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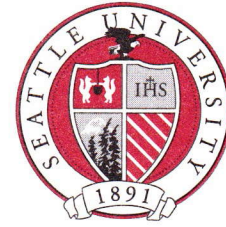
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Supportive Housing Outcomes for Ex-Offenders: Correlations between Criminal History and Tenancy Success

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SUPPORTIVE HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR EX-OFFENDERS:
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ABSTRACT

Ex-offenders face a variety of social, economic, and legal barriers to housing due to their criminal convictions. While many of these barriers exist due to the belief that convicted ex-offenders are dangerous tenants, few empirical studies have actually evaluated this relationship. This study examines the relationship between criminal history and housing success for formerly homeless and low-income individuals in a supportive housing environment, both with and without criminal histories. Housing outcomes are measured through length of tenancy, lease violations during tenancy, and reasons for leaving. Implications for future research and housing policies are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Each year, approximately 600,000 adults in the United States are released from prison, and approximately 4.7 million adults in the United States are under correctional supervision post-release (Carson, 2014; Carson & Golinelli, 2014). Prison release trends indicate that state and federal institution release numbers have consistently exceeded admission numbers since 2009 (Carson & Golinelli, 2014). Upon release from incarceration, these adults encounter social, psychological, and economic reentry barriers, in addition to the often stringent requirements of probation or parole (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013).

Immediately upon release, ex-offenders face a variety of challenges related to basic needs, such as finding transportation from the institution or obtaining seasonally-appropriate clothing. Most institutions provide ex-offenders with a gate fare, designed to help newly-released individuals with immediate needs, although few provide enough financial assistance to cover the actual costs of lodging, transportation, and food (LaVigne et al., 2008). Because a majority of offenders come from socioeconomically disadvantaged families and communities (Herivel & Wright, 2003), economic support from family members is not always feasible.

Approximately two-thirds of ex-offenders are released from prisons into community supervision programs, and thousands more are sentenced to probation in lieu of incarceration for minor offenses (Carson & Golinelli, 2014). These individuals must meet specific requirements, such as checking in with a community supervision officer, abstaining from illegal substances, and refraining from criminal activity. While these requirements may seem simple, low-income ex-offenders or ex-offenders with disabilities may experience barriers traveling to appointments, attending support groups, or meeting their needs through legitimate means (Gunnison &

Helfgott, 2013). Additional requirements, such as obtaining housing or employment, may be particularly challenging for these groups of ex-offenders.

After making temporary post-release arrangements, often with the assistance of relatives, ex-offenders begin the process of reestablishing residency, financial self-sufficiency, and community connections. While some ex-offenders are able to return to previous residences upon release from incarceration, approximately fifteen percent of ex-offenders in the United States experienced homelessness in the year immediately prior to incarceration (Greenberg & Rosenbeck, 2008). Housing restrictions, such as proximities to schools and known areas of prostitution, may also be imposed by an ex-offender's community supervision requirements (Beckett & Herbert, 2010).

In most cases, obtaining housing is contingent upon financial self-sufficiency. Legitimate avenues for financial success are often obstructed by various requirements. Reestablishing public benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income for individuals with disabilities, may be a time-consuming process, and a complete reapplication is necessary for beneficiaries who have been incarcerated for more than one year. For work-able ex-offenders, finding employment may also be challenging due to the life course disruption caused by incarceration and the presence of a criminal record (Pager, 2007). Moreover, incarceration history has been found to decrease the quality of available employment opportunities relative to those of non-offenders (Bushway, Stoll, & Weiman, 2007).

The search for housing may begin after ex-offenders establish financial self-sufficiency or support from friends or relatives. Transportation limitations, probation requirements, and other personal needs may govern where an offender may be able to successfully reside. Ex-offenders who have recently been released from long-term incarceration must navigate through unfamiliar

technologies related to housing search, such as using the Internet and completing electronic applications (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013). Ex-offenders also struggle with qualifying for rental housing, as they must often be able to pass a criminal background screening, provide proof of legitimate income, and possess a positive rental history (Thacher, 2008). Many of these screening criteria were developed in the late-twentieth century as a result of increasing attention toward criminal justice policy and exercising social control over convicted offenders.

The Current State of Ex-Offender Reentry Challenges

While some of the practical reentry challenges facing ex-offenders can be attributed to the changing technological landscapes of the early twenty-first century, many barriers are a result of mass media saturation and a desire to predict future criminal behavior. These developments in late-modern society present unique challenges to finding employment, housing, and other social services upon release from incarceration.

The immediate communication solutions offered by the Internet have permeated the criminal justice system and other social institutions. While access to public records once involved requesting physical copies of documents, Internet and computer technologies have revolutionized the process of accessing criminal and consumer records. For employers, housing providers, lenders, and other institutions, this advancement has resulted in a quick and affordable way to determine whether or not a prospective applicant has criminal record, poor credit, or outstanding debt.

In conjunction with technological advances, mass media outlets provide instant access to breaking news stories locally, nationally, and globally. However, the importance of ratings and attracting viewers often results in intense competition between networks to attract both viewers and advertisers (Serani, 2008). Because advertising often accounts for a majority of revenue

among local television networks (Pew Research Center, 2015), news providers are often inclined to increase and retain viewership through programming that appeals to public interests.

A popular trend in contemporary news media is the emphasis on shock-value, fear-based programming. Slogans such as "If it bleeds, it leads" (Serani, 2008, p. 240) define the focus of mainstream news sources, and emphasize stories that stimulate anxiety, fear, and fascination. These sensationalized stories, which are often augmented with unverified claims or selective verbiage, are designed to capitalize on viewers' emotions and to create a desire for more information (Uribe & Gunter, 2007). Using emotion-based tactics, news media sources are often able to retain viewers by convincing them that a news story will provide solutions or answers to their problems or fears (Serani, 2008).

Crime stories are at the forefront of this news trend. High-profile crime and public safety stories appeal to viewers' curiosities and fascinations with wrongdoing, scandal, and corruption. In turn, the saturation of crime stories in the news media and in popular culture contributes to public fear of crime, even as crime statistics remain stable or decline (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004). Public attitudes toward crime and criminal justice policies are often shaped by the depiction of crime in the news media, suggesting that the news media is the most influential source of information for a majority of the public (Barak, 1994; Roberts & Doob, 1990).

In addition to fear of crime, sensationalized mass media stories also precipitate public fear of offenders. Race and social class often influence news media depictions of offenders (Bjornstrom et al., 2010), fostering public association between minorities and crime. Furthermore, these effects are more geographically pronounced among predominantly White neighborhoods when crime stories stereotypically depict racial minorities as being the perpetrators of crimes (Gilliam, Valentino, & Beckmann, 2002).

Influenced by media culture and socioeconomic change in the late-twentieth century, public sentiment toward crime and offenders remains the most significant factor in the treatment of ex-offenders. Following decades of rehabilitative and service-oriented models toward offenders, public attitudes on criminal justice policy during the late twentieth century shifted toward punishment, segregation, and prediction (Garland, 2001). As a result, fewer programming opportunities became available to incarcerated offenders, and increasingly punitive informal social controls came to dominate community life.

In a direct contrast from the early-twentieth century models of penal welfarism and rehabilitative reform measures, the 1970s experienced a monumental shift toward retribution and just deserts in criminal justice policy, and in risk management of offender populations (Garland, 2001). Indeterminate sentencing, extensive offender programs, and emphasis on scholarly opinion were replaced with Truth-in-Sentencing laws, massive funding reductions for offenders, and appeals to practical explanations of crime as a personal choice that could be deterred and punished (Garland, 2001).

To address the growing fear of crime at the community level, many social institutions began to focus on minimizing safety risks through the use of actuarial prediction methods. These methods reject individualized treatments and analyses in favor of uniformed and statistical risk assessments (Harcourt, 2007). While social institutions during the early-twentieth century focused on tailoring services to individuals' needs, late-twentieth century practices emphasized the role of depersonalized treatments as a method of reducing cost, applying standardization, and appealing to public opinion (Garland, 2001; Harcourt, 2007).

Predictive tools that assess risk for violence and recidivism, such as the Revised Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R), have been introduced as successful formulas for predicting

future behavioral outcomes (Walsh & Walsh, 2006). Based on a combination of empirical research and statistical methods, these tools allow administrators to calculate potential risk without the use of professional consultation or intensive personalized analysis (Harcourt, 2007). Criminal justice administrators are often encouraged to use predictive tools in making sentencing or probation decisions in efforts to appropriately allocate limited resources and to reduce risk to the community.

In addition to cost savings and uniformity in diagnosis, actuarial methods successfully appeal to public opinion regarding the management of dangerous offenders. While these tools may be somewhat effective in linking certain characteristics to the potential for future behavior (Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1991), the most significant accomplishment of actual prediction tools is the ability to quell public fear of uncertainty in relation to offender behavior. By assuring voters, politicians, and community groups that the criminal justice system is able to easily quantify and identify dangerous behavior, actuarial prediction methods reinforce the belief that crime and criminal behavior can be understood and addressed practically, rather than theoretically (Harcourt, 2007).

Toward the turn of the twenty-first century, criminal justice policy came to be defined by the economic, political, and social fears that dominated United States culture. As a result, policies related to offender reintegration and reentry success began to reflect public disillusionment and discontent with rehabilitation, and social policies outside of the criminal justice system also began to convey a growing concern for managing ex-offender risk.

Access to Rental Housing for Ex-Offenders

Public apprehension toward convicted offenders is readily apparent in public policies and practices governing contemporary social institutions. From obtaining employment to engaging in

civic life, the presence of a criminal record often excludes convicted offenders from equal access to many social institutions. These measures are primarily intended to manage the assumed risk of allowing convicted offenders to participate in certain aspects of community life, while ensuring that limited resources, such as affordable housing, are prioritized for non-offenders.

Access to housing has been identified as a primary factor in successful reintegration (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013). However, despite empirical research supporting the significance of housing for ex-offenders, the presence of a criminal record often prevents convicted offenders from accessing this basic need. As a result of significant case law and late-twentieth century attitudes toward landlord liability, the rental housing market has been inundated with risk management tools and policies. During the housing application process, prospective tenants have become accustomed to providing Social Security numbers, income verification, and landlord references to verify that their tenancy will not be likely to cause excessive risk for the landlord.

Since the 1970s, landlord liability case law has expanded to include the liability of government-funded public housing authorities in reasonably protecting tenants from violence perpetrated by other tenants. As a consequence of civil litigation and court precedent, the tenant screening process has evolved from a largely personal matter to a multimillion-dollar industry, including consumer reporting and criminal background services (Thacher, 2008). Many web-based services market fee-based comprehensive tenant screening reports to landlords and property managers, offering to run credit reports, contact former landlords, and conduct a national criminal background check for prospective tenants (Dunn & Grabchuk, 2010). Applicants are typically scored based on an algorithm that computes prospective risk based on verifiable income, outstanding debt, and other non-financial factors, such as former landlord references and criminal history (Dunn & Grabchuk, 2010). Despite reports that many

independent landlords do not conduct extensive tenant screening (Gunter, 2014), the growth of consumer screening services demonstrates a veritable demand for risk management in housing.

For convicted offenders, the rise in tenant screening for rental housing represents a growing barrier to obtaining housing upon release from incarceration. Offenders convicted of violent crimes may be deemed to be too high of a safety risk for prospective tenancy. Similarly, offenders convicted of non-violent crimes, such as property or drug offenses, may also be denied housing as a result of local ordinances requiring landlords to ensure that their rental properties are crime-free (Werth, 2013).

One of the most prominent examples of criminal background screening in rental housing is the public housing application process. While public housing accounts for a very small percentage of all rental housing in the United States (Thacher, 2008), the majority of convicted offenders are socioeconomically disadvantaged and are often unable to afford market rate rents upon release from incarceration. As a result of poor economic opportunities, sometimes combined with untreated mental illness and addiction, government-funded affordable housing may often be the only independent living option for many ex-offenders.

Contemporary legislation has significantly restricted public housing opportunities available to convicted offenders and their households. Federal law grants government-funded public housing authorities the ability to screen and deny prospective tenants for potential engagement in criminal activity (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1996). Many of these policies translate into aggressive monitoring during tenancy, such as the implementation of "One Strike" eviction policies, which permit public housing authorities to pursue eviction of tenants who commit crimes during their tenancy (U.S. Department of Housing

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and Urban Development, 1996; McCarty et al., 2013). The courts have also extended this policy to apply to the actions of guests or other household members (Mock, 1998).

While the federal government regulates the mandatory policies for tenant screening in public housing, individual public housing authorities are permitted to enact additional restrictions. At the city, county, and state levels, criminal background check requirements for prospective tenants are often stricter than the federal minimum (Curtis, Garlington, & Schottenfeld, 2013). This provision allows local governments to augment government housing admission policies in accordance with public sentiment.

Similar to public housing authorities, agencies that accept government funds to operate affordable or supportive housing are required to adopt the federal requirements when screening applicants. While similar to public housing in rent affordability and income restrictions, supportive housing programs offer additional services targeted to specific demographic groups. Many of these groups, including low-income, disabled, and at-risk homeless adults, often overlap with the demographics of a majority of ex-offenders (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013).

In addition to the direct impact of a criminal record on available housing, status as a convicted offender also indirectly impacts eligibility for housing. The effects of incarceration may be evident even without a criminal background check. From costs associated with arrest to the amount of time spent in an institution, the life course disruption caused by incarceration affects both residential history and income.

As a part of the screening process, rental housing applicants are routinely asked to provide a history of previous residences for the purpose of obtaining references from past landlords (Thacher, 2008). A mandatory period of positive rental history, such as verifiable residency for the twelve months immediately prior to application, may affect ex-offenders who

apply for housing shortly after being released from incarceration. Though not always an indicator of incarceration, gaps in residential history that are not easily explained may indicate that the applicant has been incarcerated or institutionalized, even without a formal criminal background check. Moreover, former landlords may divulge suspicion of criminal activity during the reference check process.

For both subsidized and market rate rentals, income verification is integral to the application process. Regardless of criminal history or references from past landlords, proof of income allows landlords to objectively determine whether or not an applicant possesses the legitimate financial means to make timely rent payments. Applicants for market rate housing must typically provide proof of income that exceeds 2.5 times the monthly rent, while subsidized housing applicants must prove that their income does not exceed the appropriate thresholds. Involvement in the criminal justice system reduces opportunities for employment and eligibility for public benefits (Pager, 2007; McCarty et al., 2013), often eliminating the only legitimate sources of income for newly released ex-offenders.

Despite employment history prior to incarceration, less than half of ex-offenders are employed eight months after their release (Visher, Debus, & Yahner, 2008). Though some offenders are able to reconnect with previous employers or find jobs through personal connections, most rely on support from family members immediately upon release (Visher et al., 2008). For ex-offenders with little connection to family or friends, finding financial support to obtain housing after incarceration can be extremely challenging.

Challenges to meeting housing eligibility criteria are especially enhanced for ex-offenders who struggle with the effects of homelessness, disability, and structural discrimination. Members of these marginalized groups may encounter discrimination when seeking

employment, applying for financial services, and seeking housing (Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Boehm, Thistle, & Schlottmann, 2006; Charles, 2003). Individuals who have experienced or who are currently experiencing homelessness may have difficulty explaining periods of unemployment or rental history gaps to potential employers or landlords. Similarly, the stigma associated with disabilities may reduce the numbers of available opportunities for individuals with disabilities or other special needs. Members of minority racial and ethnic groups have frequently experienced disparity in all areas of social life, including disparate wages, housing discrimination, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system (Alexander, 2010; Fryer, Pager, & Spenkuch, 2013; Turner et al., 2013). When ex-offenders are also members of these marginalized groups, the disproportionate effects of discrimination and social stigma are exponentially increased.

Exploring the Need to Evaluate Ex-Offender Housing Success

As a consequence of exclusionary housing policies and related reentry challenges, convicted offenders are often barred from life-changing reintegration opportunities. Although the benefits of housing stability have been demonstrated (Clifasefi et al., 2012), barriers to housing continue to be a primary issue in offender reentry. The need for housing is most exaggerated for ex-offenders who lack connections to family and other community resources, many of whom struggle with mental illness, addiction, or financial instability. Because this group of offenders is unable to receive financial or social support from relatives, they must often rely on government or community programs to meet their basic housing needs upon reentry. Coupled with the need for other basic services, housing remains an integral component in successful reintegration.

Despite the demand for housing opportunities that are suitable for individuals with special needs, the current inventory of supportive and affordable housing is severely limited. In

urban areas, waiting periods for affordable public housing and housing choice vouchers may be many years, and many housing authorities have closed housing waitlists indefinitely (Dvorak, 2013). Ex-offenders who have been barred from public housing assistance or other federally-funded housing programs must compete with other renters for below market rate housing opportunities. In a market where needy households outnumber affordable housing units at a ratio of 3:1 (Arnold et al., 2014), housing providers may be less likely to rent to an ex-offender in favor of renting to another applicant without a criminal history.

