements are derived from focus group comments specific to the idea of leadership as applied to reentry work in the community. In Table 4.44 the responses to the statements are presented.

Table 4.44

*Descriptive Statistics for to the Role of Leadership in the Community for All Respondents*

	M	SD	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Service agencies should work collaboratively with other community agencies. (N = 103)	5.5	.663	0%	0%	1.9%	3.9%	27.2%	67.0%
Criminal justice leaders must work with community residents to identify neighborhood needs. (N = 103)	5.5	.725	0%	1.0%	0%	7.8%	27.2%	64.1%
Current services are adequate to address community issues and concerns. (N = 103)	2.1	1.01	27.2%	43.7%	18.4%	8.7%	1.0%	1.0%
Criminal justice and organization leaders must have a positive view of ex-prisoners in order to address issues with prisoner reentry. (N = 103)	5.0	.883	0%	1.0%	5.8%	12.6%	47.6%	33.0%
Community leaders should encourage collaboration among community organizations. (N = 103)	5.5	.603	0%	0%	0%	5.8%	31.1%	63.1%
Ex-prisoners should be a formal part of decision making teams, and committees. (N = 103)	5.2	.830	0%	1.0%	0%	19.4%	34.0%	45.6%

The survey data indicate that there is a desire for leaders to operate collaboratively in the sphere of reentry in specific ways. Most notably, all (100%) of respondents agreed at some level

that community leaders should encourage collaboration among community organizations; 98% agreed that service agencies should work collaboratively with other agencies; 99% agreed that criminal justice leaders should work with community residents to identify neighborhood needs; and 94% agreed that a positive perception of ex-prisoners should be maintained by leaders who must address problems associated with prisoner reentry.

Almost 90% of respondents disagreed that current services are adequate to address community issues and concerns. Survey respondents were very clear that collaboration was the way they envision leaders engaging the community to address issues pertaining to ex-prisoner reentry.

**Summary.** This chapter presented findings from the three-phase data collection strategy followed in this study. The first phase of the data collection included a broad overview of the context in which the social phenomenon of ex-prisoner reentry exists. The result of a review of the administrative data provided a clear illustration of the local environment, and the conditions into which a majority of ex-prisoners return. The data reveals that prison reentry is most prevalent in communities that are characterized by distinct social and economic disadvantage. The second phase of the study, three focus groups, sought to narrowly focus on the lived experience of those living and working in a specific neighborhood where the prisoner reentry rate is high. The qualitative approach utilized in Phase II gave intrinsic understanding of reentry from a local perspective. The results of the focus group provided a context to the administrative data collected in Phase I of the research strategy. The focus group data revealed that the impact of reentry has a significant impact on those living and working in socially disorganized communities. The third phase of the research strategy involved the collection of data through a survey developed from themes emanating from the focus group. The survey data collected in the

third phase of the study moves back beyond a single neighborhood and examines the attitudes and opinions of a broad sample of individuals experiencing ex-prisoner reentry in many of the communities examined in the administrative data in Phase I. The survey data quantifies the qualitative data expressed in the focus groups. The survey data also reveals the distinctions in attitudes between service providers and the community residents they serve. Chapter V of this study will provide an overview of the major findings of the study and the relevance of the findings to leadership practice.

## Chapter V: Discussion

Ex-prisoner reentry is not a unique social phenomenon. Prisoner reentry is as old as the prison system itself. What is unique about prisoner reentry at this present time and for the foreseeable future is the unprecedented numbers of incarcerated men and women currently in the U.S. prison system who are now beginning to return to the communities from which they came. Previous studies focused on the outcomes of ex-prisoner reentry have primarily examined the individual level effects of community characteristics on the person returning from prison. In addition, the studies that have focused on community level effects have been void of a contextual frame from which the effects of reentry could be understood from the perspective of those living and working within the community. The data collected in this study allow for the examination of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry and the potential application of complexity leadership theory for leaders working among communities with high rates of ex-prisoner reentry. The study sought to: (1) illustrate the community context into which the majority of ex-prisoners return; (2) illuminate the experience of living and working in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry; (3) identify a theoretical model of leadership for criminal justice leaders engaged in prisoner reentry work.

It is clear that the current circumstances that frame the environment of ex-prisoner reentry on the local level require a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, the environment in which it exists, and a mechanism by which corrections leaders can engage communities in mitigating the negative effects of prisoner reentry. In addition to leaders within corrections and criminal justice, organization and community-based leaders engaged in reentry work may find benefit in the study findings.

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings and presents the relevant implications of this study in the areas of prisoner reentry and leadership practice. The study was framed around two central questions:

- What is the interactive effect of ex-prisoner reentry on community resident quality of life and community structural factors (characteristics) in a community where the rate of reentry is high and has been growing?
- How can complexity leadership theory assist justice leaders in managing the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry?

In the subsequent sections of this chapter the findings will be presented in relation to the current literature on ex-prisoner reentry and the theoretical concepts presented in this study. Further discussion will consist of recommendations for future research and the importance of the method of inquiry presented in this study to future investigation into the impact of prisoner reentry on local communities.

### **Summary of Findings**

There are several key indicators that determine the level of efficacy demonstrated or realized within a neighborhood. Among the many community structural factors or neighborhood characteristics, crime, poverty, housing, family, employment, and healthcare have been shown in the research literature to be demonstrably impacted by prisoner reentry. These structural factors are key stabilizers within the local ecology of communities, and are indicators of social affluence within neighborhoods (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006). This study has provided an analysis of the realized impact of reentry on these neighborhood characteristics while incorporating the voices of residents, service providers, and ex-prisoners in examining the true impact of reentry on neighborhoods.

The timing of this study coincides with the move from the ideological positioning that resulted in the era of mass incarceration and drives toward a focus on prisoner reentry. These factors and current trends in the field of criminal justice make it imperative that researchers apply the most effective methods of inquiry to obtain the knowledge necessary to assist practitioners and policy-makers in establishing effective public safety practices. This study was designed to explore the intrinsic nature of the subject, exploring the experiences of those who live and work in communities to which the ex-prisoners are returning.

The issue of prisoner reentry is undoubtedly about relationships between people and their perception of community structural factors that influence successful community integration or contribute to recidivism. This fact implores justice researchers to identify qualitative approaches to inquiry that examine the lived experience of those returning to the community from prison.

This study supports the existing scholarship and expounds upon previous findings noting the debilitating effects of concentrated prisoner reentry on the neighborhood structural factors examined in this study. This study examined the impact of reentry on crime, employment, housing, healthcare, poverty, and family. In Phase I, the study established the characteristics of the communities to which ex-prisoners return. In Phase II, the focus groups, major areas of concern to those living and working in one of the communities were identified. In Phase III, people from across the state who live and work in communities with high rates of ex-prisoner return were asked through a survey to give their thoughts on both the structural factors identified in Phase I and the themes that emerged from the focus groups in Phase II.

In Phase I administrative data for the area of this study's focus were reviewed and these data support findings from previous studies (Clear, 2007; Kurbin & Stewart, 2006; Leverentz, 2011). The administrative data collected from public sources for this study clearly demonstrate



that communities experiencing high levels of ex-prisoner reentry are shown to have some common characteristics. These commonalities include: (a) a high percentage of minority residents, (b) lower than average education levels, (c) a high percentage of the population living in poverty, (d) lower than average household incomes, (e) low employment rates, (f) a high rate of substandard housing, and (g) high crime rates. These factors are impediments to successful prisoner reentry and socio-economic affluence for these neighborhoods.

The administrative data provides us with a foundation for understanding the conditions surrounding the reentry phenomenon. The importance of the administrative data can be found in the ability of these data to provide for the identification of neighborhoods where the potential and conditions exist for a concentrated return of ex-prisoners. Neighborhoods continue to emerge, evolve, and are in constant state of change. Being acutely aware of certain macro-level conditions that point to increases in ex-prisoner population rates can lead to the implementation of effective preventative measures that may reduce crime and other negative descriptors of high reentry neighborhoods.

In drawing parallels between mass incarceration and the subsequent effects of prisoner reentry on communities Drucker (2011) suggests that the sustained effect of mass incarceration and reentry has shown an ability to reproduce itself as infectious or communicable. In other words, Drucker posits that the conditions that characterize neighborhoods with high rates of reentry tend to spread to contiguous communities. Understanding the potential for the “spread” of the effects of reentry and the characteristics of these communities could assist criminal justice leaders in effectively managing returning prisoners as they return to local communities. The ability to identify these burgeoning neighborhoods should result in the development of

preventative measures to address the damage to the social structure of the neighborhood that creates a good quality of life for residents.

The administrative data, however, is insufficient for fully developing conclusions related to the impact of prisoner reentry on neighborhood structural factors. The Driving Park neighborhood highlighted in this study shared all of the characteristic factors found in neighborhoods that experienced a high rate of prisoner reentry.

Phase II of this study explored through focus groups the lived experience of community residents, service providers, and ex-prisoners in an Ohio community with a high rate of returning ex-prisoners. Participants in the focus groups identified several significant aspects of the influence of reentry on neighborhoods not widely discussed in the literature to date. These include (a) negative labeling, (b) self-agency, (c) influence of prison culture, and (d) a disconnect between leaders and community. Participants in the service worker and community resident groups most frequently indicated that the influence of prison culture was a negative aspect related to the high rates of ex-prisoner reentry.

The neighborhood selected for the Phase II focus groups was Driving Park in the Columbus, Ohio, area. The examination of the neighborhood context of ex-prisoner reentry sets the stage for the further analysis of the lived experience and an understanding of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry. In the communities where prisoner reentry primarily occurs, the concentrated return of these men and women will have an impact on the current profile of these neighborhoods. The focus group discussion seems to align perfectly with the administrative data.

