Reentering the community a criminal: A case study of jail inmates released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections

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Reentering the community a criminal: A case study of jail inmates released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections

Abstract
The current study examines inmates' transition into the community upon release from the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC), a rural county jail in New Hampshire, in 2006. The present goals are to analyze the degree to which these individuals were able to successfully reintegrate into the community and to identify potential risk factors for future engagement in crime. To meet these goals, the current study utilizes (1) data collected during pre-release discharge plan meetings (n = 160); (2) data retrieved from the official SCDOC corrections database, which reports any arrests and/or incarcerations that have resulted since release (n = 160); and (3) comprehensive self-report survey data (n = 26), which measured inmates' experiences obtaining housing, employment, health care, mental health treatment, and transportation upon release. Descriptive findings, limitations, and empirically-informed strategies for improving the transition from the correctional institution to the community are discussed.

Keywords
Sociology, Criminology and Penology

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REENTERING THE COMMUNITY A CRIMINAL: A CASE STUDY OF JAIL INMATES RELEASED FROM THE STRAFFORD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

BY

Jillian Marie Kalosky
Baccalaureate Degree, University of New Hampshire, 2006

THESIS

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
in
Sociology

May, 2008
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April 29, 2008
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ iii

LIST OF TABLES ................................................................................................................ vi

LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................ vii

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ viii

CHAPTER Page

I. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................... 1

II. THE ENTANGLEMENT OF DETERRENCE THEORY WITH THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF PUNISHMENT ....................................................... 8

   Lack of Empirical Support ......................................................................................... 10

   Inaccurate Assumptions about Human Nature ....................................................... 13

III. HYPOTHESES .......................................................................................................... 18

   List of Hypotheses .................................................................................................. 28

IV. DATA AND METHODS ............................................................................................ 31

   Research Site ............................................................................................................ 31

   Sample ..................................................................................................................... 32

   Methods .................................................................................................................. 34

   Research Costs ....................................................................................................... 37

V. DATA ANALYSIS ...................................................................................................... 38
VI. RESULTS.................................................................................................................40

Sample Demographics .........................................................................................40

Housing Instability ...............................................................................................41

Employment ..........................................................................................................43

Recidivism .............................................................................................................45


Differences in Post-Release Experiences by Sex ..............................................54

Testing Criminological Theories ........................................................................57

Other Predictors of Recidivism ...........................................................................60

VII. CONCLUSIONS...............................................................................................64

VIII. LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION...............................................................73

REFERENCES........................................................................................................83

APPENDICES .........................................................................................................90

APPENDIX A  Table A1: Descriptive Statistics for Discharge Plan and Self-Report Survey Data.........................................................................................91

APPENDIX B  Survey Instrument...........................................................................96

APPENDIX C  Institutional Review Board Approval .............................................108

APPENDIX D  Strafford County Department of Corrections Inmate Release Questionnaire Form .................................................................109
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2: Multivariate Logistic Regression of Recidivism on Pre-release Needs ..........48

Table 3: Multivariate Logistic Regression of Recidivism on Impulsivity, Strain, Rational Choice, and other Related Variables .........................................................63

Table A1: Descriptive Statistics for Discharge Plan and Self-Report Survey Data.....91
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Employment: Pre-release Need and Post-release Outcomes .........................44

Figure 2: Differences between Respondents and Non-Respondents' Post-release Needs .................................................................47

Figure 3: Self-report and Official Data on Recidivism among Survey Respondents and Non-Respondents ...........................................50

Figure 4: Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment: Pre-release Needs, Post-release Outcomes, and Recidivism .................................53

Figure 5: Criminal History: Male and Female Respondents' Prior Arrests and Incarcerations ................................................................55
ABSTRACT

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by

Jillian Marie Kalosky

University of New Hampshire, May, 2008

The current study examines inmates’ transition into the community upon release from the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC), a rural county jail in New Hampshire, in 2006. The present goals are to analyze the degree to which these individuals were able to successfully reintegrate into the community and to identify potential risk factors for future engagement in crime. To meet these goals, the current study utilizes 1) data collected during pre-release discharge plan meetings (n =160); 2) data retrieved from the official SCDOC corrections database, which reports any arrests and/or incarcerations that have resulted since release (n =160); and 3) comprehensive self-report survey data (n=26), which measured inmates’ experiences obtaining housing, employment, health care, mental health treatment, and transportation upon release. Descriptive findings, limitations, and empirically-informed strategies for improving the transition from the correctional institution to the community are discussed.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For inmates who have completed their sentences, the transition from a highly structured total institution into the community is, often, an unstable and uncertain process. Numerous challenges are faced, such as criminal stigmatization and legally sanctioned discrimination, that restrict and obstruct opportunities to rebuild normal, productive, law-abiding lives (Samuels and Mukamal 2004). For 67.5% of U.S. state prison inmates, this precarious process leads to rearrest, for 46.9% reconviction, and for 51.8% reincarceration within three years (Langan and Levin 2002). Recidivism among jail inmates in the U.S. has received significantly less attention. “Few jails track their recidivism rates or evaluate their programs with great precision” (Lyman and Lobuglio 2006: 1). This is due to limited staff resources, but “the more fundamental reason is that they fail to see the relevance of calculating recidivism rates for highly mobile and complex jail populations” (ibid). As a result, few jails have recidivism rates for their populations and, more broadly, no studies of national scope have determined the recidivism rate of jail inmates. The Hampden County Sheriff’s Department in Massachusetts provides an exception to the rule as recidivism rates have been calculated since 1998. The most recent data from 2004 concludes that 25.5% of the county’s released jail inmates were reconvicted and 21.1% reincarcerated within one year.
The problems and costs associated with incarceration and recidivism\(^1\) are magnified when considering that over 2.2 million people are currently locked up in American jails and prisons. Of this figure, 93-95\% will be one-day released, many within one to three years (Langan and Levin 2002). As Seiter and Kandela (2003) bluntly assert, correctional facilities and their populations may change over time, but “what has remained constant is that almost every inmate is still released” (p. 381). Currently, this amounts to over $65 billion in annual spending for the US system of corrections and results in over 650,000 jail, state, and federal prison inmates returning to the community every year (Travis, Solomon & Waul 2001; Harrison and Beck 2005).

Though their “debt to society” is paid, individuals released from correctional custody are at a heightened risk of informal stigmatization, financial instability, homelessness, unemployment, drug and alcohol addiction, and weakened family and social connections and support systems (Rose and Clear 2001; Petersilila 2004; Saumels and Mukamal 2004). Moreover, each state has enacted laws that allow discrimination against those with criminal records, which further impedes successful reentry into the community upon sentence completion. According to the Legal Action Center’s (2004) national report on prisoner reentry, authored by Samuels and Mukamal, these laws are considered “unfair and counterproductive barriers to the reentry into society of people with criminal records” and include laws that 1) permit employer discrimination towards

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\(^1\) Recidivism generally refers to the resumption of criminal behavior. For the purposes of this study, recidivism will refer to instances in which individuals are rearrested. Note: the official data collected includes rearrests and subsequent reincarcerations.
those with a criminal record, 2) remove access to public housing, public assistance and food stamps, 3) ban adoptive and foster parenting, and 4) revoke driver's licenses.

In their comprehensive report, Samuels and Mukamal (2004) graded each state in terms of their legal barriers to reintegration for released inmates and issued "report cards" accordingly. New Hampshire, ranking fifth best in the country, was found to have relatively few legal barriers to reentry. Notably, New Hampshire has no laws in place that limit or ban public assistance or food stamps to those with a criminal record. One-third of states that have done so by banning food stamps and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to those convicted of felony drug offenses in accordance with The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. In regards to public housing opportunities in New Hampshire, the LAC report discussed and evaluated only the Manchester Public Housing Authority's policy concerning those with a criminal record, which makes "individual eligibility determinations based on relevance of criminal history" and does not take into consideration those arrests that never led to conviction (Samuels and Mukamal 2004: 29). Upon inquiry into the Housing Authority of Dover, NH, where the research site is located, it was found that each housing authority in the state makes its own determination as to how to handle applicants for public housing with criminal records. In Dover, background checks are performed for those seventeen years of age and older, with particular attention paid to felony and drug-related convictions. If an individual's application is denied for any reason, they are granted an informal hearing, wherein the individual can discuss the circumstances of their conviction and any rehabilitative efforts they have engaged in since release. They may also have
individuals speak on their behalf, such as case workers and/or probation/parole officers. As such, the Dover and Manchester Housing Authorities appear to provide individuals with criminal records a reasonable opportunity to gain public housing by “taking it all into consideration,” as the Dover Housing Manager indicated (Zaleski 2008).

Despite favorable marks regarding access to public assistance and public housing, New Hampshire ranks poorly\(^2\) with respect to legal barriers to gaining employment. State legislation allows employers and occupational licensing agencies to refuse employment to individuals who have criminal convictions and those who have been arrested, but never convicted of a crime, regardless of their qualifications for the position. Only nine states prohibit the use of an arrest that never led to a conviction as justification for employment refusal. The latter is notable because it extends discrimination beyond those who have served time in a jail or prison to include the millions of individuals arrested ever year, but never found guilty of a crime (Samuels and Mukamal 2004). This legally sanctioned discrimination runs in direct opposition to the founding principle that individuals are “innocent until proven, by competent evidence, to be guilty” (Coffin v. United States 1895). Furthermore, without the opportunity to obtain a stable, legitimate source of income, individuals’ ability to gain housing, rebuild relationships with family members, and pay off debts accumulated while incarcerated are severely limited.

Consequently, individuals may resort to alternative sources of income or innovative means, as Merton (1938) would assert, to support themselves and sometimes their family when turned away by employers who are legally authorized to discriminate using

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\(^2\) New Hampshire was given eight points on a scale from zero (best) to ten (worst possible score).
criminal background checks. Thirty-six states have employment policies similar to those found in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire, ranking fifth best in the country for having few legal barriers to reentry, and Dover, New Hampshire, particularly in terms of public housing, appear to be of the least legally restrictive places for those returning to the community upon release, despite significant legal barriers to employment. Thus, inmates released in New Hampshire and, more specifically, Dover, New Hampshire, should have fewer difficulties reintegrating into the community upon release from correctional custody than those released into other cities and states. In addition, the current sample of released jail inmates should have a greater chance of successful reintegration than other released inmates as a result of their having relatively short sentences and, thus, less sustained contact with and learning from criminal others (Burgess and Akers 1966). Shorter sentences also equate with less time missed from work and fewer wages lost, less strain inflicted on relationships with family, friends and even employers, and less separation from the greater population of law-abiding citizens. Hence, the present study will illuminate the post-release experiences of these individuals with comparatively greater chances for reintegration: men and women who served on average 72 days in a rural county jail in Dover, New Hampshire. As will be discussed, the study participants encountered an array of challenges including, but not limited to, finding housing, employment, reliable transportation and access to health care upon reentering the community. This study highlights the difficulties inherent in making the social transition from jail, even among those with the greatest chance for success.
The present study begins with a brief discussion of the history and current American system of punishment, followed by a critique of deterrence theory and its predictions for the control of crime. From these discussions emerges the conclusion that a significant imbalance exists between efforts to punish offenders and efforts to aid offenders reentering the community. More specifically, it is argued that the legal barriers to successful reentry outnumber those that facilitate offenders' reintegration into society. This is argued to be the result of deterrence-based policies coupled with societal disregard for those who “choose” to be criminals. Implicit in these misperceptions of criminals is the notion that crime is the result of a rational choice and criminals are, in some way, qualitatively different than law-abiding citizens because they knowingly choose to be. Of particular importance, it is argued that this societal contempt and disregard for those who engage in crime prolongs the punishment individuals experience long after one's sentence has been completed by limiting opportunities for reintegration and association with noncriminal others. This extended punishment beyond the jail or prison confines and into the community is evident in and compounded by discriminatory practices by employers, housing authorities, landlords, offices of public assistance, adoption agencies, loan companies, and other sources. Though state legislators ostensibly aim to protect the safety of their constituents, it is argued that laws that reinforce and legitimize discriminatory practices only serve to increase instability, vulnerability, and desperation among those released from correctional custody. This in turn increases their risk of recidivism and decreases public safety. These discussions form the theoretical and contextual backdrop for the reentry crisis generally and the
current examination of the reintegration process among a sample of inmates released from a county jail in New Hampshire more specifically.
"If we keep passing laws and making policies as if offenders were perfectly rational, we wind up inflicting more punishment than is necessary for less crime control benefit than is possible" (Kleiman 2000: 6).

During the Age of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, philosophers and scholars began rejecting the arbitrariness, corruption, and superstition that had commanded the legal system for centuries. The “rule of law” and the notion that individuals employed reason and rationality began to emerge as the basis of individuals’ decision making processes. Human nature was considered naturally hedonistic, such that individuals attempted to maximize pleasures while minimizing associated pains. The emergence of these notions of human nature informed criminologists’ ideas about the nature of crime. To classical theorists, such as Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham, crime was considered the result of rational decision making wherein individuals assessed the benefits (i.e. pleasures) of committing crime to outweigh the costs (i.e. pains). Given this notion of human nature, a simple remedy was put forth by Beccaria (1764) that crime could be effectively controlled by adjusting the punishment to be greater than the
perceived benefits associated with the crime. More specifically, Beccaria (1764) focused on adjusting the certainty, severity, and celerity of punishment in order to deter one's rational engagement in crime. He argued that "one of the greatest curbs on crime is not the cruelty of punishments, but their infallibility," suggesting a major shift in crime control efforts from erratic and often extreme punishments to those that "fit" the crime and are, without fail, consistently applied (Becarria 1764: 58).