Although intense public fear of ex-offenders in rental housing exists, limited research on ex-offender housing outcomes has demonstrated the effectiveness of housing at reducing recidivism and improving long-term reentry success (Bruce et al., 2014; Clifasefi et al., 2012). Generally, ex-offenders who are able to access affordable and appropriate housing are more likely to become self-sufficient, access resources, and desist from criminal behavior (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013; Roman & Travis, 2004). Furthermore, preliminary research on housing screening suggests that the use of criminal history as a significant predictor of success in supportive housing is inefficient (Malone, 2009). When compared with other demographic factors, such as age at the time of release, supportive housing tenants with criminal histories were equally likely to be successful in housing as tenants without criminal histories (Malone, 2009). These findings appear to contradict the widespread belief that ex-offenders will continue to perpetrate crimes within the community if allowed to access rental housing.

While emerging research suggests limited correlations between criminal history and rental housing success, few studies have empirically examined this relationship. The lack of empirical data on this relationship may contribute to public beliefs that ex-offenders, as a group, are high-risk or dangerous tenants. Without empirical examination of the correlation between

past criminal history and future tenancy behaviors, public policy and legislation will likely continue to limit access to housing for convicted ex-offenders. By excluding ex-offenders from rental housing opportunities, both the potential for positive community reintegration and further empirical research may be severely restricted.

In this study, secondary data from supportive housing agency records are used to evaluate the differences in housing outcomes between ex-offenders and non-offenders. Chapter Two provides a theoretical overview of reentry in the United States, including how existing theories and attitudes affect ex-offender access to housing after incarceration. Possible reasons for the overall lack of empirical data on this topic are also discussed. Chapter Three provides a detailed discussion of the methodology used to collect and analyze the data. Results of the statistical analyses are reported in Chapter Four. Finally, key findings and policy implications are reported in Chapter Five.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Two chronicles the development of contemporary attitudes and policies toward ex-offender community reentry over the past decade. Theories addressing reentry, recidivism, and desistance are discussed in relation to the current state of housing opportunities available for released ex-offenders.

The Changing Face of Reentry in the United States

Travis and Visher (2005) define reentry as "the inevitable consequence of incarceration" (p. 3). Despite dramatic shifts in the role of incarceration and punishment in the United States criminal justice system, a majority of incarcerated offenders will inevitably return to the community (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013; Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005). As a result, reentry into the community becomes the final stage of sentencing for nearly 95 percent of prisoners (Hughes & Wilson, 2004). While this phenomenon has existed for the past decade, public interest in reentry has wavered with the changing landscapes of criminal justice policy.

Early Twentieth Century Reentry

For much of the early twentieth century, criminal justice policy in the United States centered around efforts to rehabilitate and reform offenders (Garland, 2001; Travis, 2005). Sociological theories of crime had largely replaced positivist criminology, and crime was interpreted as an effect of poor societal organization, economic strain, and weak social capital (Cullen & Agnew, 2010).

Early macro-level theories began to suggest that high crime rates were a consequence of disorganized communities and social inequalities (Cullen & Agnew, 2010). Merton's (1938)

anomie theory explained high crime rates as a function of disjuncture between societal goals, such as economic success and achievement, and the social means available to attain them. Writing after the Great Depression, where millions of Americans experienced incredible economic hardship, Merton (1938) argued that the American ideal of self-fulfillment was often unreachable through ordinary means. Whereas earlier theories had presumed that criminal behavior depended solely on the individual, whether as a function of biological deficiencies or personal choice, Merton's (1938) theory suggested that the state of normlessness caused by social inequality allowed crime to thrive.

Shaw and McKay's (1942) social disorganization theory continued to refine anomie theory on a smaller scale. Particularly, Shaw and McKay (1942) observed the clustering of crime in Chicago, and found that specific urban conditions, including poverty, heterogeneity, and instability led to a breakdown of traditional social institutions that acted as buffers to criminal behavior. Institutions such as churches, charities, and community groups would inevitably suffer in urban core areas, where ethnic, religious, and language fragmentation was common. Without the influence of these institutions and the ability of community members to collectively organize against deviant behavior, crime would be more likely to prevail.

This shift in criminological thought led to changes in how the United States criminal justice system functioned. Rather than being biologically pre-determined criminals, many offenders were now seen as by-products of dysfunctional communities and social environments (Akers & Sellers, 2012; Cullen & Agnew, 2010). As such, the methods in which offenders were adjudicated and sentenced reflected this change. Rehabilitation and reform were the primary focuses of sentencing for criminal offenders, and a great deal of interest was placed on reentry (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005).

Because offenders were no longer considered to be biologically pre-determined to commit crimes, more efforts were made to restructure and reform convicted offenders in the early twentieth century. While incarceration remained a common punishment for many offenses, indeterminate sentencing and the possibility of early release served to incite positive change for offenders while in custody (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005). More than in any previous time period, incarcerated offenders were invited to participate in the reentry process by demonstrating good behavior and remaining crime-free upon release.

As a reward for good behavior, many incarcerated offenders were given the opportunity for early release by parole boards (Petersilia, 2003). In 1940, approximately 44 percent of all convicted offenders in the United States were released on parole (Petersilia, 2003). By 1950, a majority of all federal and state prisoners released from custody were paroled (Leonard, 1952). The percentage of offenders released on parole would peak during the 1970s, with more than 70 percent of all prisoners released on parole in 1977 (Petersilia, 2003).

Because parole was intended to reward reformed offenders who had demonstrated good behavior while serving parts of their sentences, recidivism studies for parolees were some of the earliest methodological evaluations of reentry success. While parole eligibility and duration varied by jurisdiction, parolees were generally supervised for a period of time following release and were required to desist from criminal behavior while in the community (Travis, 2005). Ex-offenders who completed their parole without being readmitted to an institution were considered to have successfully reentered society.

Early evaluations of parole success compared small groups of parolees who had either "succeeded" by remaining in the community, or "failed" by returning to custody. Almost immediately, differences were observed between ex-offenders who had violated their parole and

those who did not. Parole violators tended to be younger and less attached than non-violators (Witmer, 1927; Metzner & Weil, 1963; Zuckerman, Barron, & Whittier, 1953). At the same time, differences were observed in offense types and specializations: property offenders violated parole more frequently than other types of offenders, although this observation may have been predicated by parole eligibility requirements (Witmer, 1927). History of offending was also found to be a significant predictor of reentry outcomes; parolees with prior convictions tended to violate parole more often than first-time offenders (Witmer, 1927; Metzner & Weil, 1963).

External social forces, such as peer associations and exposure to corrective teachings, were also recognized as important contributors to successful reentry, specifically among juvenile offenders. Exemplifying tenets of Sutherland's (1947) differential association theory, Arnold (1965) observed that juvenile recidivists in Cook County, Illinois were more likely to associate with delinquent peer groups than non-recidivists. Support for the use of corrective teaching and parole was also found among juvenile offenders in Texas, although results were independent of the length of incarceration (Romig, 1976).

Overall, studies of reentry success, conceptualized as the successful completion of parole, yielded mixed results. Recidivism among parolees during the first half of the twentieth century was observed in ranges from 30 to over 50 percent of study groups, although certain factors were identified as predictors of recidivism (Arnold, 1965; Gottfredson, Mitchell-Herzfeld, & Flanagan, 1982; Metzner &Weil, 1963; Zuckerman, Barron, & Whittier, 1953). Despite statistics that suggested approximately half of parolees would reoffend, scholars during this period were hesitant to judge the parole system as a failure of justice administration (Van Vechten, 1937).

Reentry Changes in the Late Twentieth Century

By the 1970s, a series of social and political changes in the United States prompted reform in criminal justice and crime control policies.[1] Rising crime rates and socioeconomic uncertainty contributed to public fear of crime and harsher legislation against criminal offenders (Garland, 2001). Concurrent economic uncertainty and crises also necessitated the restructuring of financial resources used in criminal justice institutions, which would come to experience exponential growth during this time as a result of changing laws and attitudes toward crime (Garland, 2001). Fueled by public discontent with the ineffectiveness of crime control, legislation shifted away from existing scholarly opinion on crime, and pragmatic perspectives began to replace empirical research in policymaking (Garland, 2001). Where the United States criminal justice system of the early twentieth century strived to incite reform and rehabilitation, the criminal justice system of the late twentieth century renewed the sentiment of punishing offenders and encouraging the demarcation between convicted offenders and the law-abiding public.

Few legislative reforms influenced the course of criminal justice policy greater than the "War on Drugs," ushered in during the 1970s as a political response to the increasing public fear of crime and uncertainty in the contemporary world. Laws such as the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 and the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 sharply increased the penalties for drug offenses in the United States. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 reintroduced mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses at the national level, resulting in the growth of the United States prison industry to accommodate the influx of many small-time drug offenders (Alexander, 2010). The use of imprisonment, rather than treatment or diversion,

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[1] See Garland (2001) for a complete account of the sociopolitical events in the United States and Great Britain affecting criminal justice policy during the late twentieth century.

as the primary punishment for drug offenders signified a departure from reentry-centered policies to policies focused primarily on extending the periods of time that criminal offenders are incapacitated and removed from society.

While anti-drug legislation comprised a great deal of the increase in imprisonment during the late twentieth century, sentencing reform for other offenses also contributed to the return of long-term imprisonment as a punishment. Specifically, many states began to review the use of parole or probation in light of heightening public disillusionment with the criminal justice system (Blumstein & Beck, 2005). The use of parole declined after the late-1970s, and many states abolished parole entirely in favor of uniform sentencing (Petersilia, 2003). Once interpreted as a vehicle for identifying offenders who had responded positively to incarceration and reducing prison populations, parole was reimagined as an ineffective sanction that both failed to reform offenders and allowed dangerous offenders to repeat their crimes when released (Petersilia, 2003; Travis, 2005).

Determinate sentencing, in lieu of an indeterminate and parole-based system, placed further limitations on the reentry component of criminal sentencing. Raphael and Stoll (2013) attribute much of the growth in the prison industry to increasingly punitive sentencing guidelines and mandatory prison terms for certain offenders. Though some of the increase in crime and incarceration rates during the 1970s and 1980s may be a product of economic hardship and social unrest, the changes in sentencing parameters and attitudes resulted in an overall increase in incarceration length for all newly-convicted offenders (Raphael & Stoll, 2013).

The sharp reduction in the scope of parole and supervised release removed much of the focus on ex-offender reentry from the perspectives of both lawmakers and ex-offenders themselves. From the political perspective, the large-scale growth of the United States prison

industry, ushered in by the era of mass incarceration, created lucrative opportunities to capitalize on the nearly 2 million adults in prison by the year 2000 (Ziedenberg & Schiraldi, 2000). Private industries and corporations saw a wealth of economic success by utilizing prison labor and revitalizing local economies by building correctional facilities and creating jobs (Shelden & Brown, 2000). Unsurprisingly, the business of corrections offered few incentives to rehabilitate or plan for successful reentry because much of the economic success of the prison industry depended on recidivism.

The late twentieth century also offered few opportunities for convicted offenders to engage in reentry planning. Reentry programming and resources faced additional changes as a result of nationwide economic instability, along with public and, to an extent, scholarly disdain for the existing state of offender programs (Garland, 2001). More than in previous decades, the success and cost-effectiveness of programs became increasingly important to justify continued spending on offenders. However, emerging research began to suggest that offender programming was wholly ineffective at reducing recidivism and lowering the costs of crime (Martinson, 1974). With increased expenses related to the costs of imprisonment and a strained national economy, ancillary programs designed to aid both incarcerated and released offenders suffered from fiscal downsizing or elimination altogether (Garland, 2001). Ex-offenders now faced a burgeoning problem from two fronts: a society favoring harsh penalties and lengthy incarceration periods, and fewer resources to prepare for reentry upon release.

Early Twenty-First Century Reentry

The emphasis on punishment and retribution that characterized the United States criminal justice system into the 2000s resulted in a prison population that had grown over 500 percent in the past forty years (The Sentencing Project, 2013), and a social, economic, and political

atmosphere that was underequipped to deal with the needs of a population boasting a 1:4 ratio of adults with a criminal record (National Employment Law Project, 2011). While many state correctional agencies have recognized the need for reentry preparation and aftercare, ex-offenders are largely left to find their own resources to assist with reentry needs (Rukus & Lane, 2013).

Furthermore, ex-offenders released into twenty-first century communities frequently encounter a series of relatively new barriers to successful reentry, due in part to changing economic and social landscapes (Bushway et al., 2007). As a consequence of technological advances, court precedent, and public fear, ex-offenders are met with staunch opposition to participation in basic institutions, such as rental housing, employment, and social services (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013; Travis, 2005).

In spite of these challenges, criminological research has continued to recognize and identify social factors that mitigate individuals' decisions to engage in criminal activity and ultimately lead to desistance from crime. Hirschi's (1969) social control theory identified specific components of conforming behavior, such as attachment to pro-social peers and commitment to pro-social ideals, that are correlated with abstinence from crime. Sampson and Laub's (1990) social bond theory extended social control to include protective factors in early childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. These factors, such as marriage, employment, and familial responsibilities have been correlated with desistance for both men and women in varying degrees (Blockland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005; Horney, Osgood, & Marshall, 1995; Maume, Ousey, & Beaver, 2005; Wright & Cullen, 2004).

In a similar direction, developmental and life course models of crime and delinquency, such as those discussed by Moffitt (1993) and Patterson and Yoerger (1993), suggest that a

majority of offenders engage in crime for short periods of time, after which biological and social maturity prompt desistance from deviant behavior. Aging or dropping out of crime may be related to a variety of social capital factors that previous researchers have identified (Hirschi, 1969; Laub & Sampson, 1993). However, the prevailing perception of criminal behavior continues to be shaped by the discouraging rates of incarceration and recidivism in the United States.

While empirical research has recognized the importance of social capital and connections to pro-social institutions, the reentry reality for most ex-offenders in the United States is one of opposition and challenge. Funding limitations, public apprehension, and socioeconomic disadvantage all affect the availability of resources available at reentry to ex-offenders (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013). However, with the accumulation of empirical knowledge and experience over the past decades, the early twenty-first century offers a unique opportunity to reevaluate reentry services and to create meaningful policies that mutually benefit ex-offenders and the public.

Access to Housing at Reentry

Criminal justice researchers agree that no single model of reentry programming is appropriate for all types of offenders (Gunnison & Helfgott, 2013). Programming specific to women, offenders with disabilities, and youthful offenders has been found to be more effective in reducing recidivism and improving long-term community reintegration (Grommon & Rydberg, 2012; Rotter & Carr, 2013). Despite the need for specific services and programs tailored to individuals, surveys of ex-offenders have consistently identified housing, employment or financial stability, and basic healthcare as primary needs upon community reentry (Grommon, 2013; Legal Action Center, 2004; Morani et al., 2001; Wright et al., 2014).

Among the basic needs of recently released ex-offenders, stable housing remains a necessity that is both non-negotiable and frequently out of reach for many adults who have been involved in the criminal justice system. As many as 15 percent of jailed offenders report experiencing homelessness prior to incarceration, and many are likely to return to homelessness after release (Greenberg & Rosenbeck, 2008). In a longitudinal study of reentry pathways for recently released prisoners, Urban Institute researchers found that approximately one-third of participants reported returning to temporary living arrangements (Roman & Travis, 2006). However, like many other reentry needs, stable housing is often relegated to a secondary or tertiary goal after other benchmarks are accomplished (Waegemakers-Schiff & Schiff, 2014). For example, ex-offenders struggling with sobriety may be told that they must be sober for a period of time before receiving assistance with basic housing needs. Often, this is the case for many ex-offenders facing a variety of challenges during reentry.

Despite evidence suggesting that homelessness and housing instability may further complicate the reentry process, ex-offenders frequently face a variety of housing barriers, many of which are not unique to individuals with criminal histories (Kushel et al., 2005; Metreaux & Culhane, 2004; Roman & Travis, 2004; Shier, Jones, & Graham, 2012; Wright et al., 2014). In addition to socioeconomic barriers to housing, the effects of incarceration and criminal history have been correlated with increased housing instability and limitations to housing opportunities (Geller & Curtis, 2011; Roman & Travis, 2004). Four main barriers to housing are discussed in this section: financial instability, lack of affordable housing, criminal justice restrictions, and exclusionary laws against ex-offenders in rental housing.

Financial Instability

Financial instability and socioeconomic distress have become synonymous with a majority of convicted offenders both before and after incarceration. As a group, ex-offenders lack educational and employment opportunities prior to beginning a criminal career, and these challenges are compounded by the experiences of incarceration and criminal justice involvement (Alexander, 2010; Harlow, 2003; Travis, 2005). Many ex-offenders who suffer from chemical dependency, mental illness, or other disabilities may also be unable to seek employment or other income-generating opportunities. As such, ex-offenders who are unable to work may be limited to fixed income sources, such as Social Security or state disability benefits, support from family members, or marginal employment opportunities. Ex-offenders consistently encounter challenges to obtaining employment, public benefits, and higher education, and available resources often lack the capacity to provide sufficient assistance (Bushway et al., 2007).

Employment barriers have been recognized as significant problems for ex-offenders released from prisons, who make up an estimated three percent of the working age adult population (Schmitt & Warner, 2010). While certain groups of individuals are protected from discriminatory practices at the federal and state levels, convicted offenders are not considered a protected class under Title VII the Civil Rights Act of 1968. Because criminal convictions are one of the most uncontestable areas of discretion in hiring practices, applicants with criminal records face significant barriers to appealing a negative hiring outcome, and are significantly more likely to be denied a job opportunity when compared to equally qualified candidates without a criminal record (Pager, 2007; Varghese et al., 2010).