The findings from the focus groups provide insight into the lived experience of persons functioning within the confines of a community with a high rate of prisoner reentry. The growing influence of ex-prisoners on the values coupled with the feelings of hopelessness; the observed

lack of self-agency and negative labeling provide us with an understanding of what it feels like to live in a neighborhood experiencing concentrated ex-prisoner reentry. The findings from the discussions are better understood against the backdrop of community conditions as described by the Phase I administrative data. The characteristics Driving Park shared with similar communities gives credibility to the transferability of the qualitative findings. The comments and views shared during the focus groups represent the experiences of those living and working in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry and the structural factors as identified with the Phase I administrative data. It is reasonable to assume that the service providers, residents, and ex-prisoners living and working in communities with similar characteristics experience the same thing as do the people living and working in Driving Park.

Three separate focus groups were held with service provider, community resident, or ex-prisoner participants. Participants in each group were asked to respond to a specific set of questions designed for the respective focus group.

The focus group discussions shed light on the lived experience of those navigating the impact of ex-prisoner reentry. Based on the focus group data it was determined that the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry had the following effect on the examined structural factors:

1. Crime

- There is a concern among those living and working in the community that they could become a victim of violent crime.
- Because of instability in the existing state of community structural factors there is a concern that ex-prisoners will resort to criminal behavior.

2. Employment

- Participants realize that it will be difficult for ex-prisoners to obtain meaningful employment.
- An increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in higher unemployment rates for the neighborhood.

### 3. Housing

- There are not enough adequate housing resources to accommodate an increase in the ex-prisoner population.
- The necessary improvements related to housing are overlooked by city officials.
- The inability to find housing and employment contributes to increases in the overall neighborhood crime rate.

### 4. Healthcare

- Although previous research indicates otherwise, participants in this study felt that ex-prisoners do not contribute to increases in neighborhood infectious disease rates.
- Resources to address the needs of residents in neighborhoods experiencing a high rate of prisoner reentry are not adequate.

### 5. Poverty

- Because of the inability to gain meaningful employment neighborhoods with a high rate of ex-prisoners will also have high poverty rates.
- Many community residents are unwilling to make attempts to improve the current economic condition of the neighborhood.
- Poverty impacts individuals, families, and the overall condition of the neighborhood.

## 6. Family

- The return of ex-prisoners to the family interrupts the established norms that developed during their absence.
- Increases in intimate partner violence can be attributed to the return of a family member from prison.
- Ex-prisoners offer the opportunity for families to gain social and economic stability.

In general, participants felt that ex-prisoner reentry negatively impacts the discussed structural factors. Aside from the perceived impact of ex-prisoner reentry on neighborhood structural factors, the focus groups provide insight into the way in which prisoner reentry shapes the lived experience. The data from the self-constructed realities of living in a neighborhood with concentrated ex-prisoner resulted in four themes:

- Influence of Prison Culture
- Negative labeling
- Self-agency
- Disconnect between leaders and community

Combined these themes provide further insight into the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry. These interrelated themes provide additional descriptors that define neighborhoods characterized by high rates of ex-prisoner reentry. The themes and key findings include:

### The influence of prison culture

- The neighborhood is seen as being shaped by the negative attitudes, behaviors, and actions of a growing sub-culture.
- Acts of violence and a disregard for authority are socially acceptable.

- Social interactions with residents who have not experienced incarceration are increasingly tense. The increased tension is a result of the differences in attitudes about socially acceptable behaviors.

#### Negative labeling

- Neighborhood residents perceive that they are treated unfavorably because they live in the Driving Park Community.
- Residents feel like they are under more scrutiny from law enforcement officers just because they live in the neighborhood.

#### Self-agency

- Neighborhood conditions that include high unemployment and persistent poverty have seemingly resulted in a sense of apathy among residents.
- Services are provided to residents in a way that creates reliance on organizations versus the development of skills that result in the ability of residents to support themselves
- Members of the neighborhood do not perceive that they can be an integral part of improving the existing conditions of the community.

#### Disconnect between leaders and the community

- Leaders fail to solicit ideas or include members of the community when making decisions that will impact the quality of life in the neighborhood.
- Residents do not feel that leaders fully comprehend the issues faced by those living in the community; further they do not seek input in order to understand the position of residents.

- Leaders that operate within the community are seen as inaccessible. Residents do not feel a connection with leaders because many of them do not live in the neighborhood.

Phase III was a survey design to describe the opinions and attitudes of individuals affiliated with local reentry coalitions throughout the State of Ohio. These individuals lived and worked or volunteered in areas with high rates of ex-prisoner reentry. The content of the survey was based on the themes and data emerging from the focus groups. Survey respondents included but were not limited to service providers, ex-prisoners, neighborhood residents, justice professionals, and victim advocates.

The survey responses supported the focus group findings that ex-prisoner reentry has a negative impact on the investigated structural factors. The survey findings support the idea that the concentrated return of ex-prisoners has a negative impact on resident quality of life. Conversely, the existing characteristics in these communities can have an adverse effect on the ability of ex-prisoners to remain crime free.

The larger survey population agreed that for those living and working in a high reentry neighborhood experience the influence of prison culture, negative labeling, lack of self-agency, and disconnect with leadership. Although the focus groups expose growing tensions between the groups, the survey provides an indication that there is potential for mending relationships based on the similar attitudes between the neighborhood residents and ex-prisoner groups demonstrated in the survey. In addressing the disconnect between leaders and residents the replies support the assertion that complexity leadership theory provides a viable leadership model for justice leaders engaged in reentry work in local communities.

This study presents findings from two distinct perspectives in order to paint a complete picture of the subject being examined. An overview of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the

defined neighborhood structural factors will now be presented with integrated findings from the focus group discussions and the survey responses.

***Crime.*** The findings indicate that neighborhoods experiencing high reentry rates have high crime rates as a dominant characteristic. Data show that those working in the neighborhood feel an increased level of concern relative to their safety with an increase in the ex-prisoner population. Service providers indicated that an increase in the ex-prisoner population would have a detrimental effect on community safety. The high crime rates in the communities examined in this study correlate to the percentages of inmates admitted to the state prison system.

Those living and working in neighborhoods characterized by high rates of reentry do not believe themselves to be less safe because of an increase in the ex-prisoner population; however, these same people agreed that with the influx of ex-prisoners they were more likely to become a victim of crime. This is consistent with the administrative data on crime that indicate these neighborhoods experience high rates of crime and thus high rates of victimization. The responses to the statements related to crime are a prime example of the complexities that can exist within these communities. While indicating that there is a concern about being the victim of a crime, study participants were not willing to associate concerns of victimization with increases in the ex-prisoner population.

In the final analysis, ex-prisoners are key contributors to increased crime rates in the neighborhoods to which they return. This fact seems undeniable in the face of the descriptions of high reentry neighborhoods as presented in the administrative data. Hipp and Yates (2011) found this to be true in their study on the effects of parolees on local crime rates in Sacramento, California. While responses appear to show that people do not attribute a sense of fear or



insecurity in the neighborhood in which they live to the increased presence of ex-prisoners, there is a realization that an enlarged ex-prisoner population does have a significant bearing on the potential victimization of those in the community.

As Braman (2004) states the majority of ex-prisoners are members of families, members of the greater community, and are known to those living in the neighborhood; the prospect of their return does not hold significant fear or concern relative to feelings of safety in the neighborhood. Seventy-two of community residents did not feel that ex-prisoners make their neighborhood less safe. However, the data on neighborhood crime rates as shown in the administrative data highlighted in Chapter 4 does assist in drawing the conclusion that an increase in the population of ex-prisoners does yield higher crime rates. Although many of the ex-prisoners returning to the community are known to residents, there remains a significant population of returning ex-prisoners who pose a threat to the personal safety of all those associated with the neighborhood.

***Employment.*** Much like the issue of crime, employment is a community structural factor that the academic literature suggests is impacted by ex-prisoner reentry. The negative credential of having a criminal conviction makes finding meaningful employment difficult for ex-prisoners. Study findings indicate that ex-prisoner reentry has a detrimental effect on employment figures. More troubling is the ripple effect that the lack of employment has on neighborhood residents.

The community conditions described by the administrative data provide a valuable context for the discussion of the impact of reentry on employment. The existing community conditions coupled with the inability of ex-prisoners to gain meaningful employment exacerbates adds to community deterioration.

While neighborhoods, like the Driving Park community, could potentially possess resources that could contribute to economic growth the lack of self-agency expressed by residents, coupled with the negative associations attributed to members of the community contribute to the low employment rates present in the area. As neighborhoods, like Driving Park, continue to receive increased numbers of ex-prisoners, the community resident employment rates will continue to plummet. The connections between incarceration and unemployment are well documented in the literature (Western, 2007).

More than two-thirds of those surveyed felt that increases in the ex-prisoner population had little to no effect on the ability of other neighborhood residents to find employment. Further, 66% of those surveyed felt that neighborhoods with high rates of reentry possess enough resources that economic development is sustainable. In the case of Driving Park, resources include the proximity of the neighborhood to downtown Columbus, several private businesses and the Nationwide Children's Hospital that could draw interest in community development. However, the fact that neighborhood conditions are often perceived as insurmountable seems to contribute to the growing sense of hopelessness among neighborhood residents. The feeling that neighborhood conditions will not change as shared in the focus group discussions is perfectly aligned with the negative images found among non-residents of these communities.

**Housing.** Affordable housing is an issue for residents living in high reentry areas. Focus group participants and survey respondents indicate that there are too few housing resources available for ex-prisoners. Nearly fifty percent of survey respondents strongly agreed that there were not enough housing resources for men and women returning from prison.

Housing in neighborhoods with high reentry rates tends to have subsidized government housing within the community. While this does provide a significant resource for residents in

need of affordable housing, it is often not an option for ex-prisoners because of policies that preclude felons from qualifying for certain housing programs. Further, there is a stigma associated with living in subsidized government housing that often contributes to the sense of hopelessness observed by agency staff members that provide services to these residents.