This theory of deterrence and the notion that individuals are rational actors has laid the foundation of the current American system of crime control and has provided theoretical support for the legislative "war on crime" that has, most notably, generated mandatory sentencing, truth in sentencing, and "Three Strikes and You're Out" laws. Of importance to the current study, deterrence theory has implications for the control of crime and efforts to reduce recidivism. According to the theory, a "tough on crime" stance will sufficiently deter criminals from engaging in crime because the costs associated with punishment will be high enough that they outweigh the benefits. Further, the theory assumes that punishments that are certain, swift, and severe (i.e. of proportional severity to the crime) should also deter crime or the resumption of crime. It is argued by the current study, however, that the theory of deterrence 1) lacks adequate empirical support, and 2) makes inaccurate assumptions about human nature. Thus, it is inappropriately and ineffectively applied to the administration of justice in the United States.
Lack of Empirical Support

As succinctly stated by Bailey and Lott (1976), “it would be a mistake to assume that deterrence is well established in theory and research” (emphasis added, p. 99). Rather, empirical support for deterrence theory is mixed, with the certainty of punishment emerging as the “most influential… of the three sanction threat perceptions” on the deterrence of crime (Pogarsky and Piquero 2003: 98). Though the “most influential,” the certainty of punishment has only a small or modest deterrent influence. Some researchers have found that the perceived certainty of punishment is inversely related to crime, providing “justification for focusing deterrence research on [it]… given doubts about the importance of the severity of punishment” and little attention paid to the celerity of punishment (Grasmick and Bryjjack 1980: 472; Paternoster 1987). Other more recent research performed by Pogarsky and Piquero (2003), however, has found that punished individuals were more likely to reoffend, demonstrating, rather, a positive punishment effect, inconsistent with the previous findings. According to Pogarsky and Piquero (2003), individuals who were punished believed that certainty of being punished again was lower in comparison with individuals who were not punished. In other words, being punished did not increase individuals’ sanction certainty estimates nor did punishment

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3 That is, certainty, severity, and celerity of punishment.

4 For exceptions and support, see Kraus 1976 and Mendes 2004.
lower individuals’ engagement in future crime. This positive punishment effect supports the resetting hypothesis, or the theory that an offender “resets” the odds of being punished, and runs in opposition to deterrence theory, related extant research, and pulls the rug from beneath decades of potentially misguided legislation (Pogarsky and Piquero 2003).

In the defense of deterrence theory, the above study and others (Paternoster and Piquero 1995; Piquero and Paternoster 1998; Piquero and Pogarsky 2002) typically employ drinking and driving scenarios, use college student samples, and operationalize “punishment” as being pulled over by the police when believing oneself to be over the legal blood alcohol level, assuming that “such an encounter was traumatic enough to constitute ‘punishment’” (Piquero and Pogarsky 2002). The assumption that being pulled over without further legal sanctions is “traumatic enough” to be considered punishment may be a major weakness of these articles and should be considered a limitation of the support for the positive punishment effect.

Refocusing on the current study, what do findings suggest when punishment, beyond being pulled over by the police, is administered and the sample includes criminal offenders, rather than college students? Does the experience of an actual legal sanction impact the certainty of punishment such that it has a deterrent effect on future engagement in crime? If so, the predictions of deterrence theory are supported. Extant research, however, suggests that offenders do little planning before committing crimes

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5 More explicitly, the positive punishment effect refers to the positive correlation between punishment and subsequent crimes.
and do not consider the consequences associated with crime, even after punishment (Bennett and Wright 1984; Feeney 1986; Wright and Decker 1994). According to Pogarsky, Kim, and Paternoster (2005), arrests have no effect on individuals' perceptions of the certainty of being arrested in the future. Contrary to rational choice and deterrence theorists' predictions, there is a “lack of regard for the possible legal consequences, implying that sanction threats have little influence” among a sample of active offenders, specifically burglars and robbers (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt, and Paternoster 2004: 185). This finding that offenders have little concern for consequences supports the current argument and may be one explanation of the high rate of recidivism in the United States, such that 67% of individuals are rearrested within three years (Langan and Levin 2006). For those offenders who do demonstrate concern for the consequences, a lack of legitimate, alternative means of “getting by” may, otherwise, force their hand into engagement in crime (Merton 1938).

Other research, however, has found the fear of punishment (i.e. returning to prison) to be paramount in motivating persistent thieves and active armed robbers to desist their criminal involvement (Shover 1996; Cusson and Pinsonneault 1986). The generalizability of this finding beyond samples of “persistent” and “active” thieves and robbers is highly debatable. If it were a reliable finding and applicable to other types of criminals, this research would support deterrence theory and the notion that offenders do, in fact, consider the consequences of future punishment upon receiving punishment. With a mountain of mixed evidence, we can conclude that there is limited empirical support for deterrence theory, with the “most influential” sanction threat perception (i.e.
the certainty of punishment) found to only modestly deter crime, if it deters crime at all. As Cullen and Agnew put forth, we can “tentatively conclude that punishing people does not reduce their subsequent crime” (2001: 405).

Inaccurate Assumptions about Human Nature

Deterrence theory assumes that deterrence is possible because individuals are rational actors who possess the ability to engage in cost-benefit analyses and do so to make decisions and determine appropriate courses of action. This is, largely, an overgeneralization of human nature. As Parisi and Smith (2005) write:

Most of us do act as utility maximizers much of the time. Unfortunately, however, the assumptions underlying economic analysis do not consistently predict individual behavior. As a consequence, social systems that rely upon an understanding of objective rationality may not always work as predicted. Criminal sanctions, which are premised upon certain theories of human behavior, may thus act as a deterrent against most people, most of the time, but they may not deter all of the people all of the time (P. 289).

One could argue that the criminal justice system is wrongly predicated on this perfect notion of rationality and largely overlooks, and thus cannot control, those crimes committed without rational consideration, such as those committed instinctually, emotionally, or impulsively (Parisi and Smith 2005). In addition, the predictions of deterrence theory cannot account for or control instances in which crime is, in fact, the rational choice according to an individual’s subjective interpretation of the situation and his or her available options (Foglia 1999; Brezina 2001). In other words, for some, crime may be the result of an instinctual, impulsive, and/or emotional reaction. For others,
engaging in crime may be the rational decision given their individual set of circumstances. Remarkably, however, little research\(^6\) has examined offenders’ subjective perceptions of the rationality of crime and the crime(s) they have committed. As Marche (1994) writes, “The degree of offender rationality has never been directly measured ... [In research], the assumption of rationality is imposed and the results test the credibility of the assumption” (P. 389). Nevertheless, lawmakers enact and politicians support legislation guided by the principle that individuals can be deterred by increasing the costs associated with punishment to outweigh the benefits. Legislation is passed without realistic knowledge of what the costs and benefits are to individuals who engage in crime, if the costs and benefits are considered at all by these individuals. To the degree that crimes are committed instinctively, emotionally, impulsively and, otherwise, without regard for punishment, legislative increases in the costs to outweigh the perceived benefits have no meaningful effect on crime. To the degree that the criminal justice system does not adjudicate swiftly or with a high certainty of punishment, deterrence-based punishment is also limited in its effectiveness in controlling crime. In other words, “deterrence messages... may fall on deaf ears” (Wright, Caspi, Moffitt and Paternoster 2004: 180).

In summation, deterrence-based policies are erroneously applied to the administration of justice because they are built upon a “perfect” notion of human nature

\(^6\) Researchers have, however, conducted thorough qualitative studies from which they have made inferences as to the rationality of offenders’ decisions to engage in crime. See McLeod’s, “Ain’t No Makin’ It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood.”
as rational. Because criminal behavior may be largely objectively irrational or subjectively rational (to the offender), the general assumption that increasing the costs of crime (i.e. increasing severity of the punishment) will control crime is misguided. Based on these theoretical predictions, the United States has enacted tougher, wider sweeping laws such as the “three strikes” laws\(^7\), which were meant to deter even the most serious offenders from committing crime (and reoffending). The result, however, has been an exponential growth in the rate of incarceration and spending on the criminal justice system, despite declining crime rates over time. For instance, in 1980 and 1991, the homicide rates peaked at approximately 10 murders per 100,000 while the rate of incarceration in jails and state and federal prisons was 139 and 313 people per 100,000, respectively. In contrast, in 2006, the homicide rate was only 5.7, but the rate of incarceration was an alarming 501 per 100,000. With high rates of incarceration comes release on a massive scale of some 650,000 individuals every year, many of whom are nonviolent offenders\(^8\). These individuals are branded criminals, which leads to various forms of legal discrimination depending upon the city and state they return to (Samuels and Mukamal 2004; Beck et al. 2000; Sabol, Couture and Harrison 2007). For many, this stigmatization, combined with low educational attainment, lowers the chances of landing

\(^7\) Three strikes laws generally result in a 25 year to life sentence upon a third felony conviction. When not applied with any certainty, however, the ability of such legislation to be an effective deterrence is seriously hindered. This is particularly salient considering that only about 6% of index offenses result in the apprehension of a suspect. Many of these cases are handled through plea bargaining or are dropped due to lack of evidence, further limiting the perceived certainty of punishment.

\(^8\) In state prisons, only 49% are violent offenders; in jails, 25%; and in federal prisons, 13% (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 2006).
legitimate employment and finding a place to live upon release. Inmates are often high
school “drop outs” who have little or no employable skills and continue to lack such
skills and opportunities for success upon their release in the absence of any intervening
programs to aid in their reintegration (Vacca 2004; Jablecki 2005; Cookson and Carman
1987). For over half of individuals released, reincarceration is imminent (Langan and
Levin 2002).

The present study points to these weaknesses in the theoretical foundation of the
criminal justice system to explain the current reentry crisis and high recidivism rate
plaguing the US system of corrections. The general aims of the current study are 1) to
analyze the degree to which individuals are able to successfully reintegrate into the
community upon release using a sample from a rural correctional facility, the Strafford
County Department of Corrections, and 2) to identify potential risk factors for post-
release recidivism. This research is guided by the overarching hypothesis that an extreme
imbalance exists between efforts to punish and efforts to aid individuals’ reentry into the
community, resulting in a cycle of punishment that persists long after one’s sentence has
been served. This imbalance is hypothesized to stem from the theoretical presumption
that individuals are rational actors who are able to be deterred by increasing the costs
associated with crime, the general assumption that criminals deserve to experience
hardships while incarcerated and upon release, and the unrealistic and pervasive belief in
American society that individuals can simply “pull themselves up by their own
bootstraps,” tied, in large part, to the American Dream. These beliefs independently and
collectively are used to rationalize the lack of efforts by the criminal justice system to aid
individuals as they are released into society and "return home," as Petersilia titled her most recent book on the topic (2004).
CHAPTER III

HYPOTHESES

Situated within this broader context of mass-incarceration and, subsequently, mass-release into the community, the present study predicts that the sample of inmates released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections will face significantly fewer post-release barriers to success than inmates released after longer terms, with more prior convictions, and in states with more legal barriers to reentry. Though the data collected do not allow for comparisons to such populations, it is expected that the outcomes of the present sample are illustrative of the “best case scenario” of reentering the community upon release. More specifically, the subsample of released inmates who participated in the self-report survey \( n = 26 \), in comparison with non-respondents \( n = 84 \), are hypothesized to represent those with the best opportunities for success of the sample \( n = 160 \) because they have housing stability, most notably. Drawing upon the predictions of self-control theory, these individuals should be better suited to reenter the community and to avoid recidivism because they possess the self-control required to complete and return the survey materials and the ability to delay gratification as the
compensation was not immediately received\textsuperscript{9}. These factors are practically and theoretically supportive of the hypothesis that respondents represent those with the best opportunities for success in the community upon release.

First, having stable housing is the core criterion needed to establish stability of any other kind upon release. Echoing other similar findings, Michaels et al. (1992) reported that 22\% of their sample of jail inmates were homeless the night before their arrest and between 24 and 34\% had been homeless sometime in the two months prior to their arrest, illustrating the influence of housing instability on criminal activity and arrest (Belcher 1988; Gelberg, Linn and Leake 1988; Draine et al. 2002). Laws that ban those with a criminal record from accessing public housing serve to further increase the instability faced by individuals upon release (Samuels and Mukamal 2004). Without the ability to gain affordable, stable housing, the ability to land and maintain employment, rebuild tattered relationships, and avoid drug and alcohol relapse is greatly diminished (Metraux and Culhane 2004). Given the numerous reintegration challenges faced by those without housing stability as an anchor, the present study expects that survey respondents are at a significant advantage because they have, at a minimum, a stable form of housing.