While some difficulty in obtaining employment may be attributed to the lack of experience or education, employer surveys suggest that the presence of a criminal history is a

determining factor when considering otherwise qualified applicants for a position. Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll's (2007) analysis of over 600 employers in the Los Angeles area confirmed that employers were far less likely to consider applicants for a non-college job with a criminal history than applicants on welfare, GED recipients, or applicants with inconsistent employment history. Despite the understanding that involvement in the criminal justice system is often correlated with these other factors, criminal history commanded an inherent stereotype of job applicants in this category.

In addition to restrictions due to criminal history, work-able ex-offenders encounter challenges to financial self-sufficiency due to an overall lack of suitable employment opportunities. Coupled with the departure of large-scale manufacturing industry jobs from the United States, the 2008 economic downturn contributed to a nationwide shortage of labor-intensive employment opportunities. While economic opportunities have improved in recent years, the National Employment Law Project (2014) estimates that a majority of new jobs becoming available in the early twenty-first century are low-paying and entry-level, offering few opportunities for career growth and wage development.

In a study of ex-offender employment opportunities in Virginia, Lichtenberger (2006) found that the industries most likely to hire ex-offenders were manufacturing, construction, and food services. Highly specialized industries, such as banking, insurance, and public administration, were among the smallest employers of ex-offenders (Lichtenberger, 2006). A study of ex-offender employment in Indiana yielded similar results, with food services, construction, manufacturing, and administrative support positions comprising over 70 percent of the job opportunities available to ex-offenders (Nally et al., 2013; Nally et al., 2014).

Researchers have cautioned that the perceived variety of job opportunities for ex-offenders masks the true challenges of maintaining gainful employment and earning sufficient income. A majority of jobs in the manufacturing and food service industries are low-paying and labor intensive, often with little opportunities for advancement (Lichtenberger, 2006; Nally et al., 2014). Moreover, the availability of work in the construction industry following the 2008 housing crisis was discussed by Nally et al. (2014) as another hindrance to successful and long-term employment.

The shortage of unskilled labor and the subsequent influx of technology-heavy industries in the United States is not ideal for the overwhelming majority of ex-offenders, who face economic and educational disadvantages prior to and after incarceration. Ex-offenders who have been incarcerated for long periods of time are at an enhanced disadvantage, as many are unlikely to possess the technological knowledge to obtain employment in these industries or to afford the costs of pursuing additional education and training immediately upon release (Harlow, 2003).

Earning power is another aspect of the challenges to financial stability for employed ex-offenders. While ex-offenders who are able to find employment may experience legitimate financial success, salaries for positions available to a majority of ex-offenders are consistently lower than those of other positions (Bushway et al., 2007). The Urban Institute's survey of recently released prisoners in three midwestern States revealed that the median hourly wage for employed offenders was $9.00 (Visher et al., 2008). Combined with all other sources of income, such as support from family members, the median monthly income for respondents was $700.00 (Visher et al., 2008).

In addition to the barriers faced by ex-offenders when applying for jobs or public benefits, income received from these sources may be severely reduced by court-imposed fines. Immediately following a criminal conviction, ex-offenders may receive notice of Legal Financial Obligations owed for court costs, fines, and restitution payments (Bannon, Nagrecha, & Diller, 2010). These fines may total hundreds or thousands of dollars, and high interest rates substantially increase the amount of debt owed. Indigent defendants in many states may also be billed for the use of a public defender, contributing to the amounts of Legal Financial Obligations owed for ex-offenders who have exercised the right to counsel (Wright & Logan, 2006).

Inability to pay these Legal Financial Obligations is often overlooked by the imposing courts (Bannon et al., 2010). Ex-offenders who are unable to pay their balances in full may experience garnishments from wages and other taxable sources of income. These garnishments may be appended to existing debts owed for child support and alimony, which typically continue to accrue during incarceration (Evans, 2014; Pearson, 2004). Despite finding employment, ex-offenders with substantial Legal Financial Obligations may continue to remain in socioeconomic hardship due to the rigidity of financial impositions placed on individuals who have been incarcerated.

Lack of Affordable Housing

The financial situation faced by many ex-offenders has a direct effect on available housing opportunities. A majority of incarcerated offenders reported earning less than $12,000 in the year prior to incarceration (Mumola, 2000), and the average ex-offender can expect numerous struggles to regain or establish income following their release from incarceration. This

income shortfall creates an automatic rent ceiling for ex-offenders seeking to pay for their own housing arrangements.

Since the 1990s, the numbers of renter households in the United States have continued to rise, with an estimated 43 million households renting in 2013 (Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, 2013). Using census and housing vacancy data, the Harvard University's Joint Center for Housing Studies (2013) estimates that approximately half of these households have annual incomes below $30,000, and that nearly 22 percent earn less than $15,000 per year. Single adults below the age of 35 consistently make up the largest percentage of renters, although the housing market recession during the late 2000s has contributed to the diversification of the United States renter population (Joint Center for Housing Studies at Harvard University, 2013).

Ex-offenders enter the already strained rental market at a financial disadvantage that limits their housing opportunities even before potential landlords can consider their criminal history. Because ex-offenders typically struggle to establish steady and sustainable income during their first year after release from incarceration (Mumola, 2000), those who are able to look for rental housing must limit their search to units being rented at low rates. At the same time, indigent ex-offenders compete with millions of other rental applicants who do not face the same challenges to applying for housing.

As a result of the vast nationwide differences in community composition, it is difficult to define a uniform standard of "affordable" housing. Each year, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determines the Fair Market Rent (FMR) standards for rental units in the United States, which are used to issue housing payment assistance vouchers to needy households and to estimate rent costs nationwide. In 2014, the FMR for a 1-bedroom unit was

determined to be $788.00, while the 2-bedroom FMR was determined to be $984.00 (Arnold et al., 2014). These amounts reflect the 40th-percentile of nationwide rent amounts, slightly lower than the median amount. However, rental units in high-density urban areas can greatly surpass the national median rental rates, with urban renters commonly spending upward of 40 percent of their incomes on rent and utilities (Dewan, 2014; Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2011).

A study conducted by Rent.com found that the average rents for 1-bedroom units in 18 major U.S. cities exceeded $1,600 per month (Willson, 2014). While some of the inflation in rental averages can be attributed to the presence of large corporations and technology firms in some cities, urban real estate is affected by stuff. Furthermore, decreasing vacancy rates in rental housing drive competition among renters and allow landlords in many cities to raise rent prices in accordance with market demand.

For renters to be able to afford these rates without exceeding 30 percent of their income, annual salaries would need to be approximately $57,000, equivalent to around $27.70 per hour for full-time employment. Compared to the projected incomes of recently released prisoners, unsubsidized rents in these cities would vastly exceed most ex-offenders' monthly take-home earnings or public benefits. Faced with a decision between spending nearly all net income on rent or finding alternate living arrangements, many ex-offenders must undoubtedly choose substandard or unstable living arrangements in order to meet other basic needs.

In addition to meeting personal needs, some ex-offenders must consider the needs of others upon release from incarceration. Many ex-offenders may return to or establish familial obligations post-release, and may seek a larger rental unit to accommodate these needs. Estimates of market rents for 2-bedroom units in the United States are equally dismal for low-

income renters. In 2014, a single wage-earner, working full-time at the federal minimum wage, would need to work more than 60 hours per week in all 50 states to reasonably afford the FMR of $984.00 for a 2-bedroom unit (Arnold et al., 2014). To afford a 2-bedroom unit without spending more than 30 percent of gross income on rent, households must typically include two or more full-time wage-earners or other comparable sources of income.

Ex-offenders on fixed incomes, such as Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance, would be equally burdened by the costs of 2-bedroom market rate rents. In 2013, the maximum monthly payment for Supplemental Security Income recipients was $710.00 per month, and the average monthly payment for disabled wage earners was $1,146.00 (Social Security Administration, 2014). Without subsidized or shared housing arrangements, single individuals with disability benefits can be even less likely than full-time minimum wage-earners to afford reasonable rental units.

Although many cities have recognized the need for affordable housing, low-income housing estimates suggest that the number of low-income households far exceeds the number of available housing units. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that the ratio of affordable units to needy households in the United States is approximately 1:3, with applications for many housing assistance voucher programs being suspended due to increasingly long waitlists (Arnold et al., 2014). These ratios may be even more disproportionate in areas with large populations of low-income households.

While some of the affordable housing drought may be attributed to the overall housing crisis of 2008, some market experts hypothesize that policies designed to help low-income households may be partly responsible for the decrease in low-income rental units. Policies such as rent control and increased minimum wage may allow renters to keep more of their income, but

sharply increase competition for available units (Fortune, 2014). As a result, landlords and developers have few incentives to reduce rent prices when demand for housing increases.

The combined effects of minimal income and limited rental options paint a discouraging picture for ex-offenders seeking to enter the rental housing market upon release from incarceration. Saddled with challenges to financial stability, ex-offenders seeking independent living arrangements are often forced to choose between meeting other basic needs and renting a suitable unit. Many more are simply unable to earn enough income to live in unsubsidized housing at all. Despite these two main challenges, restrictions placed on ex-offenders by the criminal justice system add another layer to the overall challenge of finding housing.

Criminal Justice Restrictions on Housing

Both financial instability and the lack of affordable housing are two consistent problems that affect low-income individuals and ex-offenders alike. However, ex-offenders commonly encounter a unique series of additional restrictions and requirements imposed by the legal system upon release from incarceration. Probation restrictions imposed on released ex-offenders may require them to establish a residence, find employment, attend treatment or counseling, and meet with a probation officer at regularly scheduled times. Depending on the nature of an ex-offender's convictions, probation conditions may also restrict the types and locations of housing where ex-offenders may live (Beckett & Herbert, 2010; Zgoba, Levenson, & McKee, 2009).

Sex offender housing restrictions are perhaps the most salient of all types of criminal justice system limitations on ex-offenders' post-release lives. Since the mid-1990s, public fear of sexual predators has been translated into legislation that severely restricts sex offenders' privacy, autonomy, and liberty (Zgoba, 2004). Upon release from incarceration, convicted sex offenders must register with their local sheriff's offices, obtain permission before moving or leaving the

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area, and periodically update their addresses for entry into a national registry of known sex offenders (Lieb, 2000).

Housing restrictions may be the most restrictive of all post-release conditions for convicted sex offenders. More than half of all States have implemented some forms of residency restrictions on convicted sex offenders, which include buffer zones around schools, parks, and other areas where children may congregate (National Institute of Justice, 2008). Municipal codes may expand restricted areas to include zones surrounding bus stops, day care centers, and recreational centers (National Institute of Justice, 2008; Page et al., 2012).

Criminal justice researchers have found extensive collateral effects of proposed and existing sex offender residency restrictions that may inhibit successful reintegration (Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009). Zgoba and colleagues (2009) analyzed the potential effects of proposed sex offender exclusion zones in a New Jersey community and found that nearly 90 percent of the 211 registered sex offenders lived within 2,500 feet of a proposed landmark, including schools, day care centers, and parks. Using GIS mapping techniques, Zgoba et al. (2009) also found that 80 percent of all citizens lived within proposed exclusionary zones, suggesting that available housing options outside the exclusionary zones were inconvenient, unaffordable, or simply unavailable. As a consequence of the proposed housing restrictions, the authors estimated that 88 percent of registered sex offenders would be required to move to another part of the community, despite ties to jobs, treatment, or availability of housing.

Among other factors that impact successful reintegration, housing instability and mobility have been correlated with increased reentry challenges for both sexual and non-sexual offenders (Makarios, Steiner, & Travis, 2010; Meredith, Speir, & Johnson, 2007). The presence of sex offender residency restrictions has been associated with increased housing mobility among

paroled sex offenders, which creates additional strain on both offenders and community corrections officers (Rydberg et al., 2014). While no single reason has been isolated as the primary cause of housing mobility among sex offenders, existing literature on the effects of residential stability suggests that stably-housed ex-offenders are better able to manage their lives upon release from incarceration (Nelson, Dees, & Allen, 1999).

Available housing opportunities outside of exclusionary zones are also generally more limited in both quantity and quality. In an analysis of 47 New York counties, Socia (2011) found that available housing in non-restricted areas is typically less plentiful, less affordable, and less urban than available housing in restricted areas. While non-restricted housing was found to be more affordable than housing in some counties, the least restrictive housing options were consistently located in less affordable areas (Socia, 2011). Sex offenders seeking housing in these areas would commonly encounter barriers to transportation, access to services, and financial stability.

Despite the intense housing restrictions on convicted sex offenders in many cities and counties, the effects of housing restrictions often have few positive effects on convicted sex offenders' lives (Page et al., 2012). In addition to complicating the housing search process, Page et al. (2012) found that less than 25 percent of surveyed sex offenders felt that school and day care buffer zone restrictions discouraged the motivation to recidivate. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated that housing restrictions would have no impact on the decision or ability to reoffend (Page et al., 2012). The perspectives of sex offenders are consistent with existing literature that suggests a majority of sex crimes are committed by family members or acquaintances of victims (Greenfeld, 1997). Because offenders may have access to victims

through other means, such as through social functions, residence restrictions may be ineffective methods to reduce the likelihood of sexual offending.

While housing restrictions on sex offenders may be the most prominent, non-sexual offenders may face exclusionary policies that severely limit their abilities to live and work within certain areas. Collectively referred to as social exclusion, these civil policies frequently affect non-violent and low-level offenders who are often experiencing co-occurring disorders, poverty, and other barriers to successful community reintegration (Beckett & Herbert, 2010).

In an effort to reduce visible crime and disorder, urban areas with high levels of public concern for increasing crime rates may implement restrictions that impede ex-offenders' abilities to frequent certain areas of a city for specified periods of time (Bancroft, 2012). Probation and parole restrictions on ex-offenders released into these areas may require them to refrain from visiting downtown or high-crime areas, areas that have been associated with prostitution and other vice crimes, and public congregation areas (Bancroft, 2012; Beckett & Herbert, 2010). Rearrest is often the penalty for ex-offenders who simply trespass into an excluded area without committing a new crime, creating an additional level of criminal justice control over ex-offenders who have served their sentence for a past offense (Beckett & Herbert, 2010).

Ordinances restricting the movements of convicted drug offenders are some of the most widely critiqued social exclusion laws. Originally intended to reduce drug trafficking and distribution in urban areas, these laws have had a disproportionate effect on minorities, particularly African-American males (England, 2008). Numerous problems associated with social exclusion have been identified, including limiting the availability of social services and housing opportunities for ex-offenders (Bancroft, 2012; Beckett & Herbert, 2010). In most urban areas, a majority of social service centers, food banks, and other public resources are located in

exclusion zones, such as downtown areas (Bancroft, 2012). As a result, ex-offenders who are trespassed from these areas are unable to access necessary services without the risk of rearrest (Bancroft, 2012).

Housing availability is also affected by social exclusion policies, as many ex-offenders who lack financial resources will seek shelter in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs, and affordable housing programs that may be located within exclusion zones (Bancroft, 2012). Beckett and Herbert (2010) also note that ex-offenders frequently experience barriers to living with or visiting family members who live in exclusion zones, and may be forced into homelessness or marginal housing due to their inability to stably reside with a family member.

Perhaps the most defining aspect of banishment reflected in civil laws is the disassociation of these laws with actual criminal punishment (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). This perception, however, could not be further from actuality when the disproportionate effects on indigent populations are considered. For example, the criminalization of homelessness and poverty has contributed to a new set of convicted offenders who face punishment both during incarceration and after release (Ali, 2014; Beckett & Herbert, 2010). Ex-offenders who are unable to afford housing, access social services, or find employment are repeatedly punished long after they have served their sentences.

Exclusionary Laws in Rental Housing

For ex-offenders who are able to secure the financial resources to afford a rental unit in a suitable area, the final, and often most frustrating, challenge is the legal exclusion of convicted offenders from many rental opportunities. Three primary factors will be discussed in this section:

the lack of legal protections for convicted offenders, liability law for landlords, and the ease of public access to criminal background information.

Historically, the United States legal system has done little to protect the rights and interests of convicted offenders. Unlike membership in other protected groups, convicted offenders enjoy few protections under the law, and are able to be discriminated against in public and private institutions. An ex-offender's status as a convicted offender can be used by employers, landlords, creditors, and other interested parties in determining eligibility for services, opportunities, and civil privileges. Although the lack of civil rights for convicted offenders has been disputed and challenged by various groups, many social institutions continue to use criminal history as a legal means of selection (Travis, 2005).

At the same time, liability law in the United States legal system has historically discouraged institutions from catering to the needs of potentially dangerous ex-offenders. As a method of enhancing crime control measures, civil remedies for crime prevention may hold property owners responsible for harboring or condoning illegal activity (Mazerolle & Roehl, 1998). While many individuals and groups may feel inclined to offer services to ex-offenders, the threat of civil liability for any crimes committed by ex-offenders often compels otherwise sympathetic parties to refuse housing, employment, or other services (Evans & Porter, 2015; Visher et al., 2008).

In the United States, courts have determined that both government and private landlords may be civilly liable for reasonably foreseeable criminal acts occurring on their properties (Mandell & Dozis, 2010). Beginning in the 1970s, civil legislation against landlords for failure to protect tenants against criminal acts committed by other tenants or visitors has awarded punitive

damages to crime victims, and has prompted widespread reform in housing screening and security measures.