In addition to the stigma associated with government housing the other aspect of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on housing is the apathy it creates among community residents. One of the interesting aspects of the focus group discussion was contrast between help versus service. The idea behind the thought is that established programs designed to provide assistance and resources ultimately lead to stagnation in the life course of residents who should be moving toward self-sufficiency, and are instead lulled into a life of subsistence and reliance on government and organizational assistance. The results of the current system lead to the depletion of self-sufficiency and create a sense of hopelessness seen in neighborhood residents.

***Healthcare.*** The research literature suggests that men and women who are incarcerated constitute a high-risk population for specific medical and mental health conditions (Petersilia, 2005). The administrative data show that ex-prisoners are most likely to return to communities that have higher infectious disease rates. Focus group and survey data shed light on the impact of reentry on healthcare resources.

Information on the health related conditions of ex-prisoners clearly demonstrates the high rate of exposure to specific infectious diseases men and women face during incarceration (Farmer, 2002). Focus group participants and survey respondents were asked to respond to the statement: "Returning ex-prisoners increase the rate of infectious diseases in the neighborhood." The majority of survey respondents are apparently not familiar with the conditions inside correctional facilities that exposure inmates to infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and

Hepatitis C (Thomas & Thorne, 2006). The lack of awareness for incidence of exposure puts members of the community at risk. An increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in an increase to the infectious disease rate in these neighborhoods.

A second survey statement in the healthcare category asked respondents to share their attitudes about the available healthcare resources in these communities. The survey data show that 80% of survey respondents agree that there were not enough healthcare service available in their community. This is problematic in that healthcare treatments provided to returning citizens is quickly dissipated when services or treatments are not sustained over time (Ewald & Uggem, 2012). Findings from this study provide evidence of the impact of reentry on healthcare in the following ways:

- The increase in the ex-prisoner population in neighborhoods currently experiencing high rates of returns puts a significant strain on the existing resources for both medical and mental health treatment;
- In communities where access to healthcare resources are at a premium the addition of high risk and high needs in the area of healthcare will limit opportunities for appropriate care for the general population in the community.

The issue of healthcare services provides a vivid picture of the interactive impact of reentry. The picture is found in the reciprocal relationship of reentry and incarceration. The influence of healthcare on the structural factor of crime is a real threat. Freudenberg (2001) in a study on urban health found that ex-prisoners with healthcare issues, specifically mental health are more likely to face homelessness, and are involved in more instances of abuse. Ex-prisoners in need of mental health services after release are more likely to be arrested for more violent crimes. Ex-prisoners who return to the community must be provided with a continuum of care that starts in

prison and follows them back into the community. The lack of resources in the community results in the inability of ex-prisoners to maintain a law abiding lifestyle and are often returned to prison for new crimes (Hipp et al., 2010).

There is an opportunity to address the negative impact of reentry on healthcare. The impact of reentry on healthcare shed light on the need for more collaborative efforts between correctional agencies and local community service providers. The plan for the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners must include health education programs. The data from this study shows how little is known in general about the health of ex-prisoners and their needs post-release.

**Poverty.** Neighborhoods that disproportionately experience concentrated ex-prisoner reentry are characterized by high poverty rates in comparison to the general population. A review of the available data supports this assertion. In the neighborhoods reviewed in this study the presence of poverty is a distinct characteristic of a neighborhood with a high population of ex-prisoners. Of those surveyed for this study 65% percent agreed that an expected outcome for a community with a high ex-prisoner population would be a high poverty rate. Driving Park neighborhood residents understand that poverty is a direct result of an inability to find meaningful employment. Ex-prisoners indicated that any hope of finding work or changing your circumstances is significantly reduced when employers find out you have a felony conviction. Poverty is also a structural factor that assists in gauging the efficacy of a neighborhood.

An increased level of poverty is a clear indicator that other structural factors that maintain stability within a neighborhood are in a state of jeopardy. Communities with high poverty rates are characterized by high crime, unemployment, lack of healthcare services, and high populations of ex-prisoners (Defina & Hannon, 2010; Freudenberg, 2001; Parker & Pruitt, 2000).

As the population of ex-prisoners increases those living and working in these neighborhoods expect the poverty rate to increase.

From a theoretical perspective social organization theory attempts to explain why some communities experience conditions that are conducive to the characteristics that define neighborhoods with high rate of ex-prisoner reentry. One of the interesting aspects of placing these communities into the theoretical position postulated by social disorganization is what these community characteristics say about the weak structure of organizations in the neighborhood. Parker and Pruitt (2000) maintained that poverty rates are relative to the strength of organizations designed to provide social control, and social assistance.

The social phenomenon of prisoner reentry subjugates the local ecology of neighborhoods, especially unemployed ex-prisoners and drives them toward engagement in the underground economy. This partly explains the connections between poverty and victimization. The impact of reentry on poverty is substantial. While reentry is not the source of poverty, it perpetuates its existence and is a force multiplier of its negative effects on individuals residing in the community.

**Family.** The impact of reentry on the family is two-fold. First, while the research literature has been clear about the impact of mass incarceration on the family, stating that it has caused significant disruption in the relationships among family members (Braman, 2004; Ewald & Uggen, 2012). The impact of ex-prisoner reentry has the potential for the re-establishment of family relationships and offers the promise of creating stability in the home. Both the focus group findings and survey results show that returning prisoners could enhance the family dynamic by their mere presence. A total of 66.6% of survey participants shared the belief that the return of ex-prisoners to the family could create stronger family relationships. The potential for

positive outcomes associated with prisoner reentry for families is tied to the ability of the ex-prisoner to sustain employment and find a network of support (Braman, 2004).

While there was an element of positivity associated with the return of men and women from prison to the family unit, the data supports the results of previous studies that found that ex-prisoner reentry have a negative impact on families (Braman, 2004; Ewald & Uggen, 2012; Western, 2007). Secondly, 97%, of survey respondents agreed that the lasting effects of incarceration that result in hopelessness can extend to the family members of the returning prisoners.

**The interactive impact of reentry on community structural factors.** The primary research question, how does prisoner reentry affect the examined community structural factors has been addressed in this study. The findings from all three phases support the notion that ex-prisoner reentry has a significant impact on the researched structural factors. This study supports the findings of other studies in the area of prisoner reentry and finds that prisoner reentry is concentrated in urban centers, and in specific neighborhoods (Clear, 2007; Hipp, 2010; Mauer, 2007; Massoglia, 2008a). Understanding the makeup of the neighborhood population and the level of socio-economic affluence or lack thereof can assist in gaining a broad understanding of the environment into which ex-prisoners return. The general understanding of the neighborhood conditions and the condition of residents living in these neighborhoods allows for a more complete understanding of the impact of prisoner reentry on the existing community characteristics or structural factors that provide residential stability and vice versa (Clear, 2007).

Of the six community structural factors investigated, study data show that five (crime, employment, housing, healthcare and poverty) are negatively impacted by ex-prisoner reentry. These structural factors in high reentry communities have remained static over time. and are

characterized by higher unemployment, crime, and other features that make sustainable economic stability difficult (Western, 2007). The addition of a significant number of residents that are at risk for being unemployed, committing crimes, living in poverty, and in need of healthcare and housing means entrenched cultural norms for the neighborhood.

The 33-year period referred to in the research literature as the mass incarceration era wrought significant devastation of the families of prisoners. Clear (2007) for example cites the opinions of residents in Tallahassee, Florida who stated that stigma can move from formerly incarcerated individuals and can attach to the entire community. The stigma associated with being connected with a felon only exacerbates the material effects of incarceration and reentry as the barriers to gaining meaningful employment create financial burdens for families who in most cases lack adequate resources (Braman, 2004).

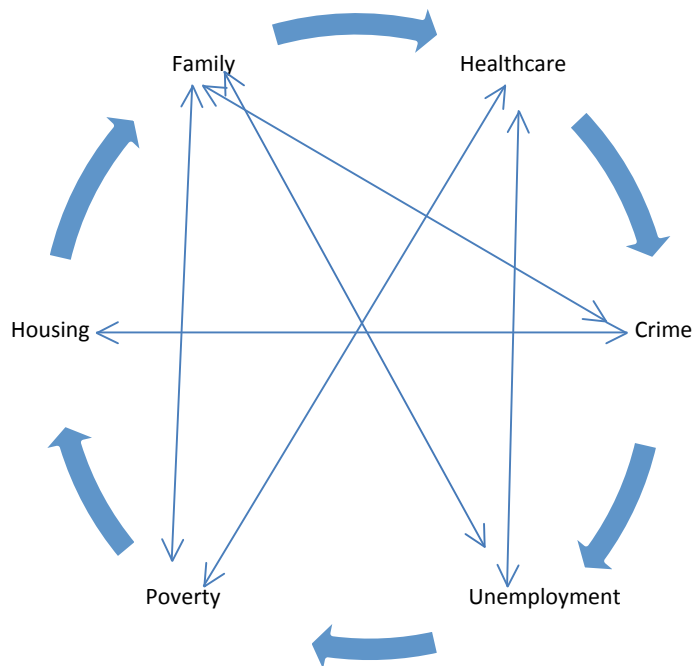
Among the community structural factors investigated in this study, the impact of reentry on family was noted as having the potential for a positive effect. The opportunity to rebuild frayed familial ties is a positive outcome as it relates to the impact of reentry on families (Grotsky & Pager, 2001). Braman (2004) provides several cases where families are enduring the loss of a family member to incarceration. The examples provided give insight into the potential for ex-prisoners to simply provide support to the family unit in diverse ways. These ways include things like child care, shopping, house hold chores and contributions to the economic stability of the family unit. As noted in Chapter II, the majority of research has focused on the micro-level impact of reentry on the individual characteristics of the ex-prisoner; with emphasis on the effects of the local ecology on the individual (Kurbin & Stewart, 2006; Rhine & Thompson, 2011). In neighborhoods with a high concentration of ex-prisoners in the population the tangible effects of this population are equal to the effect of the community characteristics on the



individuals returning from prison. Similarly, there is a caustic effect of one structural factor on the other.