In addition to stable housing, survey respondents appear, to some degree, to possess self-control and the specific ability to delay gratification. According to self-control theorists, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), criminal behavior and analogous acts

\textsuperscript{9}Unfortunately, there are no measures of self-control or, more specifically, the ability to delay gratification, among \textit{non-respondents}. Thus, the prediction that survey respondents possess self-control to an extent greater than non-respondents is unable to be empirically tested.
are said to result from the unrestrained pursuit of immediate gratification through the most expedient means available. In contrast, the process of completing a 64-item survey, placing it in the return envelope, and bringing it to a mailbox before the deadline in order to receive the promised $15 gift card of their choice is demonstrative of restraint, self-control and rule-abiding behavior. It is also indicative of trust in an unknown authority to protect and assure their anonymity. These traits, in concert with the practical utility of housing stability, are believed to favorably set survey respondents apart from non-respondents.

In light of these points, it is predicted that survey respondents, on average, will have fewer reported post-release needs than non-respondents. More specifically, it is predicted that a smaller proportion of survey respondents will have reported needing employment, housing, health care, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, a General Education Development diploma (GED), and transportation upon release than non-respondents ($H_1$). It is further expected that survey respondents will have a lower rate of recidivism\(^{10}\) than non-respondents for the aforementioned reasons, namely housing stability, self-control, and the ability to delay gratification ($H_2$).

When examining the respondents' survey data, it is important to identify two core hypotheses. First, those who have experienced difficulty finding employment, housing, and that lack access to health care are more likely to recidivate than respondents who have not experienced these difficulties upon release ($H_3$). Second, those who reported

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\(^{10}\) See discussion of the collection of recidivism data on page 35.
needing mental health and substance abuse treatment upon release (during pre-release discharge plan meetings) that have not received treatment since release are hypothesized to be more likely be recidivate than those who did not report these post-release needs \((H_4)\). To recapitulate, the rate of recidivism is predicted to be lower among survey respondents in comparison to non-respondents, but among respondents, those who have encountered the aforementioned difficulties upon release are hypothesized to be most likely to recidivate.

In accordance with one of the most reliable findings in criminological research, it is predicted that the number of self-reported prior arrests is positively related to post-release recidivism among survey respondents. Likewise, it is predicted that the number of prior incarcerations is also positively related to recidivism \((H_5)\) (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Wintemute 1999).

Utilizing the survey data, comparisons will be drawn and reported between male and female respondents. It is well-documented that men account for the majority of crimes committed and, thus, are more likely to have exposure to the criminal justice system\(^{11}\) and more prior arrests and convictions than women (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007). Accordingly, it is expected that male respondents will have reported more prior arrests and more prior incarcerations than female respondents \((H_6)\). It is further expected that male respondents will have experienced greater difficulty finding employment, housing, and other post-release needs as a result of their more frequent

\(^{11}\) Men have an 11.3% chance of going to prison in comparison with a 1% chance among women (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007).
contact with the criminal justice system. To summarize these predictions, it is hypothesized that a larger proportion of males will have reported that their life is “much more difficult now than before [they were] incarcerated” (H7).

Simply put, it is predicted that pre-release discharge planning will be viewed as more useful to those who did not recidivate in comparison to those who did (H8). In other words, it is hypothesized that recidivists are more likely to have not benefitted from this service.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, the present study utilized post-release survey data to assess respondents’ self-reported impulsivity, perceptions of the rationality of crime, perceptions that relationships with family and friends were strained due to incarceration, belief that anyone can live the American Dream, feelings of community connectedness, beliefs that help was available if needed, perceptions of the fairness and equity of the criminal justice system, and belief that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism. Hypotheses were formed in accordance with relevant criminological theories and extant literature and in conjunction with estimations made per the characteristics of the given sample of jail inmates released into a rural county in New Hampshire.

In line with self-control theory and the work of Wilson and Herrnstein (1985), a positive relationship between respondents’ impulsivity and recidivism is predicted (H9). A test of this hypothesis is considered the best available test of self-control theory in this study, given the limits of the current data. A more comprehensive measure of self-control would include the other five dimensions that make up “an invariant,
multidimensional low self-control trait," that is, preference for simple tasks, risk seeking, physical activities, self-centeredness, and temper (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Grasmick et al. 1993). Including full measures of each dimension was unrealistic as doing so would deter the sample population from completing the survey. Therefore, with a limited number of questions that could be asked of respondents, the following measures of impulsivity were included: “I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal” and “I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.” These items were drawn from Grasmick et al.’s (1993) low self-control scale (α=.82) (Tittle, Ward, and Grasmick 2003; Arneklev, Ellis, and Medlicott 2006; Baron, Forde, and Kay 2007).

The current study also predicts that belief in the rationality of crime is positively related to recidivism (H₁₀). Respondents’ belief in the rationality of crime was measured by agreement with the statement, “Crime is usually committed when the benefits outweigh the costs (the good outweighs the bad).” It is expected that crime is deemed rational among those whom incarceration, as a “cost,” is insufficient to outweigh the associated benefits of crime. It is, therefore, predicted that these individuals are more likely to recidivate than those who do not share the same perspective. The present study attempted to fill a gap in criminological literature by trying to discern whether crime, according to criminals, is the result of some rational consideration of the costs and benefits or, conversely, something else (e.g. an impulsive, instinctual, and/or emotional decision). Research generally suggests that most crimes are a result of the former rather
than the latter, but few studies have posed such a question to offenders themselves until
the present (Marche 1994).

Despite the aforesaid hypothesis that the rationality of crime is positively
associated with recidivism, it is expected that most respondents will disagree with the
above statement and indicate that crime is not the result of cost/benefit analyses. This is
hypothesized to be the case because these offenders were punished for their engagement
in crime and, thus, it is likely that the costs did outweigh the benefits for many. It may
also be the case that offenders will disavow the rationality of criminal engagement as a
coping mechanism to alleviate and/or defer the psychological stress associated with
blame and responsibility for their crime.

The present study predicts a positive relationship between respondents’ agreement
that relationships with family and friends were strained as a result of their incarceration
and post-release recidivism \((H_{11})\). This hypothesis is based on the predictions of General
Strain Theory (GST), which emerged as a revitalization of strain theory by Agnew
(1992). According to GST, crime results from strains, which are “events or conditions
that are disliked by the individual,” and that generate negative emotions, such as
frustration, anger, sadness, depression (Cullen and Agnew 2006). As Agnew (2006)
writes, “GST is the only theory to focus explicitly on negative relationships with others;
relationships in which others take the individual’s valued possessions, treat the individual
in an aversive manner, or prevent the individual from achieving his or her goals.” With
this in mind, the test of the current hypothesis will evaluate the degree to which strained
relationships with family members and friends increased the likelihood of recidivism, if
at all. Weakened familial ties are expected to have a negative practical and psychological impact on inmates once released into the community. In practical terms, strained relationships with family and friends limit individuals' ability to achieve goals and gain support upon release, particularly psychological and economic support. Therefore, it is hypothesized that increased agreement with the statements, "Being incarcerated put a lot of strain on my relationships with family members and friends" is associated with an increased likelihood of recidivism.

The present study also expects to find that respondents' belief that anyone can live the American Dream with hard work and determination is inversely related to recidivism (H12). In other words, it is hypothesized that the greater one's belief in the attainability of the American Dream via determinants within one's own control, the lower the likelihood of recidivism. This hypothesis is also drawn from the predictions of GST. Specifically, Cullen and Agnew (2006) assert that strains are most likely to lead to criminal behavior when they are "high in magnitude, are seen as unjust, are associated with low social control, and create some pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping" (P. 204). When individuals come to believe that the American Dream is unattainable despite their hard work and relentless efforts, the result is likely to be strain both great in magnitude and viewed as unjust and unfair. Individuals' inability to attain the American Dream can also generate pressure and incentive to engage or reengage in

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12 This is particularly salient for released inmates as their criminal history opens the door to various forms of legal discrimination depending upon the city and state. For instance, the ability of employers and public housing officials to disqualify applicants as a result of an arrest that never lead to a conviction is often viewed as an unjust, yet legal, practice.
crime, particularly when legitimate avenues do not yield the desired outcome of monetary success.

The current study also predicts that community connectedness is inversely related to recidivism (H₁₃). Simply stated, the more connected an individual feels to his community, the less likely he or she is to recidivate. Community connectedness, in this way, can be considered akin to social capital, or the benefits and value derived from one’s social networks. An individual released from correctional custody into the community who has positive social ties to prior employers, landlords, friends, and family members has a significant advantage over others in gaining or regaining employment, finding affordable housing, and, more generally, navigating success upon release. The survey statement, “I feel very connected to the community I live in,” was not specific enough, however, to discern whether community connectedness includes this element of social capital. Respondents may have felt as though they had valuable contacts in the community, demonstrating social capital, but disagreed with the statement because they did not feel connected to the community as a whole. They may also have felt connected to the community as a whole, but lacked the ability to tap into any specific social networks for personal betterment. In either case, the lack of specificity limits any conclusions about social capital beyond community connectedness.

It is further predicted that respondents’ belief that help is available if needed is inversely related to recidivism (H₁₄). As reasoned in the previous hypothesis, the ability to draw upon help or resources upon release bolsters efforts to reintegrate into the
community. Thus, as beliefs that help was available to respondents upon release increase, the likelihood of recidivism is predicted to decrease.

The present study expects to find an inverse relationship between respondents' belief that the criminal justice system is fair and just and recidivism (H₁₅). It is hypothesized that those respondents who felt criminal justice system was fair and treated people equally are the least likely to recidivate because they seemingly accept responsibility for their actions rather than blame "the system." This attitude orientation is in contrast with the effects of prisonization or the assimilation of inmates to the anti-authority "folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary" (Clemmer 1940: 299). It is expected that recidivism is higher among those with increased contact with the criminal justice system who are more likely to have experienced prisonization and more apt to believe that "the system" is unjust. This feeling is believed to be acquired not only through social learning with other inmates, but through repeated association of the criminal justice system with unfavorable outcomes (Edwards 1970; Thomas and Zingraff 1976). Statistically significant findings in support of the inverse relationship might not emerge, however, because it is expected that most respondents will report agreement with this statement. This would make agreement equally likely among non-recidivists and recidivists alike and significant differences indiscernible.

Lastly, a positive relationship is expected between the belief that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism and recidivism upon release (H₁₆). Though the statement does not inquire about one's personal use of drugs and alcohol as a coping
mechanism\textsuperscript{13}, it is predicted that those who agree with the statement are more likely to agree both generally \textit{and} personally. It is well-established that drug and alcohol addiction is associated with incarceration and, subsequently, recidivism. Nearly 70\% of all new arrestees test positive for one or more illegal drugs, approximately 80\% of all state and federal prisoners report having a drug or alcohol problem, nearly 67\% of drug offenders recidivate, and 36\% of crimes that lead to conviction were committed while the offender was drinking alcohol (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007; Greenfeld 1998; Hiller, Knight, and Simpson 1999).

\textit{List of Hypotheses}

\textbf{Hypothesis 1.} Fewer survey respondents will have reported needing 1) employment, 2) housing, 3) health care, 4) mental health treatment, 5) substance abuse treatment, 6) a General Education Development diploma (GED), and 7) transportation upon release than non-respondents and those who did not receive the survey.

\textbf{Hypothesis 2.} Survey respondents will have a lower rate of recidivism than non-respondents and those who did not receive the survey.

\textbf{Hypothesis 3.} Survey respondents who have experienced difficulty finding employment, housing, and lack access to a health care provider are more likely to recidivate than those who did not report these post-release difficulties.

\textsuperscript{13} Doing so would violate recommendations made by the Human Subjects Review Board.
Hypothesis 4. Among survey respondents, those who reported needing mental health and substance abuse treatment upon release (during discharge plan meetings) who did not receive such treatment since release are more likely to recidivate than those who received the needed treatment.

Hypothesis 5. Self-reported prior arrests and incarcerations are positively related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 6. Among survey respondents, men will have reported more prior arrests and incarcerations than women.

Hypothesis 7. Among survey respondents, a larger proportion of male respondents will have reported that their life is “much more difficult now than before [they were] incarcerated” than female respondents.

Hypothesis 8: Pre-release discharge planning will be viewed as more useful upon release among those who did not recidivate in comparison with those who did.

Hypothesis 9. Impulsivity is positively related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 10. The belief that crime is rational is positively related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 11. The perception that relationships with family and friends were strained due to incarceration is positively related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 12. Respondents’ belief that anyone can live the American Dream with hard work and determination is inversely related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 13. Community connectedness is inversely related to post-release recidivism.
Hypothesis 14. The belief that help is available if needed is inversely related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 15. The belief that the criminal justice system is fair and just is inversely related to post-release recidivism.

Hypothesis 16. The belief that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism is positively related to post-release recidivism.
CHAPTER IV

DATA AND METHODS

Research Site

The current study focuses on inmates released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC). The research site was selected because of prior involvement with the staff and inmates while volunteering as a GED tutor in the correctional education program. The SCDOC, located in Dover, NH, held 386 inmates at year’s end, 2006, and operates under a progressive direct supervision “inmate management philosophy,” which provides privileges based on inmates’ behavior rather than current or past offense(s).