The assault of a tenant by an unaffiliated third party in *Kline v. 1500 Massachusetts Ave. Apartment Corporation* (1970) was one of the first major court precedents involving the implied responsibility of landlords to protect tenants from criminal victimization. Considering such factors as the history of criminal activity on the property, a U.S. Appellate Court determined that the landlord of was responsible for injuries sustained to a tenant in a common hallway because the landlord had elected to discontinue the use of a doorman, despite ongoing reports of criminal victimization.

The appellate court ruling in *Kline v. 1500 Massachusetts Ave. Apartment Corporation* (1970) created a unique relationship between landlords and tenants that transcended the typical relationships between individuals. Whereas the courts have generally found that civilians have no legal obligations to protect others from crimes, the precedent of this case established that landlords of rental properties may be responsible for taking reasonable measures to protect tenants from foreseeable crimes. Another appellate court upheld a victimized tenant's complaints in *Trentacost v. Brussel* (1980), holding the landlord responsible for injuries sustained to the victim during a robbery in the building's common area. Again, the appellate court considered the landlord's obligation to reasonably foresee the presence of criminal activity in an unsecured common area of the property.

Government-funded housing providers have also been influenced by legislation to protect tenants from reasonably foreseeable criminal victimization. As administrators of public housing and voucher programs, housing authorities are routinely charged with minimizing safety risks due to maintenance issues, routine upkeep, and health hazards under existing Landlord-Tenant

laws (Burrdige & Ormandy, 2007). However, public housing authorities face increasing responsibility for protecting tenants from safety risks caused by other tenants, visitors, and community neighbors. While most civil litigation against public housing authorities is brought forward by private parties, the United States government has initiated complaints against housing authorities for failure to protect residents from crime and harassment. In complaints filed against the Boston Housing Authority and the San Francisco Housing Authority, the United States government has recognized the responsibility of public housing authorities to protect tenants from racial harassment and potential hate crimes. These complaints were based largely upon the housing authority's failure to respond to complaints made by multiple tenants who had reported racially-motivated violence, intimidation, and destruction of property.

The pervasiveness of civil liability for tenant actions has prompted a national response to the growing concern regarding high-risk tenants. As a result of neighborhood dissatisfaction with illegal activity from renters, the Bureau of Justice Administration funded a nationwide training manual intended to educate landlords about the benefits and methods of keeping illegal activity out of their rental properties. The Landlord Training Program manual, adapted from a regional program created by Campbell (1999), cites numerous reasons why landlords should be concerned with the acts of their tenants, including possible civil liability, asset forfeiture, and loss of property during police raids. Anecdotal narratives from landlords and property managers surveyed during the creation of the manual warned of the financial burdens of repairing damaged property and paying court costs to evict a bad tenant, and the overall detrimental effects of bad tenants on the rest of the property and the community. While the sentiments expressed by landlords in the survey are not intended to be representative of a majority of rental property

owners, the inception of the Landlord Training Program suggests that landlords nationwide are faced with increasing challenges when screening tenants and controlling illegal activity.

The final challenge faced by ex-offenders is the ease of access to criminal background information. Because adult criminal records are available to the public, landlords may legally and easily request a criminal background check for prospective tenants. In the twenty-first century, the emergence of the Internet has simplified this process for both professional property managers and individual property owners to obtain criminal background information on prospective tenants. As access to criminal records becomes more readily available, housing opportunities for ex-offenders are likely to decrease (Thacher, 2008).

At the same time, ex-offenders must be vigilant when reviewing copies of criminal background reports from third parties. Bushway et al. (2011) warn that, despite claims of accuracy and thoroughness, many Internet-based companies offer incomplete or unclear information regarding prospective applicants. If errors are found on an applicant's background check through a third-party agency, the burden of proof generally falls on the applicant to provide evidence of the mistake (Thacher, 2008). By the time an ex-offender is able to collect documentation of the error, it is highly likely that the available unit would have been rented to another applicant.

Even when ex-offenders secure the financial resources to afford an approved rental unit, the final obstacle of overcoming the stereotypes of a criminal history is often the most challenging. Exclusionary policies and unconscious biases generally exist because housing providers and other social institutions frequently believe that tenants who are ex-offenders present a greater risk than tenants who do not have a criminal record. However, preliminary

research on this correlation suggests that the relationship between criminal history and problematic tenancy is difficult to establish.

Housing Outcomes and Predictors for Ex-Offenders

Although housing instability presents various risks, significant barriers to housing faced by ex-offenders have been enumerated, ranging from the lack of financial resources to bias against convicted offenders in the housing application process. Absent from many areas of reentry discussion is the evaluation of housing outcomes for ex-offenders in regular residential settings. While some actuarial methods have been evaluated in relation to tenancy outcomes, few empirical studies have evaluated the predictive power of criminal history in determining community-based housing success (Carey, 2004; Gschwind, 2007; Malone, 2009).

The correlation between past and future behavior is largely assumed in the rental housing market. For example, landlords often request rental references for potential tenants, with the assumption that a tenant's behavior at a previous unit will be indicative of his or her future tenancy. Poor rental references or a lack of rental history may compel landlords to deny rental applications because of perceived risk. Furthermore, income standards for rental units, typically 2.5 to 3 times the monthly rent amount, are imposed with the assumption that tenants who have substantial income will be more likely to pay rent on time and in full (Gschwind, 2007).

Because landlords are able to obtain criminal history information on prospective tenants, assumptions based on previous criminal convictions are common in the rental market. However, the lack of empirical data on criminal history as a predictor of tenancy success suggests that these predictions may be unfounded. While some researchers have analyzed group differences between adults with and without criminal histories, much of the data pertains to outcomes related to social services, connections to community, and overall health (Casper & Clark, 2004; Tsai &

Rosenbeck, 2012). Outcomes specifically related to tenancy, such as length of housing stability and performance while in a housing program, are much less common.

To date, one of the only empirical studies to observe the predictive power of a criminal background on tenancy success was conducted by Malone (2009), using tenant data for a supportive housing program. After a two-year period of data collection on 347 adults with and without criminal histories, Malone (2009) concluded that criminal history had no statistical influence on successful completion of the program. However, consistent with contemporary criminological research, age at entry to the program was considered to be a significant predictor of program completion.

The lack of research on this unique intersection between criminal history and tenancy can be described as a result of two primary factors: the fixation on recidivism as the benchmark for reentry success, and the lack of available tenancy data for ex-offenders. These phenomena, and the resulting need for further research on this topic, will be discussed as they related to the overall shortage of research on this issue.

Recidivism as the Benchmark for Reentry Success

Although the objectives of the United States criminal justice system have wavered between rehabilitation and punishment, crime and recidivism rates continue to be the most visible performance standard. Rising crime rates may signal that more crimes are being committed, although these rates may be attributed to other factors (The Sentencing Project, 2000). Similarly, incarceration rates offer another measure of the success or failure of the criminal justice system.

Many scholars have challenged the use of arrest, conviction, and incarceration rates as adequate measures of crime and justice. Tonry (2010) argues that disproportionality in arrest

rates is a result of societal bias against minorities, particularly African-American males. Rather than accurately reflecting the numbers and types of crimes committed, arrest and incarceration statistics instead reflect biased policing, sentencing disparity, and structural discrimination in other social institutions (Tonry, 2010). Misguided interpretation of these statistics often leads to policing and sentencing methods that target minorities and blur the picture of the effectiveness of criminal justice policies and programs (Harcourt, 2007).

Reentry evaluations suffer from similar challenges due to the limitations of recidivism rates. The primary objective of many reentry-based programs, such as treatment or job-placement services, is to prevent recidivism for participants (Arrigo & Takahashi, 2007; Wright et al., 2014). Program evaluations often measure the relative success of these interventions in lower recidivism rates or greater cost savings when compared to groups of ex-offenders who did not participate in the program. While these programs provide many secondary benefits to ex-offenders, such as job readiness and life skills, these outcomes are often difficult to quantify and record. By comparison, recidivism rates and costs are much easier to describe and measure.

This phenomenon reflects larger attitudes toward ex-offenders by the United States criminal justice system and by the public. Often, greater concern is placed on the easily-measured outcomes of rearrest and incarceration costs than on abstract outcomes that affect ex-offenders. For the purposes of funding and public interest, the most successful programs will yield cost savings by lowering the risks of recidivism for participants, thereby reducing the financial burden on local jails and prisons.

Lack of Available Data

The immense focus on reducing recidivism and costs also leads to a lack of available data on how ex-offenders perform as tenants in rental housing. Because most criminal justice

programs evaluate outcomes based on desistance from crime, few may recognize the need to collect additional data from landlords or housing providers. Additional challenges may arise from the percentage of ex-offenders who return to unstable housing arrangements when they reenter the community (Roman & Travis, 2006).

Another reason for the lack of available data is the relative lack of tenancy data for all groups of renters. While large public housing authorities or private property management companies may possess the capability to aggregate large volumes of tenancy data, many rental properties are owned or managed by private owners or small property management companies. Unlike local law enforcement agencies, landlords and property managers are not required to report demographic data on tenants to a national database. The most reported outcomes are delinquent balances, reported to collection and credit reporting agencies, and evictions, reported to local courts (Hartman & Robinson, 2003). Aside from these two outcomes, landlords have few options to report data on non-financial matters.

The lack of aggregate data on tenant housing outcomes results in a subsequent lack of comparison data for any agencies seeking to compare the outcomes of their residents with state or national averages. As such, empirical program evaluations must rely on comparison data from within their programs. Because large housing providers, such as public housing authorities or non-profit agencies, often target low-income or special needs populations, data obtained from evaluations of these programs is unlikely to be generalizable to the larger population of renters.

The final, and perhaps the most troubling, contributor to the lack of available data arises from the harsh barriers faced by ex-offenders in the pursuit of rental housing. Even when legal restrictions do not prevent ex-offenders from applying for a housing opportunity, research has shown that landlords exhibit biases against convicted offenders and may be reluctant to offer

housing (Evans & Porter, 2015). Because ex-offenders are categorically and selectively barred from many types of housing, opportunities for evaluating their performance as tenants are highly limited. Unfortunately, the elimination of housing opportunities for ex-offenders also eliminates the abilities of researchers to empirically analyze the predictive ability of criminal history in relation to tenancy.

Current Research Focus

Significant barriers to housing have been identified for ex-offenders, despite an overall lack of empirical data on predictors of housing success. While much of the apprehension faced by ex-offenders is due to the belief that ex-offenders are unable to successfully reside in rental housing, preliminary evaluations suggest that criminal history is not directly correlated with tenancy outcomes (Malone, 2009). However, research in the area of criminal history as a predictor of housing success or performance during tenancy is largely underdeveloped (Malone, 2009; Tsai & Rosenbeck, 2012).

This research study contributes to the literature by evaluating supportive housing outcomes for formerly homeless and disabled tenants with and without criminal histories. Consistent with the limited research on this topic, this study compares duration and outcome of tenancy with regard to criminal history and a multitude of demographic variables. This study also captures differences in tenancy-specific performance measures, such as lease violation notices, between groups of ex-offenders and non-offenders. By collecting a small sample of original data, this evaluation will provide a basis for future research on the relationship between criminal history and housing success. Chapter Three outlines the data collection and analysis procedures in this study.

Chapter 3

METHODS

Empirical research, public policy, and legislation have demonstrated the prevalence of housing barriers for convicted ex-offenders. Many of these barriers are a product of the perception that ex-offenders pose high risks for landlords and housing providers, although a review of the current literature suggests that the relationship between criminal history and housing outcomes is understudied. Existing reentry literature has stressed the importance of empirically investigating this correlation, but few studies have actually examined criminal history as a predictor of housing success. This research study further investigates the relationship between criminal history and housing success by comparing housing outcomes between ex-offenders and non-offenders in a supportive housing program. This chapter discusses the methodology used to collect the secondary data, the available variables, the research hypotheses, and the statistical methods used in the analyses.

Research Questions

The objective of this research study is to explore the correlation between criminal history and housing success. Many landlords believe that a tenant's previous criminal history will determine whether or not he or she is likely to be a high risk for tenancy-related problems, such as non-payment of rent or lease violations, but this relationship has not been widely investigated. To better understand this phenomenon, a series of research questions will be addressed: (1) Do tenants with criminal histories experience different housing performance outcomes than tenants without criminal histories? (2) Do tenants with certain types of criminal histories experience different housing performance outcomes? (3) Are any other variables unrelated to criminal history correlated with housing performance outcomes?

Research Setting

Secondary data for this research study were collected from a supportive housing agency in the Seattle, Washington metropolitan area. The agency provides multiple supportive and affordable housing opportunities to adults in the downtown Seattle area, and a majority of program participants reside in Washington State at the time of entry to the program. Participants in the selected program were identified to have lacked a permanent residence at the time of entry to the program, although not all were convicted ex-offenders. Demographic data for both the Washington State and Seattle metropolitan areas are provided for all residents, as well as for the incarcerated population and individuals experiencing homelessness.

The United States Census Bureau estimates that the population of Washington state is approximately 6.7 million, with an almost even distribution between males and females (Howden & Meyer, 2011). The median age of residents is approximately 37.3 years, which nearly matches the median age of 37.2 years for all U.S. residents (Howden & Meyer, 2011). The percentage of state residents who identified as a non-White race is approximately 27 percent, which is lower than the U.S. average of 36.3 percent (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). Approximately 13 percent of residents live below the federal poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

At the city level, demographic statistics vary slightly from those of the rest of the state. Non-White races are represented at slightly higher percentages, although nearly 70 percent of Seattle residents identify as White (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Less than half of Seattle residents are homeowners, while the statewide homeownership rate was greater than 60 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Despite a higher median household income, the percentage of individuals below the poverty line is almost identical to the state figures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The need for affordable rental housing opportunities far exceeds the number of available

units in the Seattle area. As of August 2014, estimated wait times for Seattle Housing Authority subsidized units exceeded two years for all available buildings, while many estimated wait times were upward of five years (Seattle Housing Authority, 2014).

While demographic data on all ex-offenders in the state is not readily available, counts of incarcerated offenders provide a partial description of the convicted ex-offender population. At the end of 2014, over 70 percent of offenders in Washington prisons were White, and over 90 percent were male (Washington Department of Corrections, 2015). However, consistent with existing research on the United States incarcerated population, minority racial groups were overrepresented when compared to their distribution in the general population. The percentage of incarcerated African American offenders was over twice the percentage of African American Seattle residents, and over five times the percentage of the African American population percentage statewide (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015; Washington Department of Corrections, 2015). Similar overrepresentation was also observed for Native American and Alaskan Native offenders, who comprised 4.5 percent of incarcerated offenders, but only 0.8 and 1.5 percent of city and state residents, respectively (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015; Washington Department of Corrections, 2015).

Collecting data on unsheltered homeless households is challenging for a number of reasons, although some organizations have focused on surveying homeless individuals on public streets and other places not meant for human habitation. The Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness conducts a One Night Count annually, which is a point-in-time tally of homeless individuals who are not in shelters or transitional housing. In 2010, the One Night Count identified 1,986 unsheltered homeless individuals in the Seattle area, including minor children (Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, 2010). In 2015, the number of unsheltered

homeless individuals observed during the One Night Count increased to 2,813 in Seattle, a 41

percent increase since 2010 (Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness, 2015).

The city of Seattle's survey of unsheltered homeless households in 2009 found that males

were more likely to be homeless than females, and that minorities collectively outnumbered

Whites (City of Seattle, 2009). Approximately 42 percent had been recently incarcerated, and

nearly half of this group of homeless individuals had received mental health treatment in the past

year. Consistent with existing knowledge, homeless individuals who had been recently

incarcerated were less likely to have a job and were more likely to depend on other social

services, such as food banks and drop-in centers.

Due to the small sample size and eligibility requirements for program participants, the

sample in this research study is not expected to be representative of actual population

characteristics for the ex-offender or homeless populations in the area. However, the distribution

of certain characteristics, such as gender and race, may be consistent with the distribution in the

general population of homeless and incarcerated individuals in the Seattle area.

Overview of Data

The data for this research study were collected from tenant records kept by a non-profit

supportive housing agency in the downtown Seattle area. The agency owns and operates a

number of supportive and affordable housing buildings in the Seattle metropolitan area, with a

primary applicant base of homeless, low-income, single adults. Most have experienced

significant barriers to stable housing due to poverty, criminal history, and disability. All

buildings have on-site management, and many are staffed 24 hours.

The agency maintains a central database for all demographic data on current and former

tenants. Due to reporting requirements for various funding sources, the agency is also required to

collect demographic data on race, prior residence, disabilities, non-cash benefits, and other service utilizations. The central database also contains electronic copies of lease violations, incident reports, and contact logs for use by building staff. The primary purpose of this electronic database is to store all pertinent tenant data in one location so that all building managers, assistants, and support staff are able to quickly gain access without retrieving a paper file from the administrative office.

With permission from the agency, de-identified data were collected from housing records in the tenant database using a nonprobability sampling method. First, all tenants who had moved into one of the agency's new supportive housing buildings during the first 18 months of initial leasing were selected for the sample. Then, any tenants who had transferred to the building from another agency-owned building were excluded from the results. Records were selected in this manner to ensure a uniform starting date for initial tenancy. Because each building is managed by a separate team of staff, only one building was selected for the study. Because the selected building contained only 81 units, all cases meeting the above criteria were included in the sample. The final result yielded a sample size of 87 participants who had initially entered the supportive housing program during the lease-up period from July 2010 to December 2011.