There exists interconnectedness among the structural factors of crime, employment, housing, healthcare, poverty and family that make it implausible for concentrated reentry to have an effect on one or two neighborhood characteristics and not the others. This fact can be deduced through the examination of neighborhood data related to these structural factors. A high neighborhood crime rate is typically aligned with low employment. The lack of employment opportunity and gainful job attainment for neighborhood residents is often associated with a high crime rate (Raphael & Stoll, 2004; Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999).

In no particular order each community structural factor is first impacted by the high return to the neighborhood of individuals at high risk and with high needs for services to assist with daily life. The result is a cycle that includes an influence of conditions or an interactive impact between each of the neighborhood structural factors. Figure 5.1 illustrates the interrelationships of the neighborhood factors that are more than merely cause and effect relationships, but must be seen as dynamic systems that interact and must be engaged as an entire system (Senge, 1990).



*Figure 5.1.* The interrelationship of community structural factors.

There are multiple effects of ex-prisoner reentry on community structural factors. This study found that an ominous impact of prisoner reentry on neighborhood structural factors was less tangible but significantly influential. This study finds the influence of ex-prisoner reentry on the ambiance or that thing that best characterizes the atmosphere of a neighborhood, and its residents as being the most impactful aspect of the concentrated return of ex-prisoners. This study concludes that ex-prisoner reentry promotes: (a) Negative labeling, (b) Lack of self-agency, (c) Disconnection of leaders and community, and (d) Influence of prison culture. The influence of prison culture that flows back into the community with the reintegration of ex-prisoners into these neighborhoods was found to be the most compelling element. The influence of prison culture was the most prevalent theme to emerge from the focus group discussions. The influence of prison culture on neighborhoods was also supported by the survey data as respondents indicated that the influence of prison life can be felt on the existing cultural norms within neighborhoods with concentrated ex-prisoner returns.

**Living with the interactive impact of reentry.** An unexpected outcome that emerged from the focus group data was the type of impact ex-prisoner reentry had on the lived experience of those living and working in a neighborhood with concentrated returns of ex-prisoners. The previous work of Clear (2007) and studies conducted by Brooks et al. (2006) of the Urban Institute gave indication about the impact of mass incarceration and reentry on the quality of life for residents. The study takes those findings a step further. The themes that emerged from the focus groups permeate the entire community and shape the way in which service providers perceived the impact of reentry. This section of the discussion will focus on the four themes that emerged from the focus groups and their impact on the quality of life in neighborhoods profiled in this study.

**Negative labeling.** Nearly half of participants felt that all residents in the community are treated like convicted felons. All service worker survey respondents agreed that everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon. In the service provider focus group several participants stated they engaged in the disparate treatment of customers because of their association with a neighborhood characterized by a high rate of prisoner reentry.

About two-thirds of all survey respondents agreed that law enforcement officers assume that all community residents are potential criminals. The perception that law enforcement officers share a negative view of residents perpetuates feeling of mistrust between residents and those who support neighborhood social control. The labeling effect has consequences for increased surveillance in these neighborhoods as well as a macro-level view of the neighborhood instead of a focus on individual perpetrators of crime (Hirschfield, 2008).

**Self-agency.** Another characteristic of neighborhoods experiencing high rates of prisoner reentry is the lack of self-agency exhibited by those living in the community. Findings from this

study indicate that ex-prisoners and some residents in these communities lack the initiative to change the economic and social conditions in the communities in which they reside. Focus group participants thought that a change in this area could be brought about if ex-prisoners were required to participate in specific programs that encourage good citizenship as a prerequisite to receiving assistance from state and federally funded organizations. The lack of self-agency propagates the negative images of those living in these neighborhoods and stimulates the negative labeling that often occurs. Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2004) found that the existence of a high number of disconnected citizens diminishes the potential collective efficacy of a community.

The literature (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Clear, Rose, & Ryder, 2001) showed that increase in the self-agency of individuals within the neighborhood can lead to improvements in the social structure and provide stability to the local environment. Survey respondents did not agree. An overwhelming majority of those taking the survey did not think that ex-prisoners should have to demonstrate a commitment to good citizenship before receiving assistance. The survey indicates that 80% percent of those living and working in the area of prisoner reentry should receive assistance with no strings attached.

There are clearly two schools of thought on this subject. Study participants are interested in ex-prisoners receiving services that promote their successful reintegration into the community. However, the existing paradigm seems to diminish the self-agency of both ex-prisoners and residents.

***Disconnect between leaders and residents.*** Social control theory assists in providing a neighborhood level context to conditions existing in the community beyond the statistical outcomes evidenced by the administrative data for any neighborhood. Parker and Pruitt (2000)

posit that negative outcomes for items such as crime, employment, poverty, and healthcare provide an indication about the level of strength of local organizations within the neighborhood.

While there are a number of state, local, government, and private organizations providing services in neighborhoods with high reentry rates, this study found that a common characteristic of these communities is the failure of community leadership to effectively engage local residents. When asked to respond a statement about leaders engaging the community, 67% of those surveyed did not feel that leaders are doing a good job engaging the entire community in addressing issues pertaining to prisoner reentry. Ninety-six percent of respondents agreed that organizational leaders should foster collaboration among agencies representing structural factors impacted by prisoner reentry.

Across the board study participants identified the need for leadership strategies that foster collaboration and engagement. Several barriers to engagement among organizations and residents were identified in this study. These include: (a) A culture of competition is present among organizations and agencies over scarce funding resources. The nature of the competition over funding for programs creates division as organizations vie for the venture capital to begin or sustain programs for ex-prisoners; (b) Agencies designed to provide assistance to local residents become territorial over clients and services. Grant funding often requires that programs meet certain minimums pertaining to the number of people served. This circumstance promotes the adversarial relationship between organizations; (c) Organization advisory boards and other mechanisms that foster collaboration between residents and leaders often require certain credentials or professional backgrounds for participation; (d) The last barrier that the study findings make known is the disconnect between leaders and residents as a result of their respective cultural positioning within the community. There is a growing separation between

individuals in the neighborhood and community leaders who understand the changing needs of the residents. Increasingly residents are giving voice to local concerns and are aligned in their thinking with ex-prisoners returning to the community. The sub-group analysis from each of the examined categories shows the close association of responses from neighborhood residents and ex-prisoners, most likely partly because ex-prisoners are neighborhood residents and are related to other neighborhood residents.

***Influence of prison culture.*** One theme that emerged from the focus group discussions was the high influence of prison culture on the neighborhood. Focus group participants and survey respondents, particularly service providers, identified that the behaviors associated with prison dominate the interaction of ex-prisoners with those in the community. Prison culture not only shapes the way ex-prisoners are treated by staff from agencies designated to provide services in areas of employment, healthcare, and housing but extends to other individuals residing in communities with high rates of prisoner reentry. Stewart and Simons (2010) studied the influence of sub-culture behaviors in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods concluding that the values expressed by the sub-culture group often shape the prevailing values and norms of social interactions.

Study participants shared that values, behaviors, and attitudes of the returning ex-prisoner population have begun to shape every aspect of the interactions of residents in the neighborhoods. In response to the statement: “The returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner,” 53% of those surveyed disagreed. The influence of the prison culture permeates every aspect of the interactions between residents and impacts the interaction between residents and service providers.

Stewart and Simons (2006) found that communities that experienced high levels of structural disadvantage similar to conditions found in neighborhoods with high rates of ex-prisoner reentry residents adopted the use of street code as normative interactive practice. The data from this study builds upon this premise and asserts that the attributes of prison culture are the dominant characteristics of social interaction in these communities. This study has drawn attention to how ex-prisoner reentry disproportionately impacts individuals in communities that are classified as disadvantaged. A central theme, one that is pervasive within these communities, is the lack of spatial and socio-economic mobility afforded residents. This is especially true for ex-prisoners who because of low employment rates and the stigma associated with incarceration are relegated to lives within the borders of communities characterized by high unemployment, crime, sub-standard housing, and increasing homogeneity (Western, 2007). A serious unintended consequence of the removal and return of citizens into these concentrated neighborhoods is the growing ex-prisoner sub-culture.

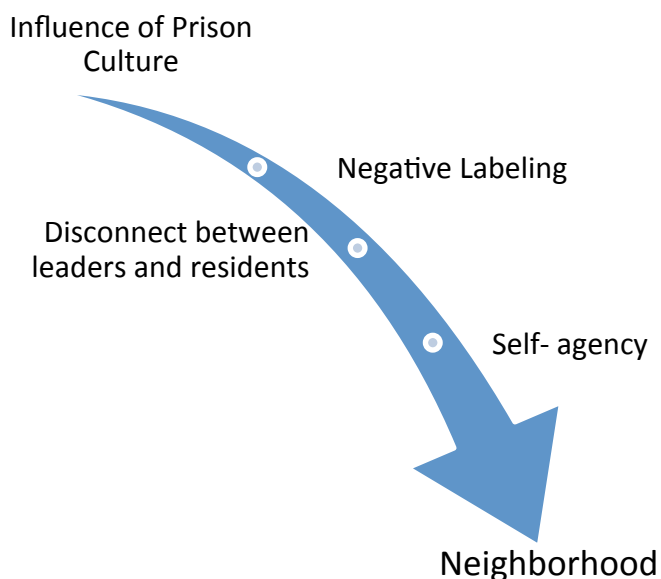
The characteristics of the prison culture as defined by those living and working in a neighborhood with concentrated reentry include an increased acceptance of crime and other anti-social behaviors. Only 47% of survey respondents agreed that the returning citizen population impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner. The majority of those surveyed (53%) agree that an increase in the ex-prisoner population will result in the normalization of the negative behaviors. The academic literature defines the removal and return of this population as coercive mobility. As the impact of coercive mobility continues to broaden, multi-generational cultural norms begin to develop that have several negative connotations.