The inmates released from the SCDOC were generally concentrated in the county’s largest cities, with 56% residing\textsuperscript{14} in Dover (13%), Rochester (26%), and Somersworth (17%). Strafford County, New Hampshire, has approximately 304 people per square mile and is considered rural by the US Census Bureau’s urban and rural classification (US Census Bureau 2000). With that said, a significant amount of area within the county exceeds 500 people per square mile and is classified as urban. The

\textsuperscript{14} During their discharge plan meeting, the city or town in which they indicated they would be residing upon release.
University of New Hampshire’s Durham campus has a noteworthy impact on this “urban” concentration of people.

Sample

The original sample included 279 inmates who were released between February 2006 and June 2007. Because discharge planning began at the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC) in February 2006, inmates released prior to February 2006 were not included in the sample. Discharge planning involves a minimum of one interaction between a correctional officer and an inmate upon an impending release date. This interaction could consist of an inmate refusing to meet with the correctional officer for a discharge plan meeting or could be as much as two meetings to 1) evaluate post-release needs and 2) provide recommendations for appropriate services to meet those needs. At the Strafford County DOC, the correctional officer vested with this responsibility created a brief survey to facilitate her evaluation of the post-release needs of soon-to-be released inmates. The survey consists of questions, such as “Do you need health care upon release?” and “Do you need help with employment?” to which inmates may answer “yes” or “no.” The inmate is also asked the address where they presume that they will be living upon release. The correctional officer compiles the self-reported information and generates a discharge plan, or a set of recommendations and suggestions for appropriate services in the community to meet their needs with the end goal of facilitating the transition into the community. If the inmate chooses not to have a discharge plan meeting, there is little or no interaction between the correctional officer
and the inmate prior to their release. If the inmate self-reports no need for any of the services, the discharge planning process typically ends with this single interaction. If the inmate reports that they need, for example, health care, mental health treatment, housing, and public assistance upon release, the correctional officer will write a discharge plan that recommends seeking services related to these needs upon release. When applicable, brochures and related media are supplied with a copy of the discharge plan during a separate, second meeting to help inform inmates of the resources available to them upon release. At the end of the fiscal year, the correctional officer in charge of this service tallies each offender’s pre-release needs and submits it in the facility’s annual report.\textsuperscript{15}

Because discharge planning is voluntary, those who do not wish to receive this service were eliminated from the sample as no addresses were available to contact these individuals. This is a limitation because, arguably, the most hardened criminals would choose not to receive this form of help. Only 1% of inmates, however, refused this service, so the sample is not significantly altered. Of those released that had a discharge plan meeting, only 15% reported that they did not need any post-release services and, thus, did not require a formal plan to be written. These individuals were not excluded from the sample because their addresses were obtained during the meeting. These inmates are, arguably, those with the best opportunity for success with fewer potential stumbling blocks to successful reentry into the community. Analyses conducted with official arrest data will test this theory. Specifically, are those individuals who do not

\textsuperscript{15} The Strafford County Department of Correction’s 2006 Annual Report: http://www.co.strafford.nh.us/jail/downloads/annualreports/SCDOC_Annual_Report_2006.pdf
need post-release services significantly less likely to recidivate (i.e. be rearrested) than those who do?

Of those inmates who 1) agreed to have a discharge plan meeting and 2) needed services upon release, a sub-sample were able to provide the correctional officer with an address that they anticipated to be living at upon release. It was the case that of 279 total inmates released, 275 agreed to have a discharge plan meeting, 232 needed services upon release, and only 160 provided an address during the meeting. In other words, of those who needed services, 31% were homeless, unsure of where they’d live upon release, or chose not to disclose their post-release address if it was known and, with no way of contacting them, were eliminated from the potential sample. These individuals who needed post-release services, such as employment, health care, mental health treatment, and/or public assistance, and who could not supply a post-release address are considered to be those at greatest risk for recidivism and, unfortunately, were not represented in the sample.

Methods

Upon gaining approval from Superintendent Warren Dowaliby of the Strafford County DOC and the University of New Hampshire’s Human Subjects Review Board in July 2007, I began the first stage of data collection: obtaining the addresses of inmates discharged during and after February 2006. Upon digging through the discharge plan files of each of the 279 released inmates (the anticipated sample), it was realized that only 160 had provided an address during their discharge plan meeting, which reduced the
projected sample size by 43%. On October 3, 2007, these addresses were used to mail comprehensive, 64-item surveys to the 160 released offenders, accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a letter that outlined the study and its purpose, its voluntariness, the procedures for participation, the estimated time commitment, and the potential risks and benefits associated with participation, including a $15 gift card of their choice upon returning a completed survey by November 1, 2007. Consent was explained to be assumed if the survey was completed and returned to the researcher.

In the weeks and months after mailing the surveys, 50 were returned and marked as “undeliverable” by the United States Post Office because the individual did not reside at that address or the address was insufficient. Of the 110 that were delivered, the number of surveys received by the intended individual is not estimable. In all, 26 released inmates completed and mailed back the survey for a response rate of 23.6%.

The surveys were randomly assigned codes, which appeared in the upper right corner of the research materials. When the completed surveys were returned to the researcher, this code was used to cross-reference the released inmates’ names and addresses in order to mail the gift cards. As each gift card was mailed, the respondents’ names and addresses were removed from the electronic list, typically within 24 hours, destroying the link between their responses and identities in accordance with Human

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16 For example, the address might have been correct, but lacked the apartment number or letter to get the survey to the correct individual. As a result, the mail carrier returned it as “undeliverable.”

17 The response rate was calculated by dividing the number of completed surveys by the total number of surveys delivered.
Subjects considerations. Those individuals whose names and addresses remained on the electronic list who did not return a survey are not at any legal risk because they did not supply any potentially harmful or incriminating information. The only estimable legal risk to any research subject was in the case that the data were subpoenaed before the gift card was mailed and the link between his or her responses was deleted. This did not occur and, to my knowledge, the confidentiality of every subject was protected.

The second stage of data collection, completed in August and September 2006, included the transformation of pre-release discharge plan data (provided by the correctional officer in charge of this service) into a dataset to be used in conjunction with the other sources of data collected. More specifically, these data regarding offenders’ specific pre-release needs were collected for use in comparative analyses with the post-release survey data and, later, official arrest/incarceration data to answer the following types of questions: Is it the case that individuals’ needs were being met upon release in the community? Of those who reported needing employment upon release, what percent actually gained employment according to the self-report survey data? Answers to these types of questions can be employed to evaluate inmates’ success in the community upon release and the effectiveness of discharge plan efforts. Using pre-release needs and post-release official arrest/incarceration data, we can also determine whether certain pre-release needs are correlated with post-release rearrest and reincarceration (i.e. are those who report needing employment, housing, or mental health treatment at the greatest risk for recidivism?) and whether it’s the case that those individuals who returned the survey were the least or most likely to recidivate, among a host of other inquiries.
Post-release recidivism data were collected in the third and final stage on February 21, 2008. As of this date, the average length of time that individuals had been in the community since release was 480 days or nearly one year and four months. These data are limited to rearrests that resulted in reincarceration at the Strafford County Department of Corrections. These data do not include any arrests outside of the jurisdiction of Strafford County or those arrests that occurred in Strafford County that did not lead to booking and reincarceration at this facility. This measure will generally be referred to as the official measure of recidivism, despite its limitations.

Research Costs

The total estimated cost of the study was $817. The cost of the stamps was $192; the gift cards for those study participants who completed and returned the survey, $375; and the labels, envelopes, and the printing charges for 160 surveys, $250.
The current study analyzes the degree to which individuals are able to negotiate success in the community upon release from the Strafford County DOC and attempts to identify potential risk factors for recidivism. To do this, self-report survey data were compiled, measuring employment, health care, mental health treatment, housing, transportation, and arrests since release. In addition, the self-report data include subjective measures of the released inmates’ self-control, the degree to which the criminal justice system is fair and just, the rationality of crime, the use of drugs and alcohol as a coping mechanism, the perceived damage to relationships with family and friends caused by incarceration, the post-release use of social networks formed while incarcerated, and whether released inmates considered their lives to be significantly more difficult since having been incarcerated. To supplement the self-report data (n=26), pre-release discharge planning data (n=160) as well as official data (n=160) on recidivism limited to arrests that lead to reincarceration in Strafford County, New Hampshire, were compiled. Refer to Table 1 in Appendix A for a complete list of the variables and descriptive statistics.

This chapter outlines the analytic strategies employed, including an evaluation of:

1) inmates’ post-release needs, as indicated during pre-release discharge plan meetings;
2) disparities in post-release needs by participant type; 3) the degree to which these needs were met in the community upon release; 4) the impact of unfulfilled needs, such as the need for mental health and substance abuse treatment, on recidivism; and 5) the effect of underlying attitudes and beliefs on recidivism.

Anticipating a larger sample size, the subjective self-report data were meant to provide richness and depth to the study of inmates upon release, stepping beyond whether they needed post-release services and tapping into their experiences, attitudes and beliefs. For the present aims of assessing post-release success and the risk of recidivism, descriptive findings are presented from several of the aforementioned subjective variables and the objective measures of respondents' post-release status (i.e. concerning housing, employment, access to health care, etc.). These aims are guided by the following general questions: What was the context in which certain study participants resumed criminal activity upon release? To what extent does the disparity between post-release needs (as reported prior to release in a discharge plan meeting) and the fulfillment of such needs upon release impact these individuals' re-engagement in crime (e.g. mental health and substance abuse treatment)? Do any risk factors emerge as particularly salient for predicting and understanding recidivism among this sample of released jail inmates? And, to what extent can criminological theories be applied to an understanding of recidivism?
CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

Sample Demographics

Men comprise 86% of the total sample \((n=160)\), but only 69% of survey respondents \((n=26)\). Hence, women make up a disproportionate amount of survey respondents (31%), while accounting for 14% of the total sample. The average survey respondent is male, 31 years old \((SD=9.9)\), has the educational attainment of a General Education Development diploma (GED) \((SD=1.3)\), and has been out of jail for 341 days \((SD=115.2)\), or nearly 11 and a half months, as of October 3, 2007\(^\text{18}\). According to the discharge plan data collected for the entire sample, the average study participant reported not needing any post-release services, including housing, health care, mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence treatment, medication, transportation, public assistance, or employment upon release.

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\(^{18}\) October 3, 2007 was selected because the surveys were mailed on this day. The exact day that surveys were received by each respective respondent is inestimable, so this day was selected as it is consistent for the entire sample.


Housing Instability

A small percentage (10%) of all study participants reported that they would not have a place to live upon release \((n=160)\). Despite not having a place to live, these individuals supplied an address during their discharge plan meeting. It is unknown if the address provided was where they hoped to live or the address of a friend, relative, or homeless shelter. Not included in the sample are the 119 released inmates who did not provide an address during their discharge plan meeting and were eliminated from the present study due to their inaccessibility via mail correspondence. This unutilized sample includes those who, too, did not know where they would live upon release, those who are homeless, and those who chose not to provide their address. Only 4% of survey respondents reported that they would not have a place to live upon release \((n=26)\).

The majority of inmates anticipated living in one of three cities in Strafford County, New Hampshire\(^{19}\). About 27% of the total sample \((n=160)\) anticipated living in Rochester upon release, 17% in Somersworth and 13% in Dover. Upon release, 28% of survey respondents \((n=26)\) were living in Rochester, 8% in Somersworth, and 16% in Dover. The underrepresentation of respondents from Somersworth may be indicative of housing instability in this area. To test this theory, we can compare the number of surveys deemed undeliverable by the Post Office to the total attempted for delivery in

\[\text{19 The inmates were asked for their addresses during their respective discharge plan meeting. It is inferred that the address provided is either the address they anticipated they would return to upon release or the address at which they lived prior to incarceration.}\]
these areas. The "undeliverables" provide an estimation of the area's housing instability as the intended recipients of the surveys no longer resided at the address they anticipated they would return to upon release or the address at which they lived prior to incarceration. Whichever the case may be, if an individual no longer lives at the address they provided during his or her discharge plan meeting, a change in residency has resulted. One exception could be those "undeliverables" that resulted from individuals supplying a false or incomplete version of their address. The vast majority of surveys deemed undeliverable, however, were stamped by the Post Office as "attempted- not known," with just eight returned as a result of an "insufficient address." Therefore, it can be assumed that the majority of undeliverable surveys correspond with those individuals who have encountered housing changes since release and no longer live where they thought they would. Stated another way, relatively few undeliverable surveys were the result of individuals providing false or insufficient accounts of their post-release addresses.