Limitations of Data

This research study employed a secondary data set that was drawn from a larger database of agency records. The original data were collected by the supportive housing agency for internal use, and were released for use in this study with a confidentiality agreement in place. Because the agency was the original collector of the data, the methodology of this research is restricted by both general and specific limitations.

The general limitation of using non-public agency records as a source of secondary data arises from threats to validity. The reason for this concern is because agencies typically collect data to support their own internal operations, or to satisfy funding or legal requirements (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008). Agency records are not normally collected for the purpose of external research, and may lack the level of detail required for a methodologically sound empirical study. As such, research designs employing secondary data may suffer from challenges to content, criterion-related, or face validity (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008).

In this study, the agency collected records to both meet operational needs (i.e. to conduct the business of providing and maintaining housing) and to meet external funding requirements. In some instances, these objectives enhanced the quality and quantity of data collected for some variables. For example, general identifying information, such as date of birth, is externally verified using government-issued identification or other official records. Income information is also externally verified and documented. Because these types of information were critical to the agency's operational needs and funding requirements, these variables were highly reliable and contributed to the validity of the study.

At the same time, the agency's operational goals and requirements may have hindered some of the data collection on current tenants. Because the basic operational needs and funding requirements of the supportive housing program require only a limited range of demographic information, some important information may not have been available in tenants' housing records. The housing records in the agency's database capture a snapshot of tenant demographic information that are useful for general reference, but do not include specific details. For specific funding requirements, proof of a disability may have been required at the time of application. However, details on the severity, duration, and scope of the disability would not be kept in the

housing records. Details of supportive services accessed and program participation may also have been excluded from the housing file for operational purposes, and instead stored in social service records.

The data used in this study were also limited by the number of records available for analysis. To preserve interrater reliability in the documentation of tenant infractions, data were collected from only one building with a total of 81 units. Combining data from different buildings may have introduced additional reliability challenges due to different staff and different building characteristics. For example, a building housing only residents over the age of 55 may yield different tenancy issues than building without resident age restrictions. Similarly, a greater number of lease violations may be observed in buildings with 24-hour staffing than in buildings with 8-hour or 16-hour staffing. While this method of data collection was intended remove observed differences due to environmental conditions, the resulting sample size was relatively small (n=86).

As stated earlier, participation in the supportive housing program was based entirely upon tenant choice. While some homeless applicants may have been approached by case managers and outreach staff, participation in the program was completely voluntary. Participant self-selection has been identified in other program evaluations as a predictor of program completion or success (Hill et al., 2013). Because random selection was not used to select participants for this program, those who chose to participate may have exhibited a predisposed amenability to stable housing.

Finally, the applicability of this program evaluation to similar programs is challenged by the unique nature of the data collected and the population from which the sample was drawn. Generally, secondary data used in program evaluations are not applicable to evaluations of different programs (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008). Replication of this study, even using data from

other supportive housing programs, may be challenged by differences in program operations. Despite these limitations, this program evaluation offers a valuable opportunity to examine actual housing records to better understand the relationship between criminal history and tenancy.

Sample

The final sample size of 87 participants included 70 males and 17 females, with an average age of 46 years at the time of entry to the program. Ages represented ranged from 24 years to 73 years, although over 80 percent of participants were 40 years of age or older when they entered the program. Approximately 66 percent of participants identified as a race other than White/Caucasian. The average annual income at entry for participants was approximately $5,600.00, or around $466.00 per month. Nineteen percent of participants had no verifiable sources of income at entry. Nearly all participants had one or more documented mental health, chemical dependency, or physical disabilities. All participants lacked a permanent residence at entry, and more than 60 percent of participants were living in places not meant for human habitation or in emergency shelters at the time of entry. Nearly 20 percent entered the program directly from incarceration in the King County jail.

Independent Variables

Verifiable criminal history. Arrest and conviction records provide a starting point for verifying the presence of a criminal history. However, because large numbers of crimes are never reported to police and are never cleared, official records represent only a small portion of actual crimes committed (Cohen, 1986). For the purposes of this study, verifiable criminal history was considered to be any conviction for a criminal offense, other than a drug possession charge, that appeared on a criminal background check using a fee-for-service, national-level reporting

agency. This agency searched for criminal records in city, county, state, and federal databases, although not all jurisdictions choose to share data. Self-report data were not obtained. Verifiable criminal history was coded as 0 = no and 1 = yes.

Violent criminal history. Various risk factors and personality traits have been identified as partial predictors of violent criminal behavior, especially among juveniles (Farrington, 1997; Henry et al., 1996). Differences between violent and non-violent criminal careers have also been evaluated, suggesting that violent and non-violent offenders follow somewhat different trajectories throughout their criminal careers (MacDonald, Haviland, & Morral, 2009). For this study, crimes against persons included homicide, manslaughter, rape/sexual assault, assault, robbery, and domestic violence. Violent criminal history was first coded as a continuous variable using the number of convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 11. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = no violent criminal convictions and 1 = 1 or more violent criminal convictions.

Property offense history. Property offenses, such as burglary and theft, may be more common among homeless or financially insolvent individuals due to the need for resources. Monetary dissatisfaction has been correlated with increased property crimes among homeless individuals (Baron, 2006), suggesting that personal attitudes toward pecuniary success may also contribute to the commission of property crimes. Property offenses were conceptualized as any felony or misdemeanor burglaries, arson, thefts, auto thefts, shoplifting, or related charges. The number of property offense convictions was coded continuously using the number of convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 23. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = no property offense convictions and 1 = 1 or more property offense convictions.

Drug manufacturing or distribution offense history. The supportive housing program operates on the Housing First model, which stresses the importance of meeting individuals where they are in the process of treatment and recovery. As such, many individuals still struggle with chemical dependency issues upon entry to the program, and could not be reasonably expected to desist from all drug use immediately. Due to the nature of the supportive housing program, there were no restrictions on prior drug possession convictions unless an applicant had been convicted of manufacturing or distributing a controlled substance. Personal drug possession was not prohibited in this building, although residents were required to abide by the terms of their probation (if any), refrain from trafficking illegal drugs, and maintain their units in safe and sanitary conditions (e.g. sharps must be disposed of properly, no smoking in the unit, etc.). Drug manufacturing or distribution offense history was coded continuously using the number of convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 5. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = no drug manufacturing or distribution convictions and 1 = 1 or more drug manufacturing or distribution offense convictions.

Criminal trespass offense history. Criminal trespass orders have been used as a method to control homeless and surplus populations in large cities (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). As a population, homeless individuals have more opportunities than housed individuals to be cited for criminal trespassing due to their lack of permanent residence. As such, a high number of criminal trespassing convictions may indicate chronic unsheltered homelessness. Criminal trespass offense history was coded continuously using the number of convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 15. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = no criminal trespass convictions and 1 = 1 or more criminal trespass convictions.

Prostitution offense history. Prostitution convictions may also indicate a history of instability, as many individuals who engage in prostitution do so out of financial necessity or compulsion (Cobbina & Oselin, 2011). While solicitation of prostitution convictions were also included, solicitors of sexual acts generally face less criminal prosecution and stigmatization than sex workers (Jeffreys, 2009; McKim & Bottari, 2014). The prosecution disparity between solicitors and sex workers may result in a disproportionate impact on females, who have traditionally outnumbered males in prostitution work, although contemporary research suggests that a growing number of males are arrested for engaging in prostitution (Vandiver & Krienert, 2007). Prostitution offense history was coded continuously using the number of convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 13. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = no prostitution-related convictions and 1 = 1 or more prostitution-related offense convictions.

Total number of all criminal convictions. The total number of all convictions may reflect the amount of formal contact a participant has had with the criminal justice system. Participants with higher numbers of criminal convictions may have had more contact with the criminal justice system than participants with fewer convictions. Participants with higher numbers of criminal convictions may be faced with additional challenges to reentry and self-sufficiency, such as debt imposed from legal financial obligations and frequent disruptions in community life (Bannon et al., 2010). The total number of all criminal convictions was coded continuously using the sum of all types of criminal convictions on record, ranging from 0 to 35.

Any conviction within the past year. Recidivism rates suggest that a majority of released ex-offenders will reoffend within three years of their release (Durose, Cooper, & Snyder, 2014; Langan & Levin, 2002). A recent conviction may also indicate that the participant

is under a form of community supervision. This variable was coded as 0 = no convictions within the past year and 1 = 1 or more convictions within the past year.

Dependent Variables

Duration of program participation. Duration of program participation was measured continuously in the number of months a participant remained in the supportive housing program as of August 1, 2014. Program participation did not automatically terminate when participants were institutionalized for short periods of time, as tenants could be out of their units for 90 or fewer days without losing their subsidies. This variable ranged from a minimum of 0.3 months to a maximum of 48.3 months as of August 1, 2014. The average duration of program participation for all participants ($n = 87$) as of August 1, 2014 was 31.2 months. Among only the group of participants who had moved out before data were collected ($n = 50$), the average duration of program participation was 20.8 months. Due to the significant number of participants who were still in the program when the data were collected, the median duration was slightly longer at 37.8 months.

Completion of 2 years in program. A two-year period is commonly used as the benchmark for successful completion in transitional and supportive housing program evaluations (Malone, 2009). Often, this two-year time limit is due to funding limitations for transitional programs (Burt, 2010). Using duration of program participation, completion of 2 years in the supportive housing program as of August 1, 2014 was measured dichotomously as 0 = no and 1 = yes.

Number of staff incident reports. The agency used an internal reporting system to track incidents of verbal assaults, threats, or physical assaults by tenants against staff members. The purpose of these internal reports was to ensure the safety of staff members, especially in

buildings where staffing responsibilities were split over a continuous 24-hour period. In some instances, such as physical assaults on staff, tenants may also have been issued lease violation notices. Because participants in the supportive housing program faced many challenges due to chronic homelessness and disabilities, staff were encouraged to resolve minor issues through verbal warnings or care conferences. This variable was coded continuously using the number of incident reports recorded by staff, ranging from 0 to10.

Number of tenant-on-tenant violence incidents. Tenant-on-tenant violence incidents were also informally recorded using the internal tracking system. Lease violation notices were more likely to follow these incidents, although the victim would not be issued a lease violation notice. An incident report included the names of both perpetrators and victims, and allowed staff to take preventive measures to ensure the safety of other tenants. This variable was coded continuously using the number of tenant-on-tenant violence incident reports recorded by staff, ranging from 0 to 5.

Number of 911 or emergency service calls. Building staff recorded incidents involving emergency responders, such as paramedics or firefighters, who were called to assist tenants with medical emergencies. One of the major tenets of permanent supportive housing is the reduction of emergency service utilization, as many chronically homeless individuals cycle through emergency rooms and detoxification centers (Culhane, Metreaux, & Hadley, 2002). Chronic incarceration may also exacerbate health risks due to the lack of specialized medical care in many jail facilities (Kushel et al., 2005). However, tenants with chronic health issues may continue to require emergency medical attention, even when presented with stable housing. This variable was coded continuously using the number of 911 or emergency service calls, ranging from 0 to 74.

Number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices. Failure to pay rent in full is a primary concern of residential landlords. In the State of Washington, a landlord may issue a 3-day notice to pay rent or vacate the unit if rent is not paid in full by the due date. The agency used a system that allowed ample opportunity for tenants to pay their portion of rent at the beginning of the month. Rent was considered on-time until the 10th day of the month, and late notices were issued on the 11th day of the month. Tenants who were issued a 3-day Pay or Vacate notice were permitted to enter into payment plan arrangements, in lieu of eviction proceedings, if current on rent from previous months. Tenants with high numbers of 3-day notices to pay rent or vacate may lack the ability to manage their own funds appropriately, or may choose to use their limited financial resources on other items. A history of late or partial payments indicates a high level of risk for landlords, especially when tenants' rent portions are based on their actual income. This variable was coded continuously using the number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received, ranging from 0 to 14.

Number of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices. Lease compliance is another primary concern of residential landlords. Lease violations may include small matters, such as excessive noise or visitor policy violations, or more serious matters, such as suspected drug trafficking or criminal activity. Failure to comply with a 10-day notice, or repeated 10-day notices, may result in eviction. The agency took into account the housing barriers faced by tenants, especially during the first few months of tenancy, and generally made efforts to resolve minor infractions with verbal warnings, care conferences, and warning letters. However, staff were encouraged to treat all instances in a similar manner to be consistent with Fair Housing laws. Tenants with high numbers of 10-day notices to comply or vacate may present behavioral challenges that may result in disturbances or hazards to other tenants, and may present additional risk for landlords.

This variable was coded continuously using the number of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices received, ranging from 0 to 33.

Reason for leaving. Because the program was a permanent supportive housing program, tenants were able to participate as long as they remained eligible for the housing subsidy and abided by lease terms. Reasons for leaving the program may be voluntary, such as accepting a Section 8 voucher or other subsidized housing unit, or involuntary, such as an eviction or mutual termination in lieu of eviction. Potential landlords often inquire about applicants' reasons for leaving their current or previous rental units, as involuntary departures may indicate poor tenancy performance and higher risk. Reason for leaving was coded categorically using the most common reasons: 0 = none/still in program when data were collected; 1 = voluntary; 2 = mutual termination; 3 = eviction; 4 = abandonment; 5 = death.

Exit destination. As often as possible, the agency attempted to record a tenant's destination upon move-out or program exit. For tenants who have planned to move to alternate living arrangements, this information may be readily available. However, for situations involving a unit abandonment or eviction, a tenant's exit destination may be uncertain. Destination at move-out may also be indicative of housing success, as some tenants may voluntarily choose to leave the program due to disagreements with rules or challenges related to disabilities. Exit destination was coded categorically using: 0 = none/still in program when data were collected; 1 = other subsidized or supportive housing unit; 2 = other non-subsidized/non-supportive living arrangement; 3 = emergency shelter; 4 = places not meant for human habitation; 5 = incarceration; 5 = other institution/hospital; 6 = deceased; 7 = other; 8 = unknown.

Outcome classification. As often as possible, the agency also attempted to classify outcome types as positive, neutral, or negative. Staff were permitted to inform potential future

landlords of a tenant's positive move-out during a reference check. Outcome classifications were classified categorically as 0 = neutral, 1 = positive, and 2 = negative.[2] This variable was then dichotomized to reflect 0 = positive or neutral and 1 = negative. Cases involving tenants who were still actively housed in the supportive housing program at the time of data collection were recorded as 1 = positive, as maintaining stable housing was considered to be a positive outcome.

Control Variables

Eight control variables were extrapolated from tenants' demographic data, including: gender, age at entry, race, income at entry, education level, disability, prior residence, and high utilizer of jail and emergency resources.

Gender. Gender differences in criminal activity and criminal victimization have been frequently addressed in empirical literature. In the United States, males represent a majority of federal and state prisoners (Carson, 2014). While the number of females in custody for committing crimes has increased since the beginning of the War on Drugs, males still outnumber females in the criminal justice system. In this evaluation, gender was recorded as 0 = male, 1 = female, or 2 = other. Although participants in the program were given the option to select a gender other than male or female, no selections were recorded in this sample.

Age at entry. Longitudinal and life-course studies of criminal offending patterns concur that criminal activity for most offenders peaks during adolescence and early adulthood, and instances of crime become less frequent as individuals age (Bushway et al., 2011; Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983; Moffitt, 1993). A small minority of offenders are considered to be career criminals, whose offending patterns develop and specialize over time. Biological maturity may

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[2] The neutral classification was used to signify a necessary move-out due to circumstances unrelated to a participant's behavior while in the program, such as a transfer to an assisted living facility or hospice. The neutral classification was also applied when a participant passed away while in the housing program.

also indirectly affect tenancy through areas such as physical health, peer associations, and social integration (Rowe & Tittle, 1977; Warr, 1998). Thus, an older biological age at the time of entry to the program may be correlated with decreased criminal activity or lease infractions. To qualify for the supportive housing program, an applicant must prove that he or she is of legal age to enter into a contract. In most cases, applicants must be 18 years of age or older, but exceptions were possible for emancipated minors. No other age restrictions applied to the building from which the sample was drawn. Age at entry was recorded as a ratio-level variable, and was verified by participants' dates of birth. The minimum age at entry was 24 years, while the maximum age was 73 years. The variable was then dichotomized to reflect whether or not a participant was over the median age of 47 years at program entry, where 0 = below median age and 1 = at or above median age.

Race. The influence of race on criminal history has been explored through a variety of lenses, particularly through the comparison of arrest and incarceration rates for both White and non-White offenders. Despite evidence that suggests White offenders commit as many, or more, crimes than non-White offenders, racial disparity in arrest and sentencing models has contributed to the perception that individuals of a minority race are more likely to commit crimes (Alexander, 2010; Harcourt, 2007). Racial inequality is not unique to the criminal justice system, as non-White individuals frequently experience institutional and structural discrimination in everyday life, which may increase the challenges related to social integration and success (Alexander, 2010; Wilson, 1996). Race was recorded as a categorical variable with the following options: 0 = White/Caucasian; 1 = African American/Black; 2 = Asian; 3 = Latino; 4 = Native American/Alaskan Native; 5 = Mixed Race; and 6 = other. These categories were then collapsed into a dichotomous variable to distinguish White/Caucasian (0) and all other races (1).