Increasingly, those associated with this growing sub-culture have adopted anti-social behaviors that have become embedded in these neighborhoods, and violence has become a

means to resolving social conflict among individuals and groups. Within the subculture, the strain associated with the inability to gain the social recognition normally gained by the upper and middle class mainstream through educational achievement and employment are placated by the development of a tough and often violent reputation (Ousey & Wilcox, 2005).

The results of this study find that the experience for many living in communities defined by high rates of ex-prisoner reentry, growing cultural segregation, and economic disadvantage is a feeling of devaluation by mainstream society. These feelings are fostered by the continuance of increased surveillance by criminal justice agencies that continue to implement policies that discriminate against citizens in these communities (Holmes, 2003; Kautt & Tankebe, 2011). The inability to change the surrounding community structural factors that include poverty, unemployment, and fragmented families contributes to the demise of the social order and the increase of incivility from which the growing ex-prisoner sub-culture is emerging. Based on the survey data and the findings from the focus group it is clear that the participants of this study share a belief that the behaviors associated with the ex-prisoner sub-culture are dominating every aspect of living in these communities. The most dominant theme emanating from the focus groups was the influence of ex-prisoners on the community. The other characteristics or themes presented during the focus group discussions are the direct result of the influence of the prisoner culture on the community. Figure 5.2 illustrates the influence of prisoner culture as the driving force for the characteristics of negative labeling, disconnect with leaders, and self-agency. These characteristics are just as descriptive of a neighborhood experiencing a high rate of prisoner reentry as the other structural factors identified in this study.





*Figure 5.2.* Thematic characteristics of neighborhood experiencing a high rate of reentry.

The influence of the deviant subcultural context is thought to predispose people to the rationalization of violence. The new positional norms created by the subculture are not ephemeral in nature, thus making the embedded behaviors of the community difficult to change.

Sixty-seven percent of survey participants agreed with the statement that going to prison is considered a rite of passage in certain neighborhoods. There is an acceptance of the negative behaviors associated with prison culture. Primary among aspects of the influence of prison culture is the acceptance of the characteristic of violent crime as an acceptable solution to dispute among residents.

The prison culture gains momentum among residents through the constant barrage of images found in various forms of media that assist in shaping the culture. Eighty-three percent of study participants agreed that television, music, and movies have glamorized the prison culture thus sustaining the cultural influence among residents who live in the conditions imitated in the media. When asked about their agreement with the statement that the returning citizen

population (ex-prisoners) impacts the social interaction of community residents in a positive manner 53% disagreed, thus indicating that over half of respondents felt that the influence of the ex-prisoner population is felt within communities with high rates of reentry. Of the service providers who took the survey 82% indicated a negative association with the influence of the ex-prisoner population on local resident interactions. This response is interesting in light of the data obtained in the service provider focus group indicating that bias held by staff assigned to assist residents may act upon negative assumptions associated with the clients who are in need of services.

The treatment of residents by service providers may explain the sense of pervasive hopelessness discussed in the focus groups. The potential positive effects of ex-prisoner reentry are muted by the stigma associated with being from a neighborhood characterized by high rates of reentry.

The responses of the various agency staff who work with residents in these neighborhoods provide evidence that the influence of prison culture permeates the entire community and effects the way in which the neighborhood and those living in it are viewed. Consideration for the nuances of culture, language, and gender are not a priority in the development of programs and services designed to assist individuals returning to neighborhoods from prison. Jepson (2009) posits that an oversimplification of culture and a failure to include or recognize cultural differences to include language, and gender create a less than favorable condition for interactive approaches for cultural inclusion and thus reform. The neutralization of cultural forces influences the success or failure of the reintegration of ex-prisoners.

Intergroup conflict as seen in the differences in responses between community service providers and ex-prisoners, for example, exacerbates the conditions under which people respond

to the psychological and sociological effects of group behavior. Booyesen, Nkomo, and Dorfling (2005) posit that social identity theory provides an explanation for understanding the behaviors present during intergroup conflict. The major aspects of social conflict theory are as follows:

- Categorization—labeling a group or individual
- Identification—association with a group in order to build self-esteem
- Comparison—favorable bias toward our group versus other groups

The interactive relationship between community residents, ex-prisoners, and specifically those providing services demonstrated in the focus groups themes show several of the elements that contribute to intergroup conflict. Conflict theory provides a context for understanding the disparate treatment of ethnic minorities and the assertion of laws that are more favorable for the dominate group (Kautt & Tankebe, 2011). The information gathered from the service provider focus group discussions in addition to the service providers responding to the survey provide insight into the opposing views shared by this group versus the attitudes and opinions of residents and ex-prisoners. Several practices associated with criminal justice and allied organizations foster the perpetuation of intergroup conflict.

The prison culture and the individuals that identify with it mark a stark contrast against the back drop of the mainstream. The survey responses of both criminal justice professionals and the network of neighborhood service providers demonstrate the distance between the ideology based on historic principles upon which the criminal justice system is built and the socialization of those returning citizens living in the community post incarceration. The cascading effects of prisoner reentry demonstrate the complexity of the impact of reentry on neighborhood structural factors. Neighborhood structural factors comprise entities that do not stand alone but are dependent on and influenced by other structural factors.

As previously discussed the issue of ex-prisoner reentry and its influence on the characteristics of a neighborhood pose complex issues for those living and working within the environments shaped by high concentrations of returning ex-prisoners. From an organizational and community perspective the negative effects of prisoner reentry must be managed in order to prevent a downward trajectory of neighborhood conditions that result in social disorganization.

**Leadership and ex-prisoner reentry.** The importance of leadership is often overlooked in discussions relative to ex-prisoner reentry. This study sought to explore the relevance of complexity leadership theory to addressing problems associated with this growing social phenomenon. It is too broad and too obvious a statement to say that leadership is essential. A specific type of leadership is required to guide organizations and communities in dealing with the complexities of the intersection of ex-prisoners and neighborhoods.

Study results present a clear picture of the lived leadership dynamic that currently exists in the neighborhoods where reentry is most prevalent and highlight what is needed from leaders:

- Leaders must become subject matter experts on the impact of reentry on communities
- Leaders should generate and promote the creation of ideas from the communities;
- Leaders must foster collaboration among partner and allied agencies;
- Leaders must build pathways that provide community based programs opportunity to establish relationships with inmates during incarceration to facilitate education, employment, and housing opportunities and
- Leaders must be involved in shaping the public perception of prisoner reentry

If leaders can become instrumental in addressing the above noted issues tremendous gains could be had in addressing the significant barriers that prevent the successful reintegration of ex-prisoners into the community. Specifically, leaders that can assist in fostering collaboration

among allied agencies can develop pathways to meaningful employment opportunities and permanent housing options for ex-prisoners.

All survey respondents agreed that leaders should be responsible for the development of ideas that address problems associated with ex-prisoner reentry. Neighborhoods experiencing high rates of reentry need leadership that is not abstract but tangible in the sense that leaders provide remedies to alleviate the condition of hopelessness. Leaders operating in this environment must be able to stimulate discussion that will result in the creation of ideas that solve complex neighborhood problems.

Ninety-six (96%) percent of survey respondents want leaders that foster collaborative approaches and build alliances among local agencies. The survey responses to the statement about leaders fostering collaboration are consistent with responses from the focus group participants. Collectively, participants in this study believe that leaders should be involved in the creation of formal networks that engage the entire community. These networks should include residents and ex-prisoners. One participant in the resident focus group illustrates the point by stating, “It is important that criminal justice leaders work with non-profits (organizations) that focus on ex-prisoners.”

Leaders should be engaged in forming the public perception of ex-prisoners and framing the discourse in relation to the impact of reentry on communities. A high 93% of individuals surveyed agreed that leaders should have a positive view of ex-prisoners in order to effectively lead change in this area. Based on the statistical information and discussion in the focus groups, participants want leaders to engage those outside of the neighborhood, i.e., funders, state policymakers, etc., providing them with data showing the return on investment when an ex-prisoner is successfully employed. Further, the study suggests that leaders must use resources

such as local media to share positive stories about ex-prisoners successfully living in the community.

The attempt to promote balanced approaches to the justice system's responses to disproportionate crime and victimization rates within predominately ethnic minority communities must include an acknowledgement of the historic perceptions. An adversarial relationship between the law enforcement community and minorities has existed throughout the history of this country. Previous research has substantiated that police more frequently employ coercive enforcement methods against Blacks in areas predominately occupied by Black residents (Holmes, 2003). Typically, these communities include high crime areas with a weak social order and high unemployment and substandard housing conditions. The reciprocal distrust has limited the utilization of effective crime reduction strategies.

To effect a positive change in urban neighborhoods, reduce violent crime, and increase public safety, criminal justice leaders must target inner-city neighborhoods and be creative in the identification and design of programs that solve community problems. A fundamental principle of effective leadership is the ability to identify and solve problems (Conger, 1989; Michie & Gooty, 2005). Leadership is required to resolve the lingering effects of oppression from criminal justice agencies in these communities. The negative press associated with the high crime rates in these neighborhoods must be balanced by positive stories about people overcoming past mistakes according to the group discussions. These success stories will create a positive narrative that will inform the general public about the opportunity for their involvement and resources needed to assist in the successful transition of inmates back into local communities.

Based on the focus group results and the survey it is apparent that organizations and agencies that wish to engage these communities must adhere to leadership methods adept at

dealing with a complex environment. This is needed to inspire not only organization members but motivate entire communities to achieve common goals that highly regard quality of life and promote peace. Study participants clearly understand the importance of leadership and the role it plays in providing a framework for the development of strategies to address the negative impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the neighborhoods.