Of the total sample, 50 surveys were attempted for delivery and deemed undeliverable. Stated another way, about 31% of individuals included in the sample experienced housing change, loss, and/or instability upon release. If we included in this figure those individuals released from the SCDOC who did not provide an address during their discharge plan meeting, we would find that an alarming 60% of released inmates experienced housing instability upon release. When comparing the percent unable to be

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20 Inmates who did not provide an address are estimated to be those who experienced the most housing instability as they were unable to or chose not to provide an anticipated address during their pre-release meeting.
delivered in each of the key reentry cities, we find that individuals released from the SCDOC who intended to return to Somersworth experienced the greatest difficulties and/or transition. In Somersworth, 14 surveys of 27 attempted for delivery were deemed undeliverable and returned to the sender for a total of 52% having experienced housing loss or change since release. In comparison, in Rochester 12 surveys were deemed undeliverable of 43 attempted for delivery for a total of 28% having experienced housing instability since release. Similarly, in Dover 21 surveys were mailed out with 5 returned for a total of 24% who experienced instability with regards to housing. Therefore, inmates returning to Somersworth upon release have a significantly greater problem with regards to housing loss or change than in other areas within the county.

Employment

Referring to Figure 1, one-quarter of the total sample (n=160) reported that they would not have employment upon release from the SCDOC. Among those who responded to the survey upon release, 50% indicated that they were currently employed while another 23% reported having been employed at some other time since release. The survey question that inquired about the length of time employed was not specific enough to indicate the length of time employed since release, so some respondents included the length of time employed prior to their incarceration. As a result, the average length of employment was 784 days, though respondents had only been out of jail for an average of 341 days.
Respondents reported an array of employment positions, including a bus driver, cook, delivery driver, dry wall finisher, landscaper, manager, and sub-contractor. One even reported working in "corrections treatment and custody." Over half (54%) reported that finding employment was difficult. Those who did not report employment difficulties often returned to previous sources of employment upon release. Over half (56%) also reported experiencing differential treatment by employers due to their recent incarceration. Only 28% indicated that they had received help finding employment from someone they knew, often a friend or family member.

Only three of the 26 respondents indicated during their pre-release discharge plan meeting that they would be without employment upon release. Of those three, none were employed at the time the survey was completed and two of the three were subsequently
rearrested and reincarcerated at the SCDOC. These men, aged 21 and 29, reported an average of 7 prior arrests and 7 prior incarcerations, not counting those accumulated since their releases in October of 2006 and March of 2007, respectively.

Recidivism

Five of the 26 survey respondents reported having been rearrested since their release. According to the official data, an additional seven respondents were rearrested and reincarcerated at the Strafford County Department of Corrections. In sum, twelve of the 26 survey respondents (46%) recidivated within eight to 24 months of their release. In the larger sample of 160 inmates released from the SCDOC, 36% recidivated. It is likely that this figure still underestimates the total criminal engagement as arrests outside of Strafford County are not included in these estimates and many crimes are not reported to the authorities and, subsequently, do not lead to an arrest.

Post-Release Needs: Are Survey Respondents at an Advantage?

As originally hypothesized, those offenders who received and completed the survey were expected to represent those with the greatest chance for success upon release in comparison with 1) those who did not receive the survey and 2) those who received the survey, but did not complete and return it. This hypothesis was built upon the notion that respondents were “better off” because they had housing stability, self-control to complete
the 64-item survey, and the ability to delay gratification as compensation was not immediately available. This advantage was expected to manifest in fewer survey respondents reporting needing 1) employment, 2) housing, 3) health care, 4) mental health treatment, 5) substance abuse treatment, 6) a General Education Development diploma (GED), and 7) transportation upon release than non-respondents and those who did not receive the survey (H1). It was also expected to manifest in a lower rate of recidivism among respondents (H2).

To reassert, about one-quarter (24%) of the total sample anticipated being without employment upon release (n =160). When examining the need for employment upon release among those who did and did not respond to the post-release survey, noteworthy differences emerged, which illuminates potentially qualitative differences between the groups. According to Figure 2 and consistent with the hypothesis that respondents have an advantage when returning to the community, 12% of respondents (n =26) in comparison with 26% of those who did not respond to the survey (n =134) needed employment upon release (p=.12). A similar pattern is found with regard to offenders’ needing housing, health care, and substance abuse treatment upon release such that respondents were less likely to report these post-release needs. For instance, only 4% of survey respondents indicated that they wouldn’t have a place to live upon release in comparison with 12% of non-respondents (p=.25). Among respondents, 24% indicated that they did not have a doctor or health care provider in contrast with 35% of non-respondents (p=.30). Thirty-six percent of non-respondents reported needing substance abuse treatment while only 16% of survey respondents reported this need, a statistically
significant difference ($p<.05$). The post-release need for mental health treatment, however, was comparable among survey respondents and non-respondents, providing an exception to this trend (32 and 29%, respectively; $p=.74$). Overall, 68% of survey respondents and 79% of non-respondents reported one or more post-release needs ($p=.24$). Therefore, we can conclude that those who responded to the survey were at a slight advantage over non-respondents (including those who did not receive the survey) in that slightly fewer respondents had one or more post-release needs, as reported during discharge plan meetings. In addition, fewer respondents reported needing substance abuse treatment upon release than non-respondents. Taken together, these findings are in partial confirmation of the first hypothesis.
Regardless of whether individuals responded to the survey or not, is it the case that recidivism is more likely among those with certain post-release needs over others? Is recidivism more likely among those with more post-release needs, independent of the need type? Are those who reported one or more post-release needs more likely to recidivate than those who reported no needs?

Table 2: Multivariate Logistic Regression of Recidivism on Specific Post-Release Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Release Needs</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Education Diploma (GED)</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Abuse Treatment</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Treatment</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor or Health Care Provider</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Assistance</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-96.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted $R^2$</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p &gt; \text{chi}^2$</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The dependent variable is recidivism, measured by official data. Standard errors are in parentheses. $n=151$ (excludes 9 observations with missing data). No statistically significant findings ($p<.05$).
After performing a multivariate logistic regression analysis (Table 2), the odds of recidivism were not found to be significantly higher among those who reported needing housing, employment, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, transportation, a GED, access to a health care provider, or public assistance. In addition, the odds of recidivism do not increase as more post-release needs are reported, independent of the need type ($p=.52$). Lastly, those who report one or more needs are not significantly more likely to recidivate than those who reported no needs ($p=.29$). More specifically, 82% of recidivists and 74.5% of non-recidivists reported post-release needs.

The second hypothesis states that respondents will have a lower rate of recidivism than non-respondents. According to Figure 3 and the official data collected at the SCDOC, over one-third of non-respondents (34.3%) and nearly half of survey respondents (46%) were rearrested and reincarcerated at the SCDOC since their recent release. Interestingly, only 5 admitted to having been rearrested in the survey responses. Therefore, survey respondents were actually more likely to recidivate than non-respondents, refuting the second hypothesis and the notion that respondents were at an advantage over non-respondents.
Figure 3: Self-report and Official Data on Recidivism among Survey Respondents and Non-Respondents

Survey respondents rearrested (self-report data)

Survey respondents rearrested and reincarcerated (official data)

Non-respondents rearrested and reincarcerated (official data)

Combined recidivism (official data)

The third hypothesis states that survey respondents who have experienced difficulty finding employment, housing, and lack access to a health care provider are more likely to recidivate than those who did not report these post-release difficulties. Forty percent of those respondents who encountered housing difficulties recidivated. Fifty-four percent of those respondents who encountered difficulties finding employment recidivated. Lastly, 57% of those who had no access to a health care provider recidivated. The differences between those who recidivated and those who did not were not statistically significant, which suggests that difficulties experienced in housing, health care, and employment upon release do not significantly influence recidivism among this sample of released jail inmates ($p=.51$; $p=.49$; $p=.68$, respectively). Upon including these
three variables in a logistic regression model predicting recidivism, the same result was found: difficulties upon release concerning housing, health care, and employment do not impact post-release recidivism among this limited sample ($p<.67$).

It is important to reiterate that these findings are narrowly drawn from a sample of 26 survey respondents who, presumably, had the most success in terms of housing upon release as they were found to be living at the address they expected they would be prior to release from the jail. Thus, using this sample to assess the impact of housing difficulties on recidivism is not surprisingly fruitless. To improve upon this limitation, we can test the same hypothesis using the sample of 50 individuals who were identified in the previous section as having experienced “housing instability,” or housing loss or change since release. With the same hypothesis, we can expect that those individuals who experienced housing instability are more likely to recidivate than those who did not.

In actuality, 38% of those who experienced housing instability recidivated upon release while 36% of those who did not experience housing instability recidivated. The difference between the groups in terms of recidivism was not statistically significant ($p=.76$). This suggests that individuals who experience housing instability upon release do not recidivate at a higher rate than those who do not experience housing instability. Stated another way, this finding suggests that housing instability does not differentially influence recidivism.

As previously discussed, inmates returning to Somersworth upon release have a significantly greater problem with regards to housing instability than in other areas within the county. According to the previous finding, those who experienced housing instability
in this city should not be more likely to recidivate than those who did not experience such instability. Contrary to the original hypothesis and extant literature which suggests that difficulties with housing increase the likelihood of recidivism, 36% of those who experienced housing instability in Somersworth recidivated while 38% of those who did not experience instability recidivated (Metraux and Culhane 2004). Surprisingly, this finding is not consistent when examining Rochester and Dover, New Hampshire. In line with original expectations, 55% of those who experienced housing instability in Rochester recidivated while only 7% of those who did not experience housing instability recidivated. In Dover, 60% of those who experienced housing instability recidivated while only 38% of those who did not experience instability recidivated. Given these conflicting findings, we can neither conclude that housing instability upon release is positively nor negatively associated with recidivism.

The fourth hypothesis states that those survey respondents who reported needing mental health treatment upon release and who did not receive such treatment since release are more likely to recidivate than those who received the needed treatment. Likewise, those respondents who needed substance abuse treatment but did not access such treatment upon release were hypothesized to be more likely to recidivate than those who received the needed treatment. Referring to Figure 4, among survey respondents, seven (29%) indicated needing mental health treatment. Of the seven who needed mental health treatment, four received treatment upon release and one subsequently recidivated. Of the three that did not receive the needed treatment, two recidivated. Therefore, one-quarter of the respondents who needed mental health treatment and who received the
treatment recidivated upon release. Conversely, two-thirds of those who did not receive the needed mental health treatment recidivated upon release. Of the respondents, four (17%) indicated needing substance abuse treatment prior to their release. Two of the four reported attending AA or NA and none reported receiving any other type of substance abuse treatment upon release. Three were found to have recidivated (75%). Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is tentatively supported, though the size of the groups used for comparison limits the conclusions that may be drawn.

The fifth hypothesis states that self-reported prior arrests and incarcerations are positively related to post-release recidivism. This hypothesis was supported using
logistic regression analyses. For each increase in the number of prior arrests, the odds that a respondent will recidivate increase by 24%. Stated another way, for each increase in the number of prior arrests reported, the odds of recidivism are 1.25 times greater \((p<.01)\). For each increase in the number of prior incarcerations, the odds that a respondent will recidivate increase by 140%. Likewise, it can be said that for each additional incarceration, the odds that a respondent will recidivate are 2.40 times greater \((p<.02)\).

Generally speaking, those who have been rearrested since release were found to have more prior arrests, served longer sentences, and have more prior incarcerations than those who have not been rearrested. Those who were rearrested had an average of 7 prior arrests and between 4 and 5 prior incarcerations \((SD=5.8; SD=2.4\), respectively). In addition, the average length of incarceration at the SCDOC was about 77 days \((SD=63.8)\). In comparison, those who were not rearrested had an average of 4 prior arrests, about 3 prior incarcerations, and a recent sentence of 68 days \((SD=3.1; SD=2.8; SD=97.3)\).

**Differences in Post-Release Experiences by Sex**

The sixth hypothesis states that male respondents will have reported more prior arrests and incarcerations than female respondents. Consistent with this hypothesis and Figure 5, male respondents, on average, reported 5.7 prior arrests while female respondents reported slightly fewer, 4.8 \((SD=5.44, SD=3.79\), respectively). When discussing prior incarcerations at the SCDOC, respondents report roughly the same
number of prior incarcerations; male respondents report 1.9 and female respondents report 2 ($SD=1.39$, $SD=1.53$). When comparing the average number of prior incarcerations at facilities other than the SCDOC, male respondents reported 1.5, while female respondents reported 1.9 ($SD=1.92$, $SD=3.67$).

Figure 5: Criminal History: Male and Female Respondents' Prior Arrests and Incarcerations

In all, female respondents report an average of 3.9 total prior incarcerations in comparison with 3.4 among male respondents ($SD=3.60$, $SD=2.45$). The standard deviation was slightly higher among female respondents as a result of one notable outlier with 11 prior incarcerations. This respondent, the youngest in the sample (born in 1988), wrote that she had “to many to count” when referring to her estimation of the number of prior incarcerations at facilities other than the SCDOC (spelling error as reported by 55
Respondent 160). The most any male respondent reported was nine prior incarcerations. Therefore, men may report more prior arrests, but not more prior incarcerations than women in the sample.