Official income at entry. At the macro level, socioeconomic disadvantage is often correlated with high crime rates and social disorganization (Shaw & McKay, 1942). Individuals may also experience strain as a result of economic deprivation, leading to the desire or need to commit crimes (Merton, 1938; Agnew, 1985). Individuals who lack adequate financial resources may resort to criminal activity to meet basic needs, or may simply be unable to meet all of their financial expenses. Income is commonly used in rental application screening procedures to ensure prospective tenants have sufficient financial resources to cover their rental expenses. In this study, official income at entry was recorded as a continuous variable, ranging from $0.00 to $15,908.00 annually. Income figures obtained represent documented, official income that was verified by housing staff. A dichotomous variable was also created where 0 = no financial resources and 1 = any type of income.

Education level. Education levels may reflect a variety of factors, including socioeconomic status, culture and family life, and biological conditions. A majority of released prisoners have completed less than a high school education or have received a GED in lieu of a high school diploma (Durose & Mumola, 2004). Education level was recorded as a self-reported item, and was not verified by an outside source. Education was coded categorically as: 0 = 0 - 11th grade completed; 1 = earned high school diploma or GED; 2 = completed some college; 3 = associate's or bachelor's degree; 4 = master's degree or higher; and 5 = unknown or refused.

Disability. As a whole, individuals with disabilities are overrepresented in the criminal justice and homeless populations (Prins & Draper, 2009; U.S. Conference of Mayors, 2005). In this program, a disability was defined as a sensory, mental, or physical impairment that was medically cognizable and diagnosable. Chemical dependency was also considered to be a disabling condition. Third party verification of disability status was required for admission to the

program. This variable was coded categorically as 0 = mental illness, 1 = chemical dependency, 2 = chronic health condition or physical disability, and 3 = combination of two or more disabilities. Because a dual diagnosis of both mental illness and chemical dependency disabilities has been identified as especially challenging conditions for ex-offenders, an additional dichotomous variable was created to indicate the presence of co-occurring mental illness and chemical dependency. The presence of a dual diagnosis was coded as 0 = no and 1 = yes.

Prior residence. A great number of differences in service needs may exist between homeless individuals who are unsheltered (i.e. living in places not meant for human habitation) and those who are living in emergency shelters or transitional housing. Individuals who are unable to live in communal environments, whether due to personal preference or to disability, may be more vulnerable than other homeless individuals. At the time of entry, participants were required to provide proof of their homelessness situation, such as a letter from an emergency shelter or a homeless outreach worker. Individuals who were homeless prior to a short-term incarceration were also considered to be homeless. Prior residence was first coded categorically as 0 = streets/other places not meant for human habitation; 1 = emergency shelter; 2 = transitional housing; 3 = incarceration; and 4 = other.

High utilizer of jail and emergency resources. A small percentage of chronically homeless individuals have been identified as high utilizers of emergency resources (Chambers et al., 2013). These individuals, who typically struggle with one or more disabilities, cycle through local jails, hospitals, and detoxification centers to temporarily meet their needs. High utilizers are often more vulnerable than other groups of homeless or unstably housed individuals, and may experience additional barriers to housing stability. In this program, a number of participants were identified as high utilizers of emergency services through outreach efforts at the King County

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Jail. This variable captures an important aspect of criminal justice involvement, as many individuals are arrested for minor offenses and incarcerated, but are not convicted of a crime if charges are dropped or suspended. These individuals' encounters with the criminal justice system would not be captured using traditional conviction records. Individuals who were identified to be high utilizers were coded as $0 =$ no and $1 =$ yes.

Statistical Analysis Plan

To determine whether criminal history is correlated with housing performance and successful outcomes, a number of statistical analyses will be performed. First, descriptive statistics will be discussed. Second, bivariate analyses will be conducted to compare means and to identify correlations between types of criminal history and program participation length, performance during tenancy, and housing outcomes. Independent samples t-tests will be used to compare average lengths of program participation among groups of ex-offenders and non-offenders, and among other bivariate groupings of offense types. Chi-square crosstabulation analyses will be conducted to determine whether any correlations exist between offender types and program outcomes, including reasons for leaving, exit destinations, and outcome classifications. Finally, bivariate analyses will be conducted to determine whether any control variables were correlated with housing outcomes. Results of these analyses are outlined in Chapter Four and discussed in relation to future research and policy implications in Chapter Five.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the univariate and bivariate tests used to determine whether criminal history and housing success are correlated in any way. Descriptive statistics are discussed first, followed by tests of correlation using categorical and continuous variables.

Descriptive Analyses

A total of 87 records were represented in the study, consisting of individuals who had moved in to the supportive housing building during its first year of lease-up. Data were collected from the three-year period of July 2011 through July 2014. Of the 87 total participants, 41.4% (n = 36) were still in the program as of August 1, 2014. A total of 54 participants, or 62.1%, had completed more than two continuous years in the program at the time of data collection. The average length of stay at the time of data collection was 31.2 months, or approximately 2.6 years. The median length of stay was slightly higher at 37.8 months, or approximately 3.2 years. Among participants who had left the program, the average length of stay was 20.8 months, or approximately 1.7 years.

Consistent with expectations of gender distribution in the homeless population, 80.5% of the sample identified as male, and the remaining 19.5% identified as female. Although the agency provided alternative gender options for applicants to self-report, no other gender identities were represented in the sample. Participants who identified as non-White represented 65.5% of the sample. Approximately 42.5% were African-American, 35.6% were White, 11.5% were Native American or Alaskan Native, and the remaining 10.4% identified as another race or as two or more races. The average age of participants at program entry was 46.2 years, and the

median age was 47 years. Age at entry ranged from 24 years to 73 years. The average annual income at entry was $5,602.00, which was approximately $467.00 per month. The median annual income was $4,068.00, which was $339.00 per month. This figure was equivalent to the maximum benefit amount for a single adult receiving General Assistance in Washington in 2010. More than 70% of participants received General Assistance or Social Security or Supplemental Security Income at entry. Nearly half of participants reported having less than a high school education ($n = 42$), while 41.4% reported having a high school diploma or GED. A small number of participants ($n = 5$) reported having either an associate's or bachelor's degree.

Disability information was available for 85 participants. A total of 73.6% of participants reported having a mental illness, while 70.1% also reported having a chemical dependency disability. Approximately 39.1% reported having a chronic illness or physical disability. These percentages total to greater than 100% because a majority of participants reported having two or more disabilities. Most entered the program either from the streets or other places not meant for human habitation ($n = 31$) or from an emergency shelter ($n = 41$). Because incarcerated individuals were considered to be homeless if they had been in custody for less than 90 days and had been homeless at the time of arrest, nearly 20% of participants entered the program directly from the King County Jail. The remaining 17.2% entered the program from transitional housing or other institutions, but met the required criteria for homelessness. Nearly half of participants were identified as high utilizers of jail or other emergency services at the time of program entry.

Criminal history information was available for 85 participants. Of these 85 participants, 77% had one or more verified criminal convictions on their criminal background screening reports. The average number of verified criminal convictions per participant was 8.3. Nearly 60% had one or more convictions for violent offenses, and nearly 60% also had one or more

convictions for property offenses. The average number of violent offense convictions was 2.2 per participant, and the average number of property offense convictions was 2.6 per participant. A smaller percentage had one or more convictions for drug manufacturing or distribution ($n = 26$). A total of 46% had one or more convictions for criminal trespassing, and nearly 15% had one or more convictions for prostitution-related offenses. Approximately 24% of participants were convicted of an offense within one year of entering the supportive housing program.

Measure of performance during tenancy included numbers of incident reports, tenant-on-tenant violence reports, 911 or emergency service calls, 3-day Pay or Vacate notices, and 10-day Comply or Vacate notices. A majority of participants had received 1 or fewer incident reports ($n = 64$). The average number of incident reports recorded per participant was 1.4. Tenant-on-tenant violence reports were also uncommon, with 51.7% of participants receiving no reports. The average number of tenant-on-tenant violence reports recorded per participant was .8. Calls to 911 for emergency services were more prevalent in the sample, with an average of 4 calls to 911 made per participant. More than half of participants received 1 or fewer 3-day Pay or Vacate notices during their tenancies. The average number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices was 1.7 per participant. The average number of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices was 4 per participant, although the largest percentage (28.7%) had not received any notices.

The largest percentage of tenants (41.4%) did not leave the program, and were still active participants at the time data were collected. The second largest percentage of tenants (35.6%) left the program as a result of a mutual termination of tenancy. Approximately 10.3% left voluntarily, 5.7% were deceased, and 2.3% abandoned their units. Only 4.6% of participants were evicted. Among the 51 participants who exited the program, 27.5% returned to the streets or to other places not meant for human habitation. Approximately 15.7% returned to

incarceration, and 5.9% returned to emergency shelters. A total of 23.5% moved to other types of

permanent housing. A total of 9.8% of participants were deceased, and the remaining 17.7%

moved to other or unknown locations. Counting all participants, including those who were

actively housed at the time of data collection, 58.6% experienced positive or neutral housing

outcomes as defined by staff.

Bivariate Analyses

Length of Program Participation

The first independent samples *t*-test compared average lengths of program participation

between groups of ex-offenders and non-offenders. Results of this comparison are reported in

Table 1 Reported *t* values were adjusted to account for unequal variances in the sample. The test

was significant, $t(32) = 2.77$, $p < .01$, indicating that significant differences were observed in the

average lengths of program participation between ex-offenders and non-offenders. Participants

without any verifiable criminal history ($M = 39.7$, $SD = 13.56$), on average, remained in the

program longer than participants with a verifiable criminal history ($M = 29.23$, $SD = 16.54$).

Only two other groupings of offense histories yielded significant differences in average

lengths of program participation. Average lengths of program participation were found to differ

significantly between ex-offenders with and without criminal convictions in the year prior to

program entry, $t(83) = 2.27$, $p < .05$. Participants without any criminal convictions in the year

immediately prior to program entry ($M = 33.71$, $SD = 16.25$), on average, remained in the

program longer than participants with a recent criminal conviction ($M = 24.56$, $SD = 15.46$).

When the sample was adjusted to exclude all non-offenders ($n = 67$), the test was no longer

significant, $t(65) = 1.58$, $p > .1$. Participants who were identified to be high utilizers of

emergency services also remained in the program for a shorter period of time, $t(84) = 2.63$, $p <$

.05. On average, high utilizers of emergency resources spent less time in the program ($M =$ 26.37, $SD = 16.73$) than participants who were not identified as high utilizers of emergency resources ($M = 35.45$, $SD = 15.3$).

Bivariate correlation coefficients were also computed using the total numbers of criminal convictions and ratio and ordinal level control variables. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2. Of the independent variables, only the total number of all criminal convictions was found to be negatively correlated with the length of program participation, $r = -.27$ ($n = 85$). The length of program participation was found to decrease as the total number of criminal offenses increased.

Two additional control variables, age at entry and annual income at entry, were found to be positively correlated with the length of program participation. Age at entry was moderately correlated with the length of program participation, $r = .37$ ($n = 87$). Annual income at entry was weakly correlated with the length of program participation, $r = .22$ ($n = 87$). Generally, the length of participation in the program was longer for applicants who were older and applicants who had higher income levels at entry.

Number of 3-day Pay or Vacate Notices

A comparison of the average numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received among different offender types is provided in Table 3. Average numbers of notices received were first compared between ex-offenders and non-offenders ($n = 84$). The test was not significant, $t(82) = .15$, $p > .1$, indicating that no significant differences were observed in the average numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received by ex-offenders ($M = 1.73$, $SD = 2.78$) and non-offenders ($M = 1.83$, $SD = 2.23$).

Only one grouping of offense histories yielded significant differences in the average number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received. Among the sample of only ex-offenders ($n =$ 66), those who had prior drug manufacturing or distribution convictions received more 3-day Pay or Vacate notices than those without any prior drug manufacturing or distribution convictions, $t(30.9) = -2.75, p < .05$. The test remained significant when including non-offenders in the sample, $t(30.6) = -2.22, p < .05$. Significant differences were also found between ex-offenders with and without prostitution-related convictions, $t(63.53) = 2.32, p < .05$. Participants with prostitution-related convictions received fewer 3-day Pay or Vacate notices than participants with prostitution-related convictions. The results remained significant when non-offenders were included in the sample, $t(68.52) = 2.65, p = .01$. The total number of criminal convictions was not found to be significantly correlated to the number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received, $r = .06$ ($n = 84$), $p > .05$. No significant differences were found in any other groupings of offense histories.

Correlations between ratio level variables and the numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices are presented in Table 4. A comparison of the average numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received among different offender types is provided in Table 6. Among control variables, only identification as a racial minority was correlated with the number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices received. Participants who identified as racial minorities received more 3-day Pay or Vacate notices than participants who identified as White, $t(84) = -2.0, p = .05$. No significant differences in the numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices were found in any other groupings of control variables.

Number of 10-day Comply or Vacate Notices

Table 3 also illustrates significant differences in the average numbers of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices received between groups of participants. Average numbers of notices received were first compared between ex-offenders and non-offenders ($n = 84$). Reported t values were adjusted to account for unequal variances in the sample. The test was not significant, $t(22.65) = -.35$, $p > .1$, indicating that no significant differences were observed in the average numbers of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices received by ex-offenders ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 5.39$) and non-offenders ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 7.09$).

Significant differences in the average numbers of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices were found in only two groupings of offense histories. Among the sample of only ex-offenders ($n = 66$), those who had a history of criminal trespassing convictions received more 10-day Comply or Vacate notices than those without any criminal trespassing convictions, $t(59.12) = -2.74$, $p < .01$. The test remained significant when including non-offenders in the sample, $t(82) = -2.18$, $p < .05$. The group of high utilizers also received a higher average number of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices than the group of non-high utilizers, $t(84) = -2.8$, $p < .01$.

The total number of criminal convictions was not found to be significantly correlated with the number of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices received, $r = .13$ ($n = 84$), $p > .05$. No significant correlations were found in any of the ratio or ordinal level control variables.

Number of Incident Reports

A comparison of the average numbers of incident reports received among different offender types is provided in Table 3. Average numbers of incident reports were first compared between ex-offenders and non-offenders ($n = 84$). The test was not significant, $t(82) = -.387$, $p > .1$, indicating that no significant differences were observed in the average numbers of incident

reports received by ex-offenders ($M = 1.52$, $SD = 2.13$) and non-offenders ($M = 1.28$, $SD =$ 2.89).

Significant differences in the average numbers of incident reports received were recorded in only two groupings of offense histories. Among the sample of only ex-offenders ($n = 66$), those who had a history of criminal trespassing convictions received more incident reports than those without any criminal trespassing convictions, $t(54.11) = -2.32$, $p < .05$. When the sample was adjusted to include all non-offenders ($n = 84$), the test was no longer significant, $t(71.14) = -1.79$, $p > .05$. The group of high utilizers also received a higher average number of incident reports than the group of non-high utilizers, $t(84) = -2.02$, $p < .05$. No significant differences were found in any other groupings of offense histories.

A comparison of the average numbers of incident reports received among different control groups is provided in Table 6. Education level, coded ordinally, was found to be positively correlated with the number of incident reports. The relationship was weak, $r = .22$ ($n = 82$), $p < .05$, indicating that a higher level of education at program entry is weakly correlated with a greater number of incident reports. Participants who were diagnosed with both mental health and chemical dependency disabilities also experienced significantly higher numbers of incident reports than participants without a dual diagnosis, $t(58.7) = -2.33$, $p < .05$. Reported t values were adjusted to account for unequal variances in the sample.

Number of Tenant-on-Tenant Violence Reports

A comparison of the average numbers of tenant-on-tenant violence reports is also included in Table 3. Average numbers of incident reports were first compared between ex-offenders and non-offenders ($n = 84$). The test was not significant, $t(82) = -.986$, $p > .1$, indicating that no significant differences were observed in the average numbers of tenant-on-

tenant violence reports received by ex-offenders ($M = .92$, $SD = 1.18$) and non-offenders ($M = .61$, $SD = 1.24$).

Significant differences in the average numbers of tenant-on-tenant violence reports received were recorded only in the grouping of high utilizers and non-high utilizers. On average, high utilizers of emergency resources received more tenant-on-tenant violence reports than non-high utilizers, $t(72.53) = -2.58$, $p < .05$. No significant differences were found in any other groupings of offense histories.

Correlations between ratio level variables and the numbers of tenant-on-tenant violence reports are presented in Table 5. A comparison of the average numbers of tenant-on-tenant violence reports received among different control groups is provided in Table 6. Of the control variables, annual income at entry was correlated with the number of tenant-on-tenant violence reports. The relationship was a weak inverse relationship, $r = -.28$ ($n = 86$). Generally, a higher amount of annual income at entry to the program was correlated with fewer tenant-on-tenant violence reports. Participants who were diagnosed with both mental health and chemical dependency disabilities also experienced significantly higher numbers of tenant-on-tenant violence reports than participants without a dual diagnosis, $t(67) = -2.38$, $p < .05$. Reported t values were adjusted to account for unequal variances in the sample.