**Effective leadership in the age of ex-prisoner reentry.** The study findings show the need for leaders to: (a) be subject-matter expertise related to prisoner reentry, (b) create knowledge; (c) foster collaboration, (d) develop effective positive messages to the public, and (e) have specific competencies. These competencies include:

- Awareness of community issues
- Coalition building
- Understanding of complex leadership theory principles
- Cultural awareness

***Awareness of community issues.*** It is imperative that leaders engaged in reentry work fully understand the issues effecting life in the community. For leaders from correctional agencies this is vitally important as the field of practice has historically focused inwardly on rehabilitative and correctional programming. These duties are increasingly impacted by external forces that include the development of policy, and legislation that is directed toward operations within the confines of prison facilities. Correctional agency leaders lead in complex situations and generally focus attention on the actions of employees, contractors, and offenders. Duties include managing budgets, physical plants, critical incidents, and the concerns of external partners that increasingly will include communities to which offenders return (Montgomery, 2006). Based on this research we now understand that among existing community issues relative

to ex-prisoner reentry, leaders must manage neighborhood characteristics that include the influence of prison culture, hopelessness, negative labeling, and lack of self-agency among residents.

Leaders must be aware of the state of neighborhoods experiencing high rates of reentry. Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed believe that community resources are inadequate for addressing ex-prisoner needs. Service providers in the group discussion acknowledge that it is difficult to work with customers when the need for resources outweighs their availability. Neighborhoods experiencing high rates of reentry are complex adaptive systems that operate with unpredictability. This is counter to the culture of the correctional system which emphasizes order and predictability.

***Coalition building.*** As complex adaptive systems, neighborhoods are comprised of multiple interactive parts that must work together to effectively resolve problems that affect the individual and the whole. By working together agencies and organizations are able to pool limited resources. Leaders must possess the ability to create opportunity for new idea creation. Leaders can promote innovation by modeling open-minded thinking and strategically placing groups together to identify issues. By placing groups together to identify issues leaders are able to transfer ownership of problems to the group or coalition which develops buy in and investment from strategically aligned partners (Basadur, 2004). Leaders addressing issues linked to the interactive impact of reentry must be able to identify appropriate partners. Partner organizations should have a vested interest in the success of both ex-prisoners and neighborhood residents. Leaders must be able to maintain the momentum of these coalitions. The response from those living and working in these communities is clear as 100% of respondents agreed at some level that community leaders should encourage collaboration among community



organizations. A high 98% of survey respondents agreed that service agencies should work collaboratively with other agencies and 99% agreed that criminal justice leaders should work with community residents to identify neighborhood needs. The establishment of strong coalitions provides a strong base for the examination of community needs and issues.

*Understand the principles of CLT.* Those in leadership need a framework from which to guide complex adaptive systems. Complexity leadership theory provides essential administrative control, while at the same time fosters an environment for adaptation. As neighborhood dynamics continue to evolve as a result of environmental influences; leadership strategies must be conducive to a changing environment. The components of CLT as outlined in Chapter II of this study illustrate the benefits of the theoretical construct of CLT as an appropriate strategy for the complexities involved in ex-prisoner reentry. As demonstrated by the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry as presented in this study CLT provides a leadership scaffold from which to build strategies that address the emerging trends and unpredictability of the interacting elements within communities.

I contend that the competencies that leaders must have to guide neighborhoods through the ex-prisoner reentry era are uniquely aligned with complexity leadership theory. CLT includes the fostering of ideas and the promotion of collaboration. In addition, the emergent change experienced by communities is well suited in the CLT framework as results emerge from unstable environments similar to those found within these neighborhoods. A review of the context of prisoner reentry indicates that it is situated in the midst of a complex adaptive system. The complex adaptive system is the neighborhood that is characterized by stability and instability, unpredictability, and the interaction of individual structural factors.

***High level of cultural competence.*** The administrative data shows that prisoner reentry is concentrated in densely populated urban communities. These communities are predominately African American and have higher concentrations of ethnic minorities than other neighborhoods. As highlighted in the literature on mass incarceration, communities of color have been ravaged by the effects of the removal and return of ex-prisoners (Clear, 2007). As a result of policies and practices formerly present in the criminal justice system there has been a mutual distrust between justice practitioners and those in the community. Leaders must be acutely aware of the cultural dynamics that may make it difficult to establish trust. From a sociological perspective the neighborhood characteristics heavily influence the interactions of residents with each other and with potential partners (Hannon & Defina, 2010). The cultural competence of leaders must move beyond race to include the influence of prison culture as defined by this study. Ex-prisoners participating in this study shared that leaders must understand the diversity of the incarceration experience. Basically, every returning citizen does not have the same challenges. Cultural competence can be attained according to the members of the focus group by including ex-prisoners in planning meetings and encourage their participation in local coalitions.

### **Recommendations for Criminal Justice Leaders**

This study investigated the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on specific neighborhood structural factors. In addition, investigation was conducted to support the assertion that complexity leadership theory is a viable leadership methodology for criminal justice leaders engaged in reentry work. The findings from this study resulted in several expected outcomes regarding the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the neighborhood structural factors of crime, employment, housing, health, poverty, and family. The findings from the study further

demonstrated the viability, and appropriateness of complexity leadership theory as a leadership methodology suited for the environment in which ex-prisoner reentry is situated.

Findings from the study did bring to light issues that lead to some recommendations for the field. The influence of prison culture on local communities was a dominant theme emanating from focus group discussions with members of the local community where ex-prisoner reentry is persistent. The following recommendations are based on the findings from this study.

In order to address the negative impact of ex-prisoner reentry criminal justice leaders must be catalysts for the development of local working groups and institutions that will promote the idea of successful ex-prisoner reentry through the establishment of various evidence-based strategies. These strategies include in-reach programs that address employment, transitional housing, and education programs that have been proven to directly impact prison recidivism. Important to the development of these local coalitions is the ability of justice leaders to effectively interpret the meaning of the many research-based practices currently employed by the justice system. In order to better understand the need of ex-prisoners and the impact of reentry on greater society, leaders must be adept at providing information that is easily understood. In Ohio, for example, justice leaders must be at the forefront in explaining the basis for the new sentencing law Ohio House Bill 86 (2011) and its justification. Evidence suggests that redirecting first time non-violent offenders to community-based programs in lieu of prison results in better outcomes for offenders. Leaders in the criminal justice field would do well to explain the significance of this legislation and its impact on local communities with regard to both costs to local taxpayers, and public safety. Justice leaders must be able to identify sound research and its potential application to the issue of reentry for communities identified in this study. Leaders must understand the theoretical underpinnings of research on prisoner reentry. There is a

substantial body of research in support of restorative justice programming. These programs, which promote the equal participation of ex-prisoners, residents, and justice professionals, are well suited for communities experiencing high rates of ex-prisoner reentry (Bazemore & Stinchcomb, 2004; Van Ness & Strong, 1997). Leaders must be able to leverage available resources through criminal justice agencies in order to implement strategies that operate bilaterally to address the individual characteristics of prisoners, and the contributing community factors that serve as predictors to recidivism. By leveraging available resources through established justice agencies, local coalitions can receive valuable training related to subjects such as offender assessment, inmate behavior, and manipulative tactics. Training in specific areas related to offender behavior can make local service providers more effective when working with recently released ex-prisoners.

Correctional leaders must provide more opportunity for local service providers to enter correctional facilities in order to establish programming opportunities inside the gate prior to offender release. The opportunity to conduct in-reach will enable local service providers the occasion to develop meaningful relationships with clients prior to their release from prison. These opportunities can create space for local service providers to identify specific areas of need that may direct the development of specific services that will fit the unique needs of their future client base. This approach may provide an opportunity to effect change in the demonstrated negative perceptions of ex-prisoners discussed previously in this study. Additionally, this approach could provide valuable guidance for future resource or funding allocations.

Justice leaders must also be able to communicate clear and easily identifiable research designs, and/or research questions that provide local coalitions with clear direction for future action to address reentry associated challenges. Finally, criminal justice leaders must be able to

blend linear and non-linear thinking into decision-making practices as it relates to community work in the field of ex-prisoner reentry. Specific evidence-based approaches predicated on purely statistical or quantitative data have created an adherence to a narrow view of outcomes associated with a specific phenomenon. The inclusion of non-linear decision making practices and non-statistical research approaches creates an environment for generating concepts to explain behaviors associated with the impact of ex-prison reentry. Criminal justice leaders must be able to use empirical data to conceptualize social phenomena. The ability to clearly discuss strategies and the application of research will assist local communities in addressing the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on neighborhood structural factors.

Through the interactive engagement of representatives of the affected structural factors working closely with criminal justice and local leaders the opportunity exists for the identification and allocation of the necessary resources to begin the process of change. Through a systems approach to addressing the assimilation of ex-prisoners into the community the various community subunits can begin the process of creating a continuum of supportive networks for ex-prisoners that move individuals in need of services through created service pathways.

Every neighborhood agency involved in providing services in high reentry neighborhoods should develop a strategic plan and identify staff who will be involved in establishing; (1) outreach strategies with aligned service providers, (2) assessment of ex-prisoner needs, and (3) community education program on impact of reentry. These networks and the formulation of the strategic plans can be established through local coalitions specifically designed to address the integration of ex-prisoners back into the community.

The development of these local coalitions also provides an opportunity for criminal justice leaders and community leaders to share knowledge and expertise in their respective fields.

Through the engagement of community components in conjunction with criminal justice leaders the core elements of leadership (administrative, adaptive, and emergent) espoused in complexity leadership theory serve to drive knowledge creation and solutions through interaction and interdependence. It is the hope that the establishment of these guiding coalitions will end in the building of the collective efficacy of neighborhoods experiencing disproportionate ex-prisoner reentry.