The seventh hypothesis states that a larger proportion of male respondents will have reported that their life is "much more difficult now than before [they were] incarcerated" than female respondents. This hypothesis is confirmed as only 1 female respondent (12.5%) and 13 male respondents (72.2%) agreed with the statement that their life is "much more difficult now." This is a striking statistically significant difference, illuminating a very different post-release reality for men and women (p<.01). In light of the last finding that women in the sample on average have more prior incarcerations than men, this widely disparate finding between men and women seems particularly unexpected. What was the post-release experience of Respondent 160 who reported 11 prior incarcerations? Was she the sole female respondent to agree that life is "much more difficult now?" Surprisingly, she disagreed with this statement, despite her extensive criminal history. Why is it the case that female respondents are not negatively impacted to the degree that men are upon release?

The eighth hypothesis predicts that those who did not recidivate will perceive pre-release discharge planning to have been more useful upon release than those who recidivated. First off, the majority of those who recidivated (83%) and those who did not (72%) remembered having a discharge plan meeting prior to release. When asked if their discharge plan was useful upon release, a higher percentage of recidivists agreed than non-recidivists. The difference between recidivists and non-recidivists almost achieved
statistical significance as a whopping 50% of recidivists and only 21% of non-recidivists report that receiving a discharge plan was helpful upon release ($p=.13$). This finding does not confirm the hypothesis.

Test the Criminological Theories

To what extent are criminological theories useful in explaining differences between those who recidivated and those who did not? Specifically, the predictions of self-control theory, rational choice theory, and general strain theory are examined. The results are reported from bivariate logistic regression analyses predicting recidivism. A three model multivariate logistic regression analysis can be found in Table 3 at the end of the chapter.

The ninth hypothesis states that impulsivity is positively related to post-release recidivism. Thus, it is expected that those who were rearrested would have lower levels of self-control as measured by higher levels of impulsivity than their non-rearrested counterparts. This hypothesis will be examined two ways. First, based on responses for the first impulsivity item, those rearrested upon release reported lower levels of impulsivity. Only 25% of respondents who recidivated agreed with the statement: “I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.” Of those respondents who did not recidivate, 36% agreed with this statement, demonstrating a higher level of impulsivity and a lower level of reported-self control than the group who recidivated since release. This tentative finding that impulsivity has little
to do with recidivism runs contrary to extant literature, namely the work of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990).

When considering the findings from the second impulsivity item, “I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think,” 66% agreed among recidivists compared to only 43% of non-recidivists. Therefore, individuals who recidivated were more likely to “act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.” These contradictory findings are likely attributable to the limited variability in the sample of 26 released inmates.

The second approach to testing this hypothesis implements logistic regressions of the impulsivity items on recidivism. It was found that for every one unit increase in impulsivity (i.e. “I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal”), the odds that a respondent would recidivate decreased by 41%. Consistent with the first test of this item, increased impulsivity is predicted to decrease the likelihood of recidivism. This finding did not achieve statistical significance ($p=.40$).

As for the second item, for every one unit increase in impulsivity (i.e. “I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think”), the odds that a respondent would recidivate increased by 60%. Stated another way, the odds are 1.6 times greater with each increase in agreement. This finding, too, did not achieve statistical significance ($p=.28$). This is likely indicative of the limited variability within the sample and the impulsivity scales, which spanned from one (strongly disagree) to four (strongly agree).
The tenth hypothesis applies rational choice theory and asserts that the belief that crime is rational is positively related to post-release recidivism. Though the model did not achieve statistical significance, it yields a noteworthy finding; the odds that a respondent would recidivate increased by 137% with each increase in agreement that "crimes are usually committed when the benefits outweigh the costs" \((p=.13)\). Stated another way, the odds of recidivism are more than two times greater with each increased agreement in the rationality of crime.

According to hypothesis eleven, the perception that relationships with family and friends were strained due to incarceration is positively related to post-release recidivism. It was found that with each additional increase in agreement with the statement, "Being incarcerated put a lot of strain on my relationships with family members and friends," the odds of recidivism increased by 74%. In other words, the odds of recidivism were 1.74 times greater with increased strain on relationships. This model did not achieve statistical significance hence the hypothesis and related theory (GST) are, for now, only tentatively supported \((p=.32)\).

The twelfth hypothesis states that respondents' belief that anyone can live the American Dream with hard work and determination is inversely related to post-release recidivism. In other words, as individuals increasingly believe that the American Dream

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21 The surveys were originally coded strongly agree to strongly disagree (1-4). This was subsequently changed so that agreement was on the high end of the scale for ease in interpreting odds ratios. The scale could have ranged from 1 to 5, allowing for a middle "unsure" or "neither agree nor disagree" category. It was decided, rather, that forced response categories demonstrating agreement or disagreement would be more informative.
is attainable with hard work and determination, the likelihood of recidivism is expected to diminish. This hypothesis was also drawn from GST. It was found that with each increase in agreement that the American Dream can be achieved via hard work and determination, the likelihood of recidivism rose by 34%. This means that the odds of recidivism increased as the belief that the American Dream is attainable through hard work and determination increased. This runs contrary to the stated hypothesis that belief in the attainability of the American Dream would decrease recidivism. The model was also short of statistical significance ($p=.47$).

*Other Predictors of Recidivism*

The thirteenth hypothesis asserts that community connectedness is inversely related to recidivism. In other words, it was expected that the more connected a person feels in his or her community, the less likely he or she is to recidivate. This model also did not achieve statistical significance, which is not unexpected given the limitations of the data in use ($p=.18$). The odds that a respondent would recidivate were 1.72 times more likely with each additional increase in agreement with the statement, "I feel very connected to the community that I live in." Stated again, the odds of recidivism increased by 72% with each additional increase in the feeling of connectedness to the community. This runs in direct opposition to the stated hypothesis of an inverse relationship.
The fourteenth hypothesis states that the belief that help is available if needed is inversely related to post-release recidivism. It was believed that with access to help if needed, the likelihood of recidivism upon release would diminish. According to the logistic regression estimates, with each increase in agreement that help was available, the odds of recidivism decreased by 4%. Put another way, respondents were .96 times more likely to recidivate. An odds value of 1, however, suggests that the independent variable, help availability, has no meaningful effect on the dependent variable, recidivism. Accordingly, the model did not achieve significance (p=.94).

The fifteenth hypothesis asserts that the belief that the criminal justice system is fair and just is inversely related to post-release recidivism. In other words, the belief that the criminal justice system is fair and just is believed to be associated with a decreased likelihood of recidivism. Alternatively, the belief that the criminal justice system is not fair and just is expected to be associated with an increased likelihood of recidivism. According to a logistic regression, the odds that a respondent would recidivate were 1.5 times greater with each increase in agreement with the statement that the criminal justice system is fair. This contradicts the predicted relationship between beliefs that the criminal justice system is fair and post-release recidivism. The model, however, did not achieve significance (p=.38).

The sixteenth hypothesis states that the belief that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism is positively related to post-release recidivism. In other words, as agreement that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism increases, the likelihood of recidivism is expected to increase also. It was found that with each increase
in agreement that drugs and alcohol are used as a coping mechanism, the likelihood of recidivism rose by 40% or was 1.40 times more likely to occur. Again, an odds value of 1 suggests that the independent variable has no meaningful effect on the dependent variable, recidivism. Consequently, the model did not achieve statistical significance ($p=.44$).
Table 3: Multivariate Logistic Regression of Recidivism on Impulsivity, Strain, Rational Choice, and other Related Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>impuls2</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>1.97</td>
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<td>(0.66)</td>
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<td>(2.04)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Log likelihood  
-13.98  -10.90  -8.45

Adjusted $R^2$  
0.22  0.37  0.51

$p > \chi^2$  
0.09  0.05  0.04

Note: The dependent variable is recidivism, measured using self-report and official data. Standard errors are in parentheses. $n=25$ (excludes 1 observation with missing data).

* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$. 

63
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter will provide a synopsis of the salient findings of the present study. This includes, but is not limited to, a discussion of housing instability in core reentry cities; differences in the experiences of survey respondents and non-respondents; the overrepresentation of female respondents; the ability of inmates to fulfill basic needs, such as employment, health care, mental health treatment, and transportation upon release; respondents’ perceptions of the utility of pre-release discharge planning; and potential risk factors for recidivism. It is the intent of the present study to illuminate the transitional process of jail inmates into the community upon release and to bring attention to the potential problems and risk factors associated with the reentry process, so that efforts to curb recidivism can be more efficiently directed and implemented.

One hundred and sixty inmates reported 44 different cities when asked about their intended post-release place of residence. Of the total sample, 50 surveys were attempted for delivery and deemed undeliverable. This equates to 31% of individuals in the sample experiencing housing change, loss, and/or instability upon release. Other estimates suggest that as many as 60% of released inmates in Strafford County experienced
housing instability upon release. Seventeen percent of inmates anticipated living in Somersworth, NH, upon release. When surveys were mailed to these individuals, an alarming 52% were returned and stamped “undeliverable.” Thus, over half of individuals who intended to live in Somersworth were unable to receive survey materials because they no longer or never resided at the address given shortly prior to release. As previously discussed, this suggests that the majority of individuals returning to Somersworth upon release encountered housing instability, loss, or change upon release. Twenty-eight percent of individuals returning to Rochester and 24% to Dover were similarly situated. This finding illuminates the current housing crisis that many face when released from correctional custody in this county.

Women were overrepresented among survey respondents, such that they made up 31% of respondents (n=26), but only 14% of the total sample (n=160). The disproportionate representation of female survey respondents is important to highlight as it may be indicative of a greater need among women for the gift card compensation. Upon release, many female offenders are responsible for direct, primary care giving whereas male offenders are more likely to provide indirect care, such as child support, which accumulates while incarcerated. As a result, the practical utility of a gift card may have been more appealing to female respondents. The need for help providing care

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22 Refer to discussion on Page 39.

23 A replication of this study should include questions about child care responsibilities and the role of the other parent in providing care.
for one’s children was evident in one female respondent’s request for a “Babies ‘R’ Us” gift card, though it was not one of the four options. Alternatively, there may be sex differences in individuals’ willingness to complete the survey that account for the overrepresentation of women in the sample. It is not the case that female respondents were more educated on average than male respondents, which would discredit the hypothesis that higher educational attainment among women impacted their disproportionate response rate.

Those who responded to the survey upon release were hypothesized to be “better off” than those who did not respond because they had stable housing and, presumably, the self-control needed to complete the 64-item survey and the ability to delay gratification as compensation was not immediately provided, however, this was not the case. First, survey respondents were not significantly “better off” than non-respondents in terms of their self-reported post-release needs. Though fewer survey respondents reported needing employment, housing, health care and substance abuse treatment than non-respondents, the need for substance abuse treatment emerged as the only statistically significant difference between the groups. With this exception, the differences between survey respondents and non-respondents were not great enough to achieve statistical significance, disproving the initial hypothesis.

Second, survey respondents had a higher rate of recidivism than non-respondents \((p=.25)\). More specifically, 34% of those who did not respond to the survey and 46% of those who did respond were found to have recidivated according to official SCDOC data. Without the use of these official data, self-reported accounts of recidivism would have
been relied upon exclusively. Based on these accounts, only five of 26 (19%) respondents recidivated. In actuality, an additional seven respondents recidivated and did not admit it when completing the survey. The underreporting of post-release arrests may be indicative of respondents knowingly adjusting their responses to present themselves in the “best light” possible. Responses in general may also be subject to these adjustments, which for some questions may be slight and for others significant, as was the case with the under-admission of rearrests. Given the great disparity between self-reported and official measures of recidivism, future research should focus exclusively on the latter to obtain this information. More generally, studies that employ similar methods with a similar target population should not assume that respondents are “better off” than non-respondents. Instead, it appears that these respondents may have been the most desperate for the gift card compensation not those in the best situated upon release.

Inmates’ ability to acquire basic needs upon release is limited to survey respondents’ self-reports. Remarkably, 50% were employed at the time the survey was completed, nearly 81% had access to a doctor or a health care provider, 27% had received mental health treatment, and 77% had access to a reliable source of transportation. More specifically, among survey respondents who recidivated, 33% were employed, 75% had access to a doctor or health care provider, 25% had received mental health treatment, and 75% had access to a reliable source of transportation. In all, the difficulties accessing basic needs upon release, particularly among those who were rearrested and reincarcerated, were significantly less than initially expected.
Those individuals who did, in fact, report experiencing difficulty finding housing and employment and lacked access to a health care provider were predicted to be more likely to recidivate than those who did not encounter these difficulties. Testing the first part of this hypothesis on survey respondents that, by definition, have a place to live was somewhat illogical. Accordingly, it was not surprising that difficulty finding housing was not a predictor of recidivism. To improve upon this weakness, a separate analysis employed a proxy measure of housing difficulty (i.e. housing instability). This was an improvement as it increased the sample size from 26 to 160 and it did not rely solely on the experiences of respondents, that is, those in a relatively stable housing situation\textsuperscript{24}. Contrary to extant literature, however, this analysis did not identify housing instability as a risk factor for recidivism either. This is not expected to be the case with a more representative and larger sample.