Number of 911 Calls

Tables 3, 5, and 6 provide a comparison of the average numbers of 911 calls for each participant. No significant differences in the numbers of 911 calls were observed between groups of ex-offenders and non-offenders, $t(82) = -.408$, $p > .1$. No significant differences were observed in any other groupings of offense histories. No significant correlations were found among any of the ratio or categorical level control variables.

Completion of Two Years in the Program

  The second set of chi-square analyses was conducted to determine whether or not any significant differences were observed in the ability to complete two years in the program between ex-offenders and non-offenders. Results of this analysis are presented in Table 7. The two variables were verifiable criminal history (yes or no) and completion of two years in the program (yes or no). Verifiable criminal history and successful completion of two years in the program were found to be slightly related, Pearson $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 4.28, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .22$. The absence of a verifiable criminal history was correlated with a greater likelihood of completing two years in the program.

  Among offense histories, only a history of property offenses and criminal trespassing offenses were significantly related to the completion of two years in the program. The relationship between property offense history and the likelihood of completing two years in the program was weak, Pearson $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 4.81, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .24$. Tenants with a history of property offenses were more likely than other tenants to complete less than two years in the program. A similar weak relationship was found between criminal trespassing offense history and the likelihood of completing two years in the program, Pearson $\chi^2(1, n = 85) = 4.91, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .24$. High utilization of emergency resources was also found to be weakly related to the likelihood of completing two years in the program, Pearson $\chi^2(1, n = 86) = 6.81, p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .28$. Failure to complete two years in the program was correlated with identification as a high utilizer of emergency resources.

  Among dichotomous control variables, only being older than the median age at entry was significantly related to the completion of two years in the program. The relationship was weak,

Pearson χ^2(1, $n = 87$) $= 7.49$, $p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .29$, indicating that tenants who were older than 47 years of age at the time of program entry were more likely to complete two years in the program.

Outcome Classification

The first set of chi-square analyses was conducted to determine whether or not any significant differences were observed in housing outcome classifications between ex-offenders and non-offenders. The two variables were verifiable criminal history (yes or no) and housing outcome classification using two levels (non-negative or negative). Verifiable criminal history and housing outcome classification were not found to be significantly related, Pearson χ^2(1, $n = 85$) $= 1.7$, $p > .1$, Cramer's $V = .14$.

Additional correlations were found using different groupings of offense types. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 8. Weak relationships between the absence of violent offense, property offense, criminal trespassing, and prostitution offense histories and outcome classifications were observed. Non-negative outcomes were significantly higher for participants who did not have a history of violent, property, or criminal trespassing offenses, although the distribution of negative and non-negative outcomes among these offenders was somewhat equal. A weak to moderate relationship between identification as a high utilizer of emergency resources and housing outcome classification was found, Pearson χ^2(1, $n = 86$) $= 10.52$, $p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .35$. A weak to moderate relationship between a criminal conviction within the past year and housing outcome classification was also found, Pearson χ^2(1, $n = 85$) $= 9.11$, $p < .01$, Cramer's $V = .33$. The absence of a criminal conviction within the past year and the lack of identification as a high utilizer of emergency resources were correlated with non-negative housing outcomes.

Outcome classifications were also significantly related to two dichotomous control variables used in this analysis. The relationship between having no financial resources at program entry and housing outcome was weak, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, n = 87) = 4.74, p < .05$, Cramer's $V = .23$. A weak to moderate relationship between being under the median age at entry and housing outcome was also observed, Pearson $\chi^2 (1, n = 87) = 10.89, p = .001$, Cramer's $V = .35$. Non-negative housing outcomes were correlated with having some financial resources at the time of program entry. Being under the median age of 47 years at entry was correlated with negative housing outcomes.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research was to explore the relationship between criminal history and future housing success. Because very few studies have examined this concept, this study sought to answer some of the most fundamental questions related to criminal history and tenancy: (1) Do tenants with criminal histories experience different housing performance outcomes than tenants without criminal histories? (2) Do tenants with certain types of criminal histories experience different housing performance outcomes? (3) Are any other variables unrelated to criminal history correlated with housing performance outcomes? The results of the study are discussed in this chapter.

The first research objective was to determine whether or not any significant housing performance outcomes existed between tenants with and without any criminal histories. As discussed in Chapter Two, many community members and groups believe that ex-offenders are high-risk tenants, employees, and neighbors due to their criminal history. Consistent with these beliefs, exclusionary laws often prevent or severely limit the available opportunities for ex-offenders to equally enjoy access to affordable and safe housing, jobs, and other aspects of social life. Individual biases or fears may also contribute to the social exclusion of ex-offenders. By examining the differences in housing outcomes for ex-offenders and non-offenders in the same housing program, this study provides a basic understanding of the relationships between criminal history and housing success.

Housing success was conceptualized using length of tenancy, numbers of lease violation and other notices received during tenancy, and reason for leaving the program. Results of the analysis showed the tenants with a verifiable criminal history spent less time in the program, on

average, compared to tenants without a verifiable criminal history. The presence of a criminal history was correlated with a greater likelihood of completing less than two years in the program. However, no significant relationship was found between the presence of a criminal history and a negative housing outcome. No significant differences in the numbers of lease or other violations were observed between ex-offenders and non-offenders. While overall criminal history was correlated with shorter tenancy lengths, the lack of a relationship between overall criminal history and the type of housing outcome is consistent with similar research on housing success for ex-offenders (Malone, 2009).

The additional research objectives sought to determine whether types of criminal history and other demographic factors were correlated with housing outcomes. Existing recidivism literature has demonstrated that certain types of offenders, such as property offenders and chronic offenders, are more likely to reoffend than violent offenders (Langan & Levin, 2002). Recidivism is also more likely for ex-offenders who have recently been released from incarceration, and becomes less likely as time passes (Bushway et al., 2011). Some of these findings are captured in the development of screening criteria for housing and other social institutions, which may exclude old convictions or minor misdemeanors.

Length of Tenancy

Length of tenancy varied only between ex-offenders who were convicted of their last offenses either within one year of program entry or more than one year prior to program entry, and between tenants who were identified as high utilizers of jail and emergency resources and those who were not. As the number of total offenses increased, the average length of tenancy decreased, indicating that higher numbers of total convictions were correlated with shorter lengths of program participation. These findings are consistent with recidivism literature that

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suggests that many ex-offenders will struggle with successful reentry upon release from incarceration. While recidivism does not necessarily equate to housing failure, the challenges of avoiding involvement with the criminal justice system may have been especially pronounced for recently-released ex-offenders, or ex-offenders with a chronic history of cycling through jails, hospitals, and other emergency resource centers. Furthermore, ex-offenders who have a lengthy history of contact with the criminal justice system may be affected by other factors surrounding their criminal history, such as chronic homelessness, untreated mental illness, or poverty. The factors contributing to their involvement in the criminal justice system may also have influenced their abilities to remain in the permanent supportive housing program for a long period of time.

Lease Violation Notices

The receipt of lease violation notices during tenancy was also evaluated among ex-offender groups. Ex-offenders with drug manufacturing or distribution convictions received, on average, more 3-day Pay or Vacate notices than ex-offenders without these types of convictions. Because many applicants for the supportive housing program struggled with the challenges of drug addiction and self-medication, the agency did not count any convictions for personal drug possession. Instead, only convictions for the manufacturing or distribution of controlled substances were evaluated in the screening process. However, due to the harsh drug laws established during the War on Drugs, many applicants who possessed drugs for personal use may have been charged and convicted with intending to distribute a controlled substance because of the amount of the substance in their possession. This phenomenon may be especially true for applicants who struggled with a severe addiction. From this perspective, a history of drug manufacturing or distribution convictions may be correlated with a history of severe drug use and addiction, as these individuals may have possessed quantities of drugs consistent with the

intent to distribute at the time of their arrests. Among tenants with drug manufacturing and distribution convictions, those who were still actively using drugs while in the program may have had a harder time paying rent in full and on time due to the cost of purchasing drugs.

Participants who identified as any non-White race or combination of races received, on average, higher numbers of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices than participants who identified as White. While this relationship was only marginally significant, participants of color may have faced additional challenges to financial stability and money management during their tenancies. Because all participants were routinely issued 3-day Pay or Vacate notices when rent was late or delinquent, significantly higher numbers of notices among participants of color may indicate an increased need for support in budgeting and financial literacy. Participants of color may have experienced external barriers to financial self-sufficiency, such as discriminatory hiring practices and challenges to applying for or maintaining public benefits.

The second type of lease violation notice used in this program was the 10-day Comply or Vacate notice for lease violations other than unpaid rent. Among ex-offender groups, only ex-offenders with a history of criminal trespassing convictions received significantly more 10-day Comply or Vacate notices than other ex-offenders. Among other types of observed offense categories, criminal trespassing is largely considered a "homeless" offense (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). Because most adults who have a permanent residence will not be issued trespassing citations for sleeping in public parks or occupying other areas without permission, criminal trespassing convictions are most common for homeless and transient individuals. In large cities, these efforts may be expanded to exclude known drug users and prostitution workers and patrons from high-vice areas (Beckett & Herbert, 2010). A history of criminal trespassing convictions may be consistent with a history of unsheltered homelessness or involvement with public order

and vice crimes. These chronically homeless individuals may experience greater challenges with adjusting to the rules of permanent and independent housing.

High utilizers of jails and emergency resources also received higher numbers of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices than tenants who were not identified in this group. High utilizers of jails, hospitals, and detoxification centers present a unique challenge to the criminal justice, public health, and social service systems. These individuals typically experience a variety of barriers to housing stability, including untreated mental illness, chronic health conditions, and lack of financial resources (Chambers et al., 2013). While access to permanent housing has been found to reduce overall utilization of emergency resources (Culhane et al., 2002; Sadowski et al., 2009), many of the conditions that contributed to high utilization may continue to be present during tenancy. Because the permanent supportive housing program operated on the "Housing First" principle, tenants were not required to be compliant with mental health treatment or in recovery in order to access housing. Although one of the program goals was to provide housing in order to catalyze other services, the group of high utilizers may have experienced more challenges to housing than their counterparts, which may have contributed to higher numbers of 10-day Comply or Vacate notices.

Other Incident Reports

Although internal incident reports were not legal lease violation notices, these reports allowed staff to track tenant behaviors even when a formal notice was not necessary. In some cases, such as hate speech or physical assaults on staff, a formal 10-day Comply or Vacate notice may also have been issued. Among ex-offender groups, only those with a history of criminal trespassing convictions received higher average numbers of incident reports than other ex-offenders. Again, tenants who had a history of criminal trespassing convictions may have been

more likely to be unsheltered or chronically homeless, and may have experienced greater challenges when interacting with housing staff.

Higher average numbers of incident reports and of tenant-on-tenant violence reports were also observed among high utilizers of emergency resources and among dually-diagnosed participants when compared to their counterparts. This group of participants may also have experienced greater challenges when interacting with housing staff due to long-term homelessness, self-medication, and other related barriers. At the same time, these challenges may have contributed to negative interactions with other tenants at the building.

No significant differences among offender groups or numbers of offenses were observed in relation to the numbers of 911 calls for service. One explanation for this phenomenon is that the need for emergency services may be related more significantly to age, chronic health conditions, or other factors unrelated to criminal history. High utilizers of emergency resources prior to program entry did not require the use of 911 emergency services more frequently than non-high utilizers, which is consistent with literature suggesting that access to stable and supportive housing can reduce service utilization among chronic jail, hospital, and detoxification center users (Culhane et al., 2002; Sadowski et al., 2009).

Completion of Two Years in the Program

For many transitional and other time-limited housing opportunities, the two-year period is a benchmark for successful completion of the program. This timeframe was also used by Malone (2009) to measure successful housing outcomes among formerly homeless ex-offenders in the Seattle area. The permanent supportive housing program was not time-limited, but evaluating the successful completion of two years in the program allowed for comparison with other similar programs. Among ex-offender groups, ex-offenders who did not have prior convictions for

violent offenses or criminal trespassing offenses were more likely to complete two years or more in the program. However, the successful completion of two years in the program was nearly evenly split between all property ex-offenders and all ex-offenders with a criminal trespassing conviction. While failure to complete two years in the program may be unrelated to recidivism, these findings are consistent with recidivism studies that suggest property offenders experience greater reentry challenges (Langan & Levin, 2002). These challenges may be related to leaving the program prior to completing two years.

Similarly, participants who were not identified as high utilizers of emergency resources had significantly higher rates of completing two or more years in the program than the identified high utilizers. While some may have chosen to leave the program for other housing opportunities, this group of tenants may have experienced the most co-occurring challenges to housing stability. Furthermore, previously identified correlations with higher numbers of lease violation and incident reports may have prompted more tenants in this group to leave the program within two years of entry.

Being older than the median age of 47 years at program entry was also correlated with the completion of two years in the program. This finding is consistent with many age-graded theories of crime and delinquency, which suggest that biological aging is often correlated with a decline in criminal, deviant, and antisocial behaviors (Moffitt, 1993; Sampson & Laub, 2003). Biological aging may also be correlated with increased housing stability for a variety of reasons, including physical limitations and life experiences.

Housing Outcome Classification

Classifying housing outcomes allowed for additional comparison of tenancies, as many participants left the program to move onto other housing opportunities, or passed away while in

the program. For the purposes of comparison, housing outcomes were classified as either negative, such as an eviction or mutual termination in lieu of eviction, or non-negative. Tenants who were still housed in the program at the time of data collection were given a non-negative housing outcome. While the presence of a criminal history was not correlated with housing outcome classification, the presence or absence of other types of criminal convictions were correlated with overall housing outcomes. In each offense grouping with the exception of drug manufacturing offenders, non-negative outcomes were significantly higher for tenants who did not have any convictions for that type of offense. Non-offenders and ex-offenders whose most recent conviction was more than one year prior to entering the program also experienced significantly higher non-negative housing outcomes than recently convicted ex-offenders. The same phenomenon was observed between tenants who were identified as high utilizers of emergency resources and those who were not.

Variations in housing outcome classifications were also observed in the two dichotomous control variables used in the study. Non-negative housing outcomes were correlated with participants who had a source of income at entry. The presence of income at the time of program entry may also be indicative of increased stability, as participants without any income sources may have lacked the ability to apply for public benefits or find employment. Blocked access to financial resources may be due to a variety of factors, such as severe disability, lack of citizenship status, language barriers, or disqualification from public benefits. While the housing subsidy attached to the supportive housing program covered the full unit rent for tenants without any income, it is likely that this group of tenants experienced financial challenges to meeting other basic needs, such as food, clothing, and household items. These challenges may have contributed to overall negative housing outcomes.

Similarly, age at program entry was correlated with overall housing outcomes. Negative housing outcomes were more common among participants who were younger than the median age of 47 years at the time of program entry. Younger participants may experience more volatility in their daily lives, such as those caused by peer associations, and may have difficulty remaining stable in housing. Younger participants with previous involvement in the juvenile justice system may also struggle with transitioning into adult roles (Massoglia & Uggen, 2010), resulting in challenges to maintaining independent living arrangements.

Limitations of Findings

The data used in this study provided a unique opportunity to evaluate the intersection between criminal history and housing outcomes. However, the data were limited by the scope of available records and information obtained. Because the data were obtained from a single building in a supportive housing program in the Seattle area, it is unlikely that the results of this evaluation can be appropriately generalized to all formerly homeless ex-offenders in supportive housing programs nationwide. Similarly, because this study involved the evaluation of a single program, the results are unable to be generalized to all similar programs (Maxfield & Babbie, 2008).

Another limitation of the study arose from the availability and quantity of data. The supportive housing building evaluated in the study was comprised of only 81 units for single individuals, which restricted the number of total records during the data collection period. As a result, the number of records available for the evaluation was limited by the number of vacant units in the building. In addition, building restrictions limited occupancy to one participant per unit, with limited exceptions for reasonable accommodations. The data gathered reflected only single individuals living alone, and did not reflect any potential housing outcome differences

between single ex-offenders and ex-offenders living with their families. Women and racial minorities other than African Americans were also highly underrepresented in this study. As such, comparisons between different racial groups and between genders were not evaluated. Case studies or evaluations of programs targeting these underrepresented groups may be valuable toward understanding any unique barriers to housing success they may face.

The collections methods for some of the variables were the final limitation of the study. While some variables, such as age and income at entry, were deemed highly reliable because they were verified with third-party documentation, measures of other variables may be less reliable. Criminal history was documented using a third-party screening service, but research suggests that these services are not always accurate or thorough (Bushway et al., 2011). Many applicants may also have committed crimes without detection or using false identification, resulting in no official records of criminal history. Conversely, some applicants may have experienced disproportionate rates of arrest or citation for criminal acts due to profiling, homelessness status, or other demographic factors. Because applicants were not asked to self-certify criminal history, it is possible that the variables related to criminal history were over- or under-representative of applicants' criminal backgrounds.

Similarly, the collection of lease violation notices and incident reports was also limited by the discretion of staff who were in charge of building management. While staff were instructed to issue lease violation notices when necessary, some staff may have elected to forego official notices in favor of more informal sanctions, which were not documented in this study. This may be especially true for tenants who were just making the transition from chronic homelessness to housing. Staff may also have been reluctant to log incident reports for seemingly minor issues, or may have forgotten to complete the data entry process if the data

were not entered immediately following the incident. Because data were collected using the program's electronic records, it is also possible that some records may have been omitted because they were not uploaded to the database, or were uploaded after the data were gathered. Despite these limitations, the secondary data provided by the agency offered a useful opportunity to evaluate a relationship that is often overlooked in social science research.