**Correctional policies and practices.** Correctional agencies must develop policies that replicate to the extent possible life in the community. A correctional agency must design processes that simulate conditions as they exist in pro-social environments in the community. The majority of correctional institutions have a period of orientation for those newly admitted to the prison system. In order to address the negative influence of ex-prisoner culture agencies must create opportunity for inmates to engage in activities that will be required for their success upon release from prison. Some suggestions include requiring inmates to both apply and interview for jobs within the prison, and require inmates to maintain an account and pay for non-essential materials or items mirroring to the extent possible a banking account and payment system.

These policies must simultaneously develop the self-agency of the offender. Offenders should be required to engage in meaningful activities for a minimum of eight hours each day. An 8-to-10 hour day replicates a typical work day in the community (Mohr, 2012). Policies should be developed that require strict adherence to dress code and grooming stipulations for clothing and appearance. Policies and programs must confront institutional culture prior to the offender being released back into the community. The results of the survey indicate that 68% of those living or working in the area of prisoner reentry feel that criminal justice leaders while

positioned to assist in the successful reintegration of prisoners into the community they will not put forth the effort to do so.

Prior to being released from correctional facilities offenders should be required to participate in intensive readiness programming that will assist in assimilation back into the community. Offenders participating in these programs should complete competency tests to measure proficiency in specific areas. Scores that indicate a certain level of deficiency can be examined to determine strategies to improve competencies related to life outside of prison. This process moves away from mere participatory programs where credit is awarded for program completion. These intensive programs should include health education, sex education, parenting, financial planning, and cognitive behavioral programs that address the characteristics of self-agency, negative labeling, and the influence of prison culture.

Finally, agencies should develop mentorship opportunities for ex-prisoners and members of the local community. In the resident focus group members were clear that the majority of ex-prisoners return to impoverished areas. However, it was noted that the majority of residents do not engage in criminal behavior. Utilization of the influence of mentors who can assist in establishing pro-social norms can be a strong force in changing sub-cultural belief systems developed during incarceration.

**Victim centered offender programs.** Offenders have the opportunity to participate in programming designed to educate prisoners on the impact of crime on victims. Victim empathy programming has been found to increase the knowledge of prisoners regarding the plight of crime victims, increased empathy, and overall knowledge of the negative effects of crime. Victim impact panels provide the opportunity for offenders to hear testimony from crime victims and their family members regarding the impact of crime on their lives. Studies indicate that

victim impact programs have a positive effect on inmate behavior during incarceration (A. Jackson, 2009). Programs should also include batterer intervention programs. Approximately 19% of all arrests for aggravated assault and 68% of simple assaults involve family members. Batterer intervention programs, in addition to programs that promote healthy family relationships could assist in addressing persistent criminal behaviors and the negative impact of ex-prisoner reentry on families. These programs should also be offered in the community through collaboration between correctional agencies and neighborhood service providers.

The issue of crime and violence is an ever present issue confronting the communities presented in this study. There is a concern among those in the neighborhood that an increase in the ex-prisoner population results in the fear of victimization for individuals living and working in the community. Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that an increase in the population of ex-prisoners holds the potential for them becoming a victim of crime. Nearly 80% of the sample makes a connection between the fragility of neighborhood structural factors and ex-prisoner recidivism.

**Community engagement.** Correctional agencies must develop coalitions with local service providers in order to enhance services both inside the prison and in the local community. Local service providers working in the areas that include but are not limited to healthcare, employment, substance abuse recovery, and education can enhance the work of criminal justice practitioners working inside the prison. Professionals coming in from outside of the criminal justice system can assuage the influences of the prison culture. The interaction between local service providers and inmates in partnership with justice professionals can assist in the introduction of expected behaviors from prisoners once released back into the community. The



opportunity for local service providers to begin work to address barriers to successful reentry may ameliorate the negative attitudes expressed by service providers relative to ex-prisoners.

Community leaders must develop a specific skill set that is aligned with aspects of complexity leadership theory. Primarily leaders in high reentry neighborhoods should adopt strategies that recognize the interdependence of neighborhood factors. Local leaders must learn to work collaboratively and leverage available resources in order to build sustainable programmatic initiatives that will assist residents over time. Organizational and other community leaders must create venues for the inclusion of ex-prisoners in discussions about specific needs. In addition, these discussions must include other residents in order to identify the needs of residents. There must be an acknowledgement of the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on the quality of life experienced by all residents in the neighborhood. The leadership in these neighborhoods must work with criminal justice leaders and offer opportunities for these leaders to partner in the design of strategic approaches to address reentry from the neighborhood perspective. This would require criminal justice leaders to spend time in local communities where ex-prisoners disproportionately return.

Justice practitioners must reciprocate in approach and seek opportunities to work alongside service providers in neighborhoods with concentrated prisoner reentry. The expertise provided by correctional workers can assist service providers in better understanding the ex-prisoner population and may assist the offender in transitioning from incarceration to freedom. Barriers exist for the formerly incarcerated who in some instances have spent years working with specific correctional staff and once released no longer have contact with the person who has assisted them in managing their lives. Better transitioning of inmates to the community is needed. A clear picture has been presented regarding the need for collaborative approaches to

address ex-prisoner reentry. When it comes to views about ex-prisoners roughly 83% of those taking the survey agreed that the general assumption about ex-prisoners is negative. Although that is true the majority of overall study participants feel that ex-prisoners must be included in resolving issues related to the impact of prisoner reentry.

Criminal justice leaders have worked for decades to attempt to reduce recidivism rates. Consideration should be given to reversing the roles of formal correctional and organization leaders with those from the population of the formerly incarcerated who have demonstrated the ability to gain the trust of ex-prisoners and who are dedicated to working alongside formal leaders in the criminal justice system and not behind them.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Further research on the effects of ex-prisoner reentry on local communities is needed. This study sought to combine two primary methods of research. Future studies should continue along a similar mixed method approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed method design that I strongly encourage is an ethnographic-correlational design. This study design allows for more in-depth description of the study participants and the neighborhoods. The correlational aspect of the suggested design would allow for the investigation into the relationship between examined variables. This type of mixed method research strategy could build upon the data presented in this study and more closely examine the relationship among structural factors and themes emanating from the focus groups (McMillan & Wergin, 2010). Since we understand that ex-prisoner reentry does have a profound impact on structural factors in local communities, research should explore ways in which the negative effects of concentrated reentry can be mitigated. Future research should also consider the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on communities of color. Specifically, future studies should examine

reentry's impact in neighborhoods with high concentrations of African Americans. Research should also examine the potential for cultural bias in the allocation of resources and design of strategies to address prisoner reentry. Similarly, future studies should examine the effectiveness of leadership approaches to determine what strategies are most likely to position communities for successful reintegration of ex-prisoners. Longitudinal studies, although time consuming, can assist in determining the long term effectiveness of specific strategies addressing the reintegration of ex-prisoners into neighborhoods with similar characteristics as outlined in this study. Another well-suited research strategy for this topic would include the combination of ethnography with a causal comparative method in order to analyze the impact of applied leadership approaches in ex-prisoner reentry utilizing approaches grounded in complexity leadership theory.

The method of inquiry for this study coincided with my intuitive inclination regarding the primary methods of inquiry dominant in the field of criminal justice practice. For the contemporary criminal justice practitioner, quantitative scientific methods of research are the guiding elements of practice and procedure in the field. Because the existing research related to offender reentry has been limited in scope; questions remain about the possible impact that new approaches to problem solving and knowledge procurement could have on the impact of ex-prisoner reentry within a community context. These questions may be more appropriately addressed through qualitative research, such as the focus groups used in this study.

### **Limitations**

This study is a move forward in the attempt to understand the effects of concentrated ex-prisoner returns on specific community characteristics. The lack of substantial scholarship on this specific issue warrants a significant level of reliance on the constructed experiences of the

study participants. The study does not analyze specific correlations between the returning prisoner population, and specific rates of change to the structural factors examined in the study. Further, the study sample is relatively small and makes it difficult to draw conclusions on all aspects of the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry, and may not be generalizable. While the survey was distributed to individuals living working, and volunteering in communities characterized by high reentry areas a significant limitation of this study includes the inability to identify which specific areas the survey respondents represent. Conceivably several respondents could have been from smaller communities versus communities identified in the administrative data as having significant ex-prisoner populations. Notable limitations include limiting participation in the focus groups and the survey sample. In addition, the bias of the researcher that includes experiences as an advocate for crime victims and communities highlighted in this study, as well as positions in the criminal justice system, cannot be considered as insignificant. Despite these limitations, it is hoped that this study will provide direction for practitioners who desire to better understand the effects of reentry in the context of significant community change.

## **Conclusion**

Through the examination of concentrated prisoner reentry this study has clearly identified the way in which individuals returning from prison influence residential quality of life. The impact of ex-prisoner reentry is a near and present condition effecting thousands of returning citizens and thousands more community residents each year. A study of the effects of concentrated reentry is a response to decades of mass incarceration. There is an extensive body of literature outlining the debilitating effects of mass incarceration on individuals, neighborhoods, and state budgets (Lynch, 2011).

This study provides a foundation for understanding the impact of reentry on specific structural factors that are evidenced to provide community stability. The focus group and survey data provide justice, organizational, and community leaders with critical information that is essential to understanding the way in which a significant portion of the population returning from prison will shape the landscape of the local ecology.

I approached this study with the assumption that the concentrated return of ex-prisoners to urban communities to which they primarily return would result in the increase of negative outcomes for the examined structural factors. My assumption was confirmed. However, the results of this study broaden the definitions and understanding of characteristics that typify neighborhoods experiencing high rates of ex-prisoner reentry. Beyond the statistical characteristics that demarcate these communities, the intangible characteristics (influence of prison culture, negative labeling, and self- agency) that make up the essence of the neighborhood must be understood equally.