Analyses regarding difficulty finding employment and lack of access to health care yielded a similar result; respondents who had difficulties finding employment and lacked access to health care were not significantly more likely to recidivate. More generally, the present study also found that those who were not currently employed, those who experienced differential treatment by employers, those without access to health care, those who had been in contact with someone they knew while incarcerated at the SCDOC, those who could obtain illegal substances from someone they knew while incarcerated at the SCDOC, and those without a reliable source of transportation were not

\textsuperscript{24} Respondents reported an average of 1.73 places of residence since release.
statistically more likely to recidivate. In other words, recidivists and non-recidivists alike were equally likely to be unemployed, to have experienced differential treatment by an employer, and so on. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the inability to identify significant risk factors for or predictors of recidivism is likely to be the result of a very limited sample size and, thus, limited variability, rather than the lack of genuine factors that predict recidivism among released inmates.

Conversely, the current study is able to confirm the hypothesis that prior arrests and incarcerations are positively related to post-release recidivism. More generally, the current research adds further substantiation to the widely accepted finding in criminological research that one's prior criminal involvement is the best indicator of one's future involvement (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). It is important to note, again, that these data were obtained through self-reports only. Also, given the underreporting of arrests that occurred since release among survey respondents, it is likely that past arrests and incarcerations were also underreported. Even if underestimated, prior arrests and incarcerations were positively associated with recidivism. Most notably, for each additional incarceration, the odds of recidivism were 2.4 times greater ($p<.02$).

None of the analyses that drew upon applicable criminological theories yielded statistically significant results. As repeated throughout, the limited sample size prohibits conclusions to be drawn with any known accuracy and restricts between group variability. It may be the case with a larger sample size that one particular criminological theory or a combination of multiple emerges to explain why some individuals re-engage in crime after having been incarcerated and others do not. Taken together, the
aforementioned findings, though limited, are undoubtedly useful for guiding future research of this kind.

Lastly, the perceptions of pre-release discharge planning among survey respondents will be considered. To review, a correctional officer at the SCDOC met with each inmate prior to their release and asked a total of 17 "yes" or "no" questions, including their post-release address. (The questionnaire used can be found in Appendix D.) Questions that received a "yes" response were then recorded on a separate form, which was later provided to inmates during a follow-up meeting. This form includes a list the needs reported and provides suggestions for fulfilling these needs upon release. Sometimes brochures and/or pamphlets were supplied to inmates prior to release that correspond to the particular needs that have been identified. One commonly distributed pamphlet describes the Families First "Helen Van," which makes stops at homeless shelters, train stations, and churches in the Seacoast area providing primary healthcare, basic health screenings, emergency dental, and access to prenatal care for those "between homes" and homeless. This may be one explanation for the high percentage (81%) of respondents who report having access to health care upon release. If so, this may be a successful component of the discharge plan process.

The present study first asked respondents if they recalled having a discharge plan meeting. Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated affirmatively. Of great importance to the efforts and funding of this program, respondents were then asked whether receiving a discharge plan was useful upon release. Only about one-third (35%) of respondents indicated that it was, in fact, helpful. As previously reported, however,
50% of respondents who recidivated believed that receiving a discharge plan was useful upon release. In comparison, 21% of non-recidivists felt that receiving a discharge plan was useful in the community. What accounts for the nearly statistically significant difference between recidivists and non-recidivists? How do these findings reflect on the program? What can be done to improve the utility of the program?

An argument can be made to extend the services provided during discharge plan meetings to increase the ability of inmates to meet their needs in the community and decrease their likelihood of recidivism. For instance, 43% of respondents who reported needing mental health treatment during their discharge plan meeting were unable or chose not to access such treatment upon release. The majority of these individuals later recidivated. Another related example concerns substance abuse treatment. Half of those who needed substance abuse treatment upon release did not receive treatment. Of these individuals, half were found to have recidivated. Thus, these individuals had an equal likelihood of recidivating or not after receiving substance abuse treatment. Of those who did not receive treatment, all recidivated. Among those who attended Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA), 83% subsequently recidivated.

The first example illustrates a disjunction between individuals’ reports of their therapeutic needs and the fulfillment of such needs. This may be indicative of a deficiency within the discharge plan program in inadequately preparing inmates for treatment upon release. The second example suggests a disjunction also as only half received the needed substance abuse treatment. More importantly, however, this example highlights the extreme difficulty associated with breaking a substance abuse addiction,
even when treatment is received. Remarkably, the vast majority of individuals who attended AA or NA are rearrested and reincarcerated and half who went to other forms of substance abuse treatment recidivated also. In the first example, it appeared rather that the lack of treatment was more associated with recidivism. This again raises the question, were these individuals given enough information to obtain treatment upon release? To answer this question, future studies should employ a measure that identifies the effectiveness of the discharge planning program’s utility in each need-based area. For instance, it appears that the pre-release planning program is useful in the area of health care, but its other strengths, if any, are largely unknown. In all, the vast majority of respondents did not feel that the program was useful upon release, despite its stated goal to “help [them] with [their] transition into the community” (Appendix D).
CHAPTER VIII

LIMITATIONS AND DISCUSSION

The limitations of the current study have been discussed at length when applicable throughout this report. The most notable limitation is the sample size, which often did not allow for significant variability within groups. Another notable limitation includes the “weeding out” process in which those released inmates who experienced the most difficulties upon release, particularly concerning housing, were eliminated from the sample as a result of their inaccessibility via mail correspondence. In addition, those individuals who do, in fact, have stable housing may be unaccounted for in this small sample because they reside at a different address than indicated during the discharge plan meeting and, too, are inaccessible via mail correspondence. The number of individuals who have found stable housing elsewhere and the number of those who are homeless or in transitional housing is inestimable and unaccounted for given the current data sources.

This underscores a major weakness inherent in using a survey methodology to study a highly transitory population; only the most stable individuals are represented in the findings. With a larger, randomly selected sample, it is anticipated that respondents’ experiences will be more representative of the experiences of the larger population of released inmates. For example, would be improved upon if those who experienced housing instability were equally likely to be included in the study. As a result, the
findings from the present study should not be generalized to other inmate populations or other geographic locations.

Other potential respondents weeded themselves out by choosing not to participate in the study. For some, the compensation may have been insufficient to justify the time commitment asked of them. Others may have feared the legal risk associated with their participation. For others still, the lack of self-control and the ability to delay gratification may have influenced their decision to not complete and return the survey. According to self-control theorists, this last group of individuals would be the most likely to recidivate and the most likely to go unaccounted for if relying solely on a self-report survey methodology. To test this theory, the official rate of recidivism among survey respondents \( n=26 \) and the total sample \( n=160 \) were compared. If the predictions of the theory are correct, survey respondents would have a lower rate of recidivism because they have higher levels of self-control and the ability to delay gratification. The theory was not confirmed; 46% of survey respondents and only 36% of the sample recidivated upon release. Therefore, recidivism was not underestimated among survey respondents in comparison with the total sample.

Without the use of official data to measure recidivism, the current analyses would have been limited to the self-report survey measure of rearrest and reincarceration obtained for only twenty-six respondents. Using a measure limited to *self-reported* rearrests would have missed arrests that the individual did not wish to disclose. This was certainly the case among this sample as only 5 of the 26 respondents admitted to having been rearrested. As previously discussed, 12 were actually rearrested and reincarcerated
at the SCDOC according to official estimates. This means that seven respondents chose to conceal their post-release rearrests.

Generally speaking, using an official measure of arrest is limited, too, in that the vast majority of crimes committed go undetected to the authorities. Thus, even official measures of recidivism miss a significant amount of criminal activity. The official recidivism data used in this study miss even more; only arrests that occurred since release that led to a reincarceration at the Strafford County Department of Corrections are included. Thus, any arrests in Strafford County that did not lead to an incarceration and any and all criminal sanctions outside of this county are not included in these data. Despite this limitation, the use of these data significantly improved the scope and overall utility of the present study. All told, the SCDOC official data improved significantly upon the limited self-reported arrest data, which was found to underestimate recidivism among respondents. That is, only 12% of respondents recidivated according to self-reports whereas 46% actually recidivated according to official data. The extent to which the official SCDOC data underestimates recidivism is inestimable, however, without supplementation by state and federal level official records.

To fill in the gaps missed by official estimates of recidivism, survey respondents could have been posed questions inquiring if they had “broke the law” or had engaged in acts of force or fraud since release. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) would suggest that this line of questioning would be more fruitful in gathering data about post-release criminal activity. Per the recommendations of the Human Subjects Review Board, however, these questions were not permitted due to the risk of the data being subpoenaed.
This risk was very low and ample measures were put in place to protect the anonymity of the respondents even in the case that the data were subpoenaed. Paramount to protecting their anonymity was the elimination of the link between the respondents’ names and their responses, which occurred within 24 hours of receiving each survey. In sum, current measures of recidivism do not include self-reported behavioral measures of criminal engagement since these disclosures had the potential to generate legal sanctions.

Another limitation of the present study is the inaccuracy of inmates’ projections of their needs upon release. The extent to which these projections of post-release needs (reported in the discharge plan meetings) are inaccurate is inestimable and likely varies by individual and need in question. For instance, some inmates may have unknowingly underestimated their post-release need for housing by assuming they would have a place to live, as 90% indicated during discharge plan meetings. In actuality, however, 31% experienced housing instability and did not reside at the address they indicated during that same pre-release meeting. Individuals may have also knowingly underestimated their post-release needs to various extents. For instance, it might be difficult for some individuals’ to admit having certain basic needs upon release, especially in an environment in which self-reliance and masculinity are learned, fostered, and promoted (Thomas and Zingraff 1976). It might also be more acceptable to acknowledge and disclose certain post-release needs over others. For example, needing a GED might be easier and more acceptable to admit than needing mental health treatment or domestic violence treatment, particularly to a female correctional officer. In all, the findings
derived from the discharge plan data should be viewed with caution, taking into consideration the inestimable inaccuracy of inmates' pre-release reports.

Also to be viewed with caution are the self-report survey data. The individuals who responded to the survey might have knowingly or unknowingly manipulated their responses to fit what they perceived the goals or aims of the study to be, generally referred to as participant bias in social psychology. As a result, respondents may have minimized or exaggerated the struggles encountered upon release under the assumption that the present study desired that outcome. Respondents may have also been angry or resentful of their recent incarceration and knowingly or unknowingly exaggerated the difficulties they experienced upon release. One useful measure of the respondents' truthfulness, however, emerged when the official data on rearrest and reincarceration at the SCDOC were collected. As previously discussed, only five respondents admitted in the survey to being rearrested upon release while 12 of 26 (46%) were identified as recidivists according to official data. Therefore, seven respondents withheld this information and were untruthful when completing the survey. This example highlights the importance of considering the discharge plan data and the survey data inaccurate to some extent.

Lastly, the current study employs measures that are not tested to be reliable or valid. Studies of this nature have not been widely conducted and so the ability to use established measures was significantly limited. All but two items in the survey instrument were designed for the purposes of this study. These two items were drawn from Grasmick et al.'s (1993) self-control scale, specifically measuring impulsivity. The
entire self-control scale yielded a Cronbach’s alpha reliability score of .82. Descriptive statistics for the items used can be found in Table 1.

The current findings should be situated within the larger framework of the prisoner reentry crisis and the significant imbalance that exists between efforts to punish offenders and efforts to aid offenders reentering the community. Though not representative of reentry at the macro level, the current findings indicate that various challenges are salient for inmates released into the community, even among those who were initially considered to have the best possible chance for successful reentry (see related discussion on p. 2). That said, the challenges reported by these individuals were significantly less than anticipated with the exception of housing. Roughly one-third of surveys that were mailed were returned because the Post Office was unable to find the intended recipient at the provided address. These individuals were likely to be homeless or experienced housing change or instability upon release that resulted in their inaccessibility via mail correspondence. Though information could not be obtained from these individuals, it is expected that without housing stability, other areas in their lives, such as employment, mental health, and access to support networks, are negatively impacted.

To recapitulate, it was anticipated that inmates would experience greater difficulty in the community upon release than was found among the sample of respondents. This may be due to the relatively short length of their incarceration having served only 72 days on average. Because the bulk of the literature on inmate reentry is centered on the release
of prison inmates, it is not unexpected that the experiences of these less serious, jail offenders are different.

For individuals released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections, the only effort to aid their reentry into the community is the discharge plan program, which took root in February of 2006 and is managed by one correctional officer. As discussed, this process identifies the post-release needs of those who wish to receive this service and provides information in the form of pamphlets for accessing services for these needs in the community. This study has found that discharge planning, though better than no pre-release efforts, does little more than to release inmates with a written plan of what services to use to meet their needs and basic information about how to access these services. As the discharge plan coordinator concludes in her annual report\(^{25}\) (2006), "Once the inmate is released there is no guarantee, despite our encouragement, that the inmate will follow through with their Discharge Plan." In actuality, it appears that many respondents did not "follow through with their Discharge Plan" upon release and did not find utility in these pre-release efforts, indicating overwhelmingly that receiving a discharge plan was not useful upon release.

Because the program has immense potential to improve the transition of inmates into the community upon release, it is recommended that amendments be made to the program to improve its effectiveness. First, a more thorough evaluation of inmates' post-release needs is urged. Rather than asking, "Do you need substance abuse treatment?" it

\(^{25}\) This information can be found in the Strafford County Department of Correction's 2006 Annual Reports: http://www.co.strafford.nh.us/jail/downloads/annualreports/SCDOC_Annual_Report_2006.pdf
is recommended that inmates be asked, “Before being incarcerated, about how many
drinks did you consume during a typical week?” and/or “Do you ever feel that your
drug and/or alcohol use interferes with your daily life” and/or “Have you ever received
treatment in the past for substance abuse?” Using a broader net to identify post-release
needs would allow more people to be informed of their options upon release.