Considering the limitations of this study, future research should evaluate diverse sources of secondary data that capture the relationship between criminal history and housing success. Sources such as public housing authorities, affordable housing providers, and large property management companies may provide a wealth of aggregate information about tenants' past criminal histories and performance during tenancy. At the same time, these programs will include a large subset of the ex-offender population, including those who are not literally homeless at the time of program entry and who do not require the services associated with supportive housing programs. Analyzing data from these sources may also provide valuable information about the population of ex-offenders with families, which was not analyzed in this study.

Future research should also consider the importance of self-reported and qualitative data in the evaluation of both criminal history and housing outcomes. Because official statistics and reports exclude a large figure of crime, while often reflecting profiling biases in police and court practices. By including self-reported criminal history along with official data, future research may dispel some myths about ex-offenders with official convictions and those who have avoided prosecution or who have sealed or expunged records. The inclusion of qualitative data from landlords and property managers may also highlight informational shortfalls in the use of official lease violation notices and reasons for leaving. Interviews with housing providers may also

provide empirical perspectives from actual landlords regarding tenant selection and screening criteria. By integrating these sources of data with verified information, future evaluations may provide a more complete picture of the housing search process for ex-offenders.

Policy Implications

At this time, empirical research examining the relationship between criminal history and tenancy is extremely limited. Many policymakers and community members believe that ex-offenders present a danger or risk to others, and are reluctant to permit ex-offenders to live, work, and socialize in their communities. The results of this study suggest that the relationship between criminal history and tenancy is multi-faceted and must be examined at a more critical level. However, significant policy changes and attitudinal shifts must be made to create an environment where ex-offenders are permitted to access rental housing at rates comparable to non-offenders.

In order for future research to be possible, existing policies that prevent ex-offenders from accessing rental housing programs must be reexamined. This study has demonstrated that ex-offenders who were convicted more than one year prior to entering the program were more likely to remain in the program for a longer period of time and to experience a positive or neutral housing outcome, when compared to ex-offenders with more recent convictions. Relaxing existing policies that disallow any types of criminal convictions within a longer time period may contribute to a reduction in housing barriers for convicted ex-offenders who have remained crime-free after their most recent convictions.

Consistent with recommendations from social justice agencies, such as the Seattle Human Rights Commission (2011), city and state governments should also consider extending protections to housing applicants based on conviction and arrest history. Because criminal

history is not a federally protected class, any additional protections would need to be granted by state and municipal governments. The joint proposal by the Seattle Office for Civil Rights and the Seattle Human Rights Commission (2011) outlines specific suggestions to reduce housing barriers for convicted ex-offenders, including abolishing blanket restrictions on all ex-offenders or all ex-felons and determining whether or not the nature of an applicant's prior convictions are directly related to tenancy issues. To date, the proposal has not yet been codified into municipal law. However, legislation of this nature would allow more ex-offenders to fairly access rental housing and provide a basis for future research to analyze housing outcomes and predictors.

Another integral component to the reduction of housing barriers is for landlords and housing providers to provide applicants an opportunity to explain negative items on their screening reports. Tenant assistance agencies often recommend that applicants with criminal records or poor credit histories obtain personal reference letters or other documentation to demonstrate that they will not pose undue risk to potential landlords. For example, a convicted drug offender may provide documentation that he or she has completed rehabilitation and is actively engaged in outpatient care. This process provides ex-offenders with an opportunity to explain their circumstances, including any actions they have taken to remain crime-free, and to actively participate in the community reintegration process. At the same time, landlords may be able to increase their interactions with convicted ex-offenders and reduce personal biases. Despite these benefits, landlords are not currently required to consider these references or to accept any explanation from the applicant that could potentially mitigate the criminal convictions on a screening report.

Certain factors, such as having reached a certain age at the time of entry to the program and having a higher income level, may also be correlated with a higher likelihood of successful

housing outcomes. Participants who were older than the median age of 47 years at the time of entry were more likely to remain in the program for two years. Similarly, length of tenancies generally increased as income levels increased. These observed relationships suggest that some life course turning points, such as reaching a certain age or finding adequate employment, may be correlated with stable tenancy for both ex-offenders and non-offenders. Landlords should consider these life course factors when evaluating housing applications, as convicted ex-offenders may experience significant changes that increase their social capital and stakes in conformity (Sampson & Laub, 1990; Wright & Cullen, 2004). Ex-offenders who are invested in other aspects of society may be especially interested in maintaining stable housing.

While the modification of existing policies is critical for all ex-offenders seeking rental housing, this study has demonstrated that additional support may be needed for certain types of ex-offenders. Ex-offenders with an implied history of chronic homelessness generally struggled more frequently than other groups of ex-offenders or non-offenders, and likely experienced additional barriers due to the collateral effects of chronic homelessness. Ex-offenders who were identified to be high utilizers of emergency services and who were identified as having a dual diagnosis also experienced more barriers to successful tenancy. These populations often struggle with the long-term effects chronic health conditions and self-medication, which may warrant specialized treatment plans and services. Studies of programs that link supportive housing to identified high utilizers of emergency services have demonstrated a reduction in overall service usage (Mackelprang, Collins, & Clifasefi, 2014; Sadowski et al., 2009), but the results of this research suggest that additional services may be needed to ensure that individuals in this population are able to remain stably housed for longer periods of time.

This study also offered some insight to the relationship between housing success and minority status. While identification as a racial minority was not found to be correlated with overall housing success, tenants who identified as racial minorities received a higher average number of 3-day Pay or Vacate notices during their tenancies. This phenomenon may be due to blocked economic opportunities that are especially enhanced for people of color. The higher incidence rate of financial difficulties during tenancy highlights the important problem facing minority ex-offenders who must seek employment and other legitimate means of generating income after incarceration. Although it is not possible to distinguish between tenants who were seeking employment and those who were not, additional services related to financial self-sufficiency may be an integral component in reducing housing barriers and challenges for certain groups of ex-offenders.

The results of this study demonstrate that the relationship between criminal history and housing success is multifaceted. Housing outcome differences between certain groups of ex-offenders and non-offenders in a supportive housing environment have been found to be statistically insignificant. However, existing policies often exclude entire groups of ex-offenders from rental housing opportunities that may greatly improve their abilities to successfully reenter society after incarceration. Future research on this topic should include tenancy data for ex-offenders in other types of rental housing, including non-supportive housing and housing available for families. At the same time, qualitative and self-report data should be combined with existing official data to better understand the relationship between criminal history and housing success.

In order for future research to be possible, public attitudes toward ex-offenders must shift from exclusionary to integrative. Exclusionary policies that prohibit all ex-offenders from

seeking rental housing must be reevaluated, and landlords and housing providers should allow applicants to explain negative items on their criminal background reports. In urban areas and areas where rental housing is highly competitive, local governments should consider extending certain protections to convicted ex-offenders by requiring landlords to evaluate housing applications on other criteria before accessing criminal history information. Finally, successful housing outcomes for ex-offenders must not be restricted to a discussion of housing-related issues. The criminal justice system, lawmakers, and other social institutions must work in partnership to ensure that ex-offenders and other marginalized groups are provided with opportunities to learn the life skills that will lead to financial self-sufficiency, housing stability, and successful community integration.

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Table 1

Length of Tenancy in Months by Group

	n	M	(SD)	Minimum	Maximum	Range
				Average length of tenancy (months)		
Offense Groups						
Verifiable criminal history**						
Yes	67	29.23	(16.54)	.3	48.1	47.8
No	18	39.7	(13.56)	6.1	48.1	42
Violent criminal history						
Yes	52	29.77	(16.13)	.3	48.1	47.8
No	33	27.36	(18.37)	2.6	48.0	45.4
Property offense history						
Yes	51	29.1	(16.89)	2.6	48.1	45.5
No	34	35.0	(15.34)	.3	48.1	47.8
Drug offense history						
Yes	26	30.87	(16.76)	.3	48.1	47.8
No	59	31.7	(16.46)	2.6	48.1	45.5
Criminal trespass offense history						
Yes	40	27.41	(15.14)	5.6	47.7	42.2
No	45	35.04	(16.9)	.3	48.1	47.8
Prostitution offense history						
Yes	13	21.37	(15.91)	2.6	47.2	44.6
No	72	33.27	(16.0)	.3	48.1	47.8
Conviction within past year*						
Yes	21	24.56	(15.46)	2.6	46.4	43.8
No	64	33.71	(16.25)	.3	48.1	47.8
Control Variables						
High utilizer of emergency resources*						
Yes	42	26.37	(16.73)	.3	48.0	47.7
No	44	35.45	(15.3)	3.4	48.1	44.7
Below median age at entry*						
Yes	47	26.34	(17.52)	.3	48.1	47.8
No	40	37.03	(13.33)	3.4	48.1	44.7
Zero income at entry						
Yes	17	26.87	(17.15)	2.6	48.1	45.5
No	70	32.25	(16.36)	.3	48.1	47.8
Minority race						
Yes	57	31.61	(16.47)	.3	48.1	47.8
No	30	30.42	(16.96)	4.7	48.1	43.4
Dual diagnosis						
Yes	45	29.3	(15.51)	2.6	48.1	45.5
No	38	35.23	(16.09)	4.7	48.1	43.4

Indicates significance at p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at p < .01 level.

Table 2

Correlations between Ratio Level Variables and Length of Tenancy in Months

	Length of tenancy (months)
Criminal History	
Number of total offense convictions	-.27*
Number of violent offense convictions	-.10
Number of property offense convictions	-.17
Number of drug manufacturing/distribution convictions	.10
Number of criminal trespass offense convictions	-.10
Number of prostitution offense convictions	-.10
Control Variables	
Age at entry	.37**
Education level	.13
Income level at entry	.22*

Indicates significance at the p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at the p < .01 level.*

Table 3

Numbers of Lease Violation Notices and Incident Reports by Offense Group

	n	3-day Pay or Vacate Notices		10-day Comply or Vacate Notices		Incident Reports		Tenant-on-Tenant Violence Reports		911 Calls	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Verifiable criminal history											
Yes	66	1.73	(2.78)	4.18	(5.39)	1.52	(2.13)	.92	(1.19)	4.23	(9.61)
No	18	1.83	(2.23)	3.56	(7.09)	1.28	(2.89)	.61	(1.24)	3.28	(4.03)
Violent criminal history											
Yes	52	1.62	(2.42)	4.42	(5.67)	1.46	(2.01)	1.0	(1.19)	4.54	(10.69)
No	32	1.97	(3.02)	3.44	(5.9)	1.47	(2.74)	.63	(1.19)	3.19	(3.73)
Property offense history											
Yes	51	1.59	(2.44)	4.65	(5.66)	1.65	(2.27)	.98	(1.23)	4.67	(10.71)
No	33	2.0	(2.98)	3.12	(5.85)	1.18	(2.34)	.67	(1.14)	3.03	(3.97)
Drug offense history											
Yes	26	2.92*	(3.7)	3.42	(3.89)	1.46	(2.34)	1.0	(1.23)	3.0	(3.29)
No	58	1.22*	(1.83)	4.33	(6.43)	1.47	(2.3)	.79	(1.18)	4.48	(10.24)
Criminal trespass offense history											
Yes	39	1.74	(2.56)	5.49*	(6.23)	2.56	(.41)	1.08	(1.38)	5.67	(12.1)
No	45	1.76	(2.76)	2.8*	(5.05)	1.98	(.3)	.67	(.98)	2.6	(3.46)
Prostitution offense history											
Yes	13	.85*	(.8)	3.62	(3.87)	1.77	(2.59)	1.23	(1.3)	2.85	(2.89)
No	71	1.92*	(2.84)	4.13	(6.05)	1.41	(2.25)	.79	(1.18)	4.24	(9.39)
Conviction within past year											
Yes	21	2.19	(3.28)	5.24	(6.42)	2.29	(2.92)	1.24	(1.41)	6.38	(15.85)
No	63	1.6	(2.42)	3.65	(5.51)	1.19	(2.0)	.73	(1.1)	3.24	(4.23)
High utilizer of emergency resources											
Yes	42	2.0	(3.15)	5.70*	(6.77)	1.93*	(2.51)	1.17*	(1.34)	5.77	(11.67)
No	44	1.5	(2.03)	2.34*	(3.89)	.95*	(1.94)	.52*	(.93)	2.23	(3.26)

Indicates significance at p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at p < .01 level.

Table 4

Correlations between Ratio Level Variables and Numbers of Lease Violations Received

	Number of 3-day Pay or Vacate Notices	Number of 10-day Comply or Vacate Notices
Criminal History		
Number of total criminal convictions	.06	.13
Number of violent offense convictions	0	-.08
Number of property offense convictions	-.08	.49**
Number of drug manufacturing/distribution convictions	.19	-.14
Number of criminal trespass offense convictions	-.02	-.07
Number of prostitution offense convictions	-.02	-.08
Control Variables		
Age at entry	.12	-.07
Education level	.05	.13
Income level at entry	-.05	-.01

Indicates significance at the p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at the p < .01 level.

Table 5

Correlations between Numbers of Convictions and Numbers of Incidents During Tenancy

	Number of Incident Reports	Number of Tenant-on-Tenant Violence Reports	Number of 911 Calls
Criminal History			
Total criminal convictions	.17	.13	.06
Violent offense convictions	-.1	-.11	-.05
Property offense convictions	.24*	.06	.07
Drug manufacturing/distribution convictions	-.02	.04	-.09
Criminal trespass offense convictions	-.09	-.11	-.05
Prostitution offense convictions	-.1	-.11	-.05
Control Variables			
Age at entry	.04	-.09	-.1
Education level	.22*	-.09	.1
Income level at entry	-.16	-.28*	.02

Indicates significance at the p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at the p < .01 level.

Table 6

Number of Lease Violation Notices and Incident Reports by Demographic Group

	n	3-day Pay or Vacate Notices		10-day Comply or Vacate Notices		Incident Reports		Tenant-on-Tenant Violence Reports		911 Calls	
		M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)
Below median age at entry											
Yes	47	1.62*	(2.6)	4.51	(6.74)	1.55	(2.21)	.96	(1.23)	4.47	(11.0)
No	39	1.9*	(2.69)	3.33	(4.13)	1.28	(2.38)	.69	(1.13)	3.33	(4.35)
Zero income at entry											
Yes	17	2.0	(3.34)	4.41	(5.82)	2.76	(3.47)	1.41	(1.77)	2.06	(2.54)
No	69	1.68	(2.45)	3.87	(5.71)	1.1	(1.76)	.7	(.96)	4.42	(9.49)
Minority race											
Yes	57	2.14*	(2.87)	4.02	(5.29)	1.23	(2.0)	.77	(1.13)	3.23	(4.25)
No	29	.97*	(1.9)	3.9	(6.55)	1.83	(2.74)	.97	(1.3)	5.38	(13.64)
Dual diagnosis											
Yes	45	1.56	(2.41)	4.76	(5.84)	1.98*	(2.88)	1.11*	(1.45)	3.73*	(4.51)
No	38	2.11	(2.93)	3.37	(5.64)	.89*	(1.11)	.53*	(.73)	4.45*	(12.05)

Indicates significance at p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at p < .01 level.*

Table 7

Crosstabulation of Housing Outcomes and Offense Groups

	Completion of Two Years in Program				Negative Housing Outcome			
	Yes	No	χ^2	Cramer's V	Yes	No	χ^2	Cramer's V
Verifiable criminal history			4.28*	.22			1.69	.14
Yes	38	29			30	37		
No	15	3			5	13		
Violent offense history			1.24	.12			4.31*	.23
Yes	30	22			26	26		
No	23	10			9	24		
Property offense history			4.81*	.24			5.06*	.24
Yes	27	24			26	25		
No	26	8			9	25		
Drug offense history			.15	.04			.02	.02
Yes	17	9			11	15		
No	36	23			24	35		
Criminal trespass offense history			4.91*	.24			4.0*	.22
Yes	20	20			21	19		
No	33	12			14	31		
Prostitution offense history			3.73	.21			4.99*	.24
Yes	5	8			9	4		
No	48	24			26	46		
Conviction within the past year			4.52*	.23			10.54***	.35
Yes	9	12			15	6		
No	44	20			20	44		
High utilizer of emergency resources			6.81**	.28			10.52**	.35
Yes	20	33			25	17		
No	22	11			11	33		

*Indicates significance at p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at p < .01 level.
***Indicates significance at p < .001 level.

Table 8

Crosstabulation of Housing Outcomes and Demographic Groups

	Completion of Two Years in Program				Negative Housing Outcome			
	Yes	No	χ^2	Cramer's V	Yes	No	χ^2	Cramer's V
Below median age at entry			7.49**	.29			10.88***	.35
Yes	23	24			27	20		
No	31	8			9	31		
Zero income at entry			2.02	.15			4.74*	.23
Yes	8	9			11	6		
No	46	24			25	45		
Minority race			.08	.03			.07	.03
Yes	36	21			23	34		
No	18	12			13	17		
Dual diagnosis			2.93	.19			3.42	.2
Yes	25	20			22	23		
No	28	10			11	27		

Indicates significance at p < .05 level.
**Indicates significance at p < .01 level.*
***Indicates significance at p < .001 level.*