In the introduction to this study it was suggested that the issue of mass incarceration and the subsequent reentry of thousands of ex-prisoners would push local communities to a tipping point. This study found that the effects of concentrated ex-prisoner reentry do have a negative impact on structural factors designed to provide stability and order in local communities. The negative trajectory of conditions in neighborhoods with concentrated ex-prisoner reentry poses significant challenges to both criminal justice and community leadership.

This study illuminates the fact that the impact of ex-prisoner reentry moves beyond the statistical impacts of the phenomenon on neighborhood structural conditions and includes the experiential or lived realities of residents facing the quality of live challenges brought on by complexities associated with disproportionate prisoner reentry. While the current circumstances

seem to conclude that negative outcomes associated with reentry are unavoidable, there remains opportunity for change.

The impact of prisoner reentry on neighborhoods remains an area of research to be explored. This study provides a parallel to the study of the environmental influence on individual level characteristics of ex-prisoners returning to the community. This study provides a more precise understanding of the interaction of structural factors beyond the traditional micro-level analysis. The insights gained from this study will provide correctional agency leaders, and policymakers clear direction for the development of specific remedies to the interactive effects of prisoner reentry.

As a final point it is my hope that this study broadens the epistemological view of research within the criminal justice system. The quantitative research paradigm was not sufficient for the study of the lived experience relative to the impact of reentry on communities. More qualitative ethnographic studies should be conducted to supplement the quantitative analysis prevalent in the field.

## **Appendix**

## **Appendix A**

### **Agency Letter**

Dear Ms.

My name is Michael Davis; I am a doctoral candidate in the Leadership and Organizational Change program at Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. I am conducting research on the interactive impact of ex-prisoner reentry on specific community structural factors to include; crime, housing, employment, families, and healthcare. I am requesting permission to include staff from your agency in a focus group designed to gain insight into their experiences, perceptions and feelings relative to the impact of ex-prisoner returns to the community.

I am eager to discuss the details and plans for my research, as well as any suggestions that you may have for my study. I certainly appreciate your consideration of my request. As the leading social service problem solving agency in the area, I greatly appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael Davis



## Appendix B

### Recruitment Letter

Date

I am a Ph.D. candidate in the Leadership and Change Program at Antioch University. I am beginning the data collection portion of my dissertation. My research interest is in the area of ex-prisoner reentry. Specifically I am interested in learning more about how ex-prisoner reentry affects specific community characteristics that include: crime, housing, employment, poverty, and healthcare. Since 2000 approximately 700,000 ex-prisoners return to the community each year. Because ex-prisoners disproportionately return to urban communities I would like to engage you in a discussion with 8 to 10 individuals who either provide services or reside in the Driving Park Community.

I would appreciate your assistance in learning more about the impact that ex-prisoners have on life in Driving Park.

The focus group will last approximately 90 minutes and will be scheduled in early 2013. I will take all precautions to protect the confidentiality of our discussions.

Please consider participating in this research study as I attempt to learn more about the impact of ex-prisoner reentry on communities. If you are interested in participating in this study please contact me at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. If you have any questions or want further information on this study, please contact me.

Thank-you!

Michael Davis  
Doctoral Candidate, Ph.D. in Leadership and Change  
Antioch University, Yellow Springs, Ohio

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent Form

#### Informed Consent for Participants in the Prisoner Reentry and Communities Study

Greetings:

You have been selected to participate in a research study on the effects of prisoner reentry on community characteristics. This study is being conducted by Michael Davis a doctoral candidate in the Antioch University Leadership and Change program. Antioch University is located in Yellow Springs, Ohio.

This research study involves an investigation into the experiences, perceptions, and feelings of residents who are active in a community where ex-prisoners return to the neighborhood to reside. I am interested in conducting a total of four focus groups with 8 to 10 participants in each group. Selected participants will only participate in one focus group.

Each focus group will be conducted at the Driving Park Library and is expected to last approximately 1.5 hours. The focus group will be audio recorded and subsequently transcribed. When the information from the focus group has been transcribed the information from the focus group will be made available for your review to ensure accuracy of the information obtained during our discussion.

The names of all study participants will remain confidential, unless you grant permission for me to use your name in the final report. In the event that information collected during the focus group could potential disclose your identity, you will have the opportunity to have quotations removed from the transcription. All research materials associated with the study including the Informed Consent Form will be kept in a secure file cabinet and destroyed after the completion of my study. The results from these interviews will be incorporated into dissertation.

The goal of this study is to provide better insight into how communities interact and engage with the effects of the returning ex-prisoner population. It is my hope that through this study communities are able to identify several key factors to making the transition of ex-prisoners to the community a contributor to the overall growth and development of the neighborhood.

The risks associated with this study are considered minimal. However, there is slight chance that you may experience some discomfort in the telling of your experiences. If you do, please contact the Southeast Mental Health Center at 614. 444.0800 in order to discuss your reactions. Furthermore, you may withdraw from this study at any time either during or after the interview without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, your data will be eliminated from the study.

There is no financial remuneration for participating in this study.

If you have any questions about any aspect of this study or your involvement, please contact:

Carolyn Kenny, Ph.D.  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Ph.D. in Leadership & Change  
150 E. South College Road  
Yellow Springs, OH 45387  
[REDACTED]

Two copies of this informed consent form have been provided. Please sign both, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this research. Return one to me and keep the other for yourself.

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Signature of the Researcher

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Date

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Name of Participant

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Signature of Participant

---

Date

## Appendix D

### Survey on the Impact of Ex-Prisoner Reentry

#### Introduction

I am conducting a study on the impact of ex-prisoner reentry into communities. You are being asked to participate in this study because of your interest and/or work in the field of prisoner reentry. This is an opportunity to contribute to the growing body of knowledge in this field. Your responses will assist in shaping the way ex-prisoner reentry is viewed and managed by criminal justice and community leaders.

Since 2000 nearly 700,000 ex-prisoners have returned to local communities in this country each year. After 30 years of sentencing policies that resulted in an era commonly known as mass incarceration, recent correctional policies are placing focus on assisting prison systems release more offenders back into the community.

There are very few studies specifically designed to capture the opinions of community members related to how an increasing number of ex-prisoners will impact the community. Previous studies have shown that ex-prisoners/returning citizens typically go back to communities that are high in crime and unemployment.

Your participation in this study is very important to a more complete understanding of prisoner reentry. The results of this study promise to provide an opportunity to better understand reentry from the perspective of community participants. All responses are confidential. Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete this survey. If you have any questions about the survey or study, please contact Michael Davis.

#### **In what city is your reentry work primarily focused?**

- Columbus
- Cleveland
- Toledo
- Dayton
- Cincinnati
- Lorain
- Akron
- Other

Other (please specify)

**2. In what neighborhood(s) is your reentry work primarily focused?**

**3. Thinking about your involvement with ex-prisoner reentry how would you categorize your current role with the community?  
Please check all that apply.**

- Social Service Provider
- Victim Advocate
- Government Leader or Staff
- Ex-Prisoner
- Private Business Leader or Staff
- Non-Profit Leader or Staff
- Criminal Justice Leader or Staff
- Community Resident
- Other

Other (please specify)

**4. In the course of a week, how often do you come in contact with ex-prisoners?**





There are not enough health care services resources in the community to assist returning ex-prisoners

[only](#)

Ex-Prisoners and the Community

**7. Thinking about the ways that ex-prisoners influence the neighborhoods to which they return, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Ex-prisoners can serve as mentors to at-risk youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Returning prisoners increase the number of potential voters in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offenders offer hope to other community members that you can overcome bad experiences.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community characteristics determine the success of ex-prisoners in remaining crime free.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ex-prisoners bring resourcefulness and creativity to the neighborhood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Returning ex-prisoners increase the rate of infectious diseases in the neighborhood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increased opportunities for affordable housing would assist ex-prisoners with a successful transition to the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. In what, if any, ways can criminal justice or community leaders create a positive perception of ex-prisoners for the general public?**



Ex-Prisoners and the Community (continued)

**9. Thinking about the experience of living and working in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry, how strongly do you disagree or agree with each of the following statements?**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Everyone in the neighborhood is treated like a convicted felon.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Law enforcement officers view all neighborhood residents as potential criminals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Living in a neighborhood with a high rate of prisoner reentry makes it difficult for other residents to find a job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Because of the increase in the ex-prisoner population my neighborhood is less safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People are more afraid that they are going to be a victim of crime.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A high poverty rate is an expected outcome for neighborhoods with an ex-prisoner population.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
With more ex-prisoners in the community, crime and disruptive behavior are more acceptable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The Role of Leadership in Prisoner Reentry and Community



Criminal justice and organization leaders must have a positive view of ex-prisoners in order to address issues with prisoner reentry.

Community leaders should encourage collaboration among community organizations.

Ex-prisoners should be a formal part of decision making teams, and committees.

**12. What, if any, suggestions do you have that would assist criminal justice leaders in connecting ex-prisoners with available community resources?**

### Section III Participant Information

In this section of the survey you will be asked to answer a few simple questions about yourself.

**13. What is your gender?**

- Female  
 Male

**14. What is your age?**

- Under 25  
 25 to 39  
 40 to 59  
 60 and over

**15. What is your ethnicity?**

- Hispanic/Latino
- Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino

**16. What is your race? Please choose one or more.**

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian
- Other

**17. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- Less than high school
- High school
- Some college
- College
- Graduate school

**18. Are you currently employed?**

- Yes
- No

**19. How would you classify your job?**

- Law enforcement

- Prosecutor
  - Health care provider
  - Employment Services
  - Victim Advocate
  - Private Industry
  - Social Worker
  - Judge
  - Educator
  - Housing Specialist
  - Parole/Probation Officer
  - Other
- Other (please specify)

Thank You

Thank you for your work in prisoner reentry and contributing your ideas to this field by completing this survey.

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