In addition to better identification of needs, it is recommended that more
assistance be provided to fulfill these needs upon release. The present study advocates
increasing communication and coordination with various agencies in the community on
behalf of the inmates who are unable to do so for themselves while incarcerated. For
example, establishing contacts at the Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County
on behalf of the inmates and providing this contact information to inmates prior to release
might encourage those who need to earn or complete their GED to seek out help there
upon release. This same philosophy can be applied to accessing mental health treatment,
substance abuse treatment, employment, and housing assistance as well.

Another related recommendation is to increase the coordination with local
shelters, Public Housing authorities, and low-income housing units in the community on
behalf of inmates at risk. Prior to this study, the alarming finding that between 30 and
60% of inmates released from the SCDOC experience housing instability was unknown
and likely underestimated by county officials. With a clearer view of the housing
instability landscape in Strafford County, it is hoped that improved efforts to identify and

26 According to The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, consuming more than
14 drinks per week or more than four drinks on any occasion may be indicative of alcoholism.
aid those at risk will be undertaken. This is particularly salient as the lack of housing
stability jeopardizes the stability of all other parts of individuals' lives, which in turn
increases the likelihood of recidivism and raises the costs of the county to readmit these
individuals into the Department of Corrections. Thus, the present study argues that
increased spending prior to release on improving the transition and the stability of
inmates' lives once in the community will reduce the long-term costs of recidivism. This
includes the costs associated with the courts, such as paying judges, clerks, juries, public
defenders, and sheriffs, and the system of corrections.

Despite the recommendations for improvements, this facility and those who
implemented the discharge plan program should be applauded for their progressive
efforts in funding a program aimed at improving the reentry of offenders to the
community. In the 2006 Strafford County Department of Corrections Annual Report,
Superintendent Warren Dowaliby wrote of this program, "I believe this is crucial to the
successful transition of inmates in need who are released without resources into the
community. We want to reduce the number of people walking out our door unprepared
for reintegration into the community." To achieve the goals outlined by the
superintendent and to utilize the funds designated for this program to the fullest potential,
the present study urges the consideration of the aforementioned recommendations.

More broadly, discharge plan programs like the one found at the SCDOC are
scarce and are often reserved for those to be released with mental illness. The

\[27\] See footnote 14.
lack of assistance to inmates in jails and in prisons is indicative of the broader imbalance at the macro level between efforts to punish and deter offenders through punishment (e.g. legislative net-widening) and efforts to improve the reintegration of individuals into their communities after having served their sentence. It is argued that the costs of recidivism and the re-imprisonment of offenders can be driven down by shifting this imbalance and increasing efforts to aid these individuals’ reentry into the community. In concert with Joan Petersilia (2003): “Over time, prisoner reentry should cease to be ‘one of our most profound social challenges’ simply because more inmates will be going home and *staying there*” (P. 5, emphasis added).
REFERENCES


## Table A1: Descriptive Statistics for Discharge Plan and Self-Report Data

### Discharge Plan Variables

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<td>Valid Driver</td>
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<td>----------</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.43</td>
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<td>Min.</td>
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<td>0.04</td>
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<td>Max.</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.96</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
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Survey Variables:  
Self-Report
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health 4</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health 5</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health 6</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displan 1</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impuls 1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceptions 1</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copel 1</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lostl 1</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJS1 1</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Survey Variables Description**

- Health 4: I lost people and/or things that were important to me when I was incarcerated.
- Health 5: The criminal justice system is fair and treats people equally.
- Health 6: Being incarcerated put a lot of strain on my relationships with family members.
- Displan 1: I have a discharge plan upon release?
- Displan 2: Remember having a discharge plan meeting and receiving a discharge plan?
- Impuls 1: I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.
- Connected 1: I feel very connected to the community I live in.
- Perceptions 1: People usually get away with crime.
- Copel 1: Crimes are usually committed when the benefits outweigh the costs.
- Lostl 1: I lost people and/or things that were important to me when I was incarcerated.
- CJS1 1: The criminal justice system is fair and treats people equally.

**Everyday Life**

- Strain 1: Strain everyday life.
- Copel 1: People often turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with the stress and pressures of.
- Connected 1: The criminal justice system is fair and treats people equally.
- Perceptions 1: People usually get away with crime.
- Lostl 1: I lost people and/or things that were important to me when I was incarcerated.
- CJS1 1: The criminal justice system is fair and treats people equally.

**Life Course Events**

- Impuls 1: I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.
- Copel 1: Crimes are usually committed when the benefits outweigh the costs.
- Connected 1: I feel very connected to the community I live in.
- Perceptions 1: People usually get away with crime.
- Lostl 1: I lost people and/or things that were important to me when I was incarcerated.
- CJS1 1: The criminal justice system is fair and treats people equally.
### Self-Report Survey Variables Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>difficulty</td>
<td>My life is much more difficult now than before I was incarcerated.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mean | S.D. | Min. | Max. |
---|---|---|---|
2.62 | 1.02 | 0.43 | 4.04 |

**Note:** Variables implied - difficulty: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.
APPENDIX B: Survey Instrument

PLEASE READ

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted at the University of New Hampshire because of your recent release from the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC). As researchers, we hope to better understand the process and experience of returning to the community after being released from a correctional facility. Our goal is to use the information supplied by you and others released from the SCDOC to make this process easier for others in the future. (Your address was obtained from the discharge plan form completed prior to your release from the SCDOC.)

Your participation is voluntary, which means that you can choose whether or not to participate. If you choose to participate in the study, you will promptly receive a $15 gift card in the mail upon completion. Your decision whether or not to participate will not impact any legal or probation-related conditions.

The researchers are not employed by the Strafford County Department of Corrections and your responses, if you choose to participate, will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of the transition from a correctional facility to the community. With your help, we hope to learn first-hand what has been helpful and what has been problematic during this process. The goal is to better prepare others for release and to better inform local and state policy makers of the needs and struggles of those going through this transitional process.
Procedures

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1. Read this form
2. Complete the questionnaire (takes approximately 15-20 minutes)
3. Place the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided
4. Mail envelope by November 1, 2007

Potential Risks

There is a very low legal risk to you if you choose to participate in this study. The study does not include questions about illegal behaviors, though some questions might conflict with probation-related requirements. To assure the highest level of confidentiality of your responses, you will be assigned a numeric code, which will appear on your questionnaire. After you mail your completed questionnaire and it is received by the researcher, your compensation (a $15 gift card of your choice) will be placed in the mail and should be received within 3 days. At this time, the link between your responses and your name and address will be permanently deleted and your responses will no longer be connected to your name.

Potential Benefits to Subjects

There are no direct benefits to you for your participation; however, your feedback will increase existing knowledge of the transition process into the community after release from a correctional facility. This feedback will be used to make recommendations and suggestions for future improvements.

Payment for Participation

You will receive a $15 gift card in the mail upon sending in a completed survey by November 1, 2007. No payment will be received for a partially completed or blank survey.
Participation and Withdrawal

You can choose whether or not to participate in this study. If you do not wish to participate, you can simply discard these materials. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may stop at any time without consequences of any kind. The $15 gift card is conditional, however, upon sending in the completed survey.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact Julie Simpson in the University of NH Office of Sponsored Research at 603-862-2003 or julie.simpson@unh.edu to discuss them.

Your participation in this survey will require about 15-20 minutes of your time. You will be promptly compensated with a $15 gift card of your choice upon sending in your completed survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided. With your input, we hope to make the transition from the correctional facility to the community easier, whether it be improving housing and health care accessibility or transportation and employment services. If there is anything you feel is important that we know that is not covered in this survey, please write to us at:

Research Study 4035
Department of Sociology, Horton SSC
Durham, NH 02824
Please answer the following questions as honestly as you can by circling or writing in your response. If there is a question that you don't want to answer, please write by it “Do not want to answer” and move to the next question.

1. What year were you born? ______________________

2. Are you Male Female (Circle one)

3. What is the highest level of education that you completed? (Check the appropriate box)
   - Less than high school
   - Some high school
   - Graduated from high school
   - Earned GED
   - Some college
   - Graduated from college

4. Are you currently employed? (If not, skip to Question 7) Yes No

5. Approximately, how long have you worked at this job? ______________________

6. What type of employment is it? (What is your position?) ______________________
7. If *not currently* employed, have you been employed since your recent release from the Strafford County Department of Corrections (SCDOC)?

   Yes   No

8. If yes, approximately, how long did you work at this job? __________________________

9. Has finding a job been difficult since your release from the SCDOC?  

   Yes   No

10. Do you feel that employers treat you differently because you have been convicted of a crime?  

    Yes   No

11. Have you received help finding a job from someone you know?  

    Yes   No

12. If yes, what is their relationship to you?  

   □ Friend  
   □ Family member  
   □ Former co-worker  
   □ Significant other  
                        (girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse)  
   □ Other

Section B

13. Would you consider anyone you knew or associated with at the SCDOC a "friend"?  

    Yes   No

100
14. Have you been in contact with anyone you knew or associated with at the SCDOC *(not staff)* since you've been out?  
Yes  No

15. Could you count on someone you knew or associated with at the SCDOC if you:

...needed help finding a job?  
Yes  No

...needed a place to live or stay for a while?  
Yes  No

...needed a ride?  
Yes  No

...wanted to get an illegal substance?  
Yes  No

...needed help resisting drugs or alcohol?  
Yes  No

...needed money?  
Yes  No

16. On a scale of 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful), how helpful have *your friends* been in your life since release?  Circle one.

1  2  3  4  5
Not helpful  Somewhat helpful  Very helpful

17. On a scale of 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful), how helpful have *your family* been in your life since release?  Circle one.

1  2  3  4  5
Not helpful  Somewhat helpful  Very helpful
Section C

18. Do you have a valid ID? Yes No

19. Do you have a valid driver's license? Yes No

20. Do you have a reliable source of transportation? Yes No

21. Have you recently had to miss an appointment or court appearance because you didn’t have a way of getting there? Yes No

22. Have you ever missed a shift at work because you didn’t have a way of getting there? Yes No

Section D

23. Is this your current address? Yes No

24. How long have you lived at your current residence? ________________

25. Who do you live with, if anyone?

☐ Friend
☐ Family member
☐ Girlfriend/Boyfriend
☐ Spouse
☐ Other

102
26. Have you encountered any difficulties finding a place to live since your release?  
   Yes  
   No

27. If yes, what has been the most difficult part of finding a place to live?


28. Do you feel safe where you live? (Check the appropriate box)
   □ Yes
   □ Most of the time
   □ Some of the time
   □ No

29. Approximately, how many places have you lived or stayed at since your recent release from the SCDOC?

Section E

30. While at the SCDOC, did you participate in the Therapeutic Community (TC) program?  
   Yes  
   No

31. If not, were you on a waiting list to participate in the TC program?  
   Yes  
   No
32. Approximately, how many times have you been arrested since age 18?

33. How long was your most recent sentence at the SCDOC?

34. How many times have you been incarcerated at the SCDOC?

35. How many times have you been incarcerated at correctional facilities other than the SCDOC?

36. Have you been arrested since your recent release from the SCDOC? Yes No

Section F

37. Do you have access to a doctor or a health care provider? Yes No

38. Do you regularly take medication? Yes No

39. Since your release from the SCDOC, have you ...

   ... received medical treatment? Yes No

   ... received mental health treatment? Yes No

   ... received substance abuse treatment? Yes No

   ... attended AA or NA meetings? Yes No
Section G

Prior to your release from the Strafford County Department of Corrections, you received a discharge plan which provided information about recommended services in the community.

40. Do you remember having a discharge plan meeting and receiving a discharge plan prior to release? Yes No

41. Do you feel that having a discharge plan was useful to you upon returning to the community? Yes No

Section H: Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements from 1-4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. I often do whatever brings me pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.

43. I often act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.

44. I don't feel like I have the same opportunities for success as others.

45. Anyone can live the “American Dream” with hard work and determination.

46. People usually get away with committing crime. 1 2 3 4
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47.</td>
<td>Crimes are usually committed when the benefits outweigh the costs (the good outweighs the bad).</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48.</td>
<td>I feel very connected to the community I live in.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49.</td>
<td>It doesn't matter what people think of me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>There are people I can turn to if I need help.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>People often turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with the stress and pressures of everyday life.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Being incarcerated put a lot of strain on my relationships with family members and friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>The criminal justice system (the courts, jails, and prisons) is fair and treats people equally.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>I lost people and/or things that were important to me when I was incarcerated.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>My life is much more difficult now than before I was incarcerated.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section I

47. From which business would you like your $15 gift card? (Check the box)

☐ Walmart   ☐ Target
☐ Irving Gas Station   ☐ Hannaford Supermarket

48. Would you prefer that your gift card be mailed to a different address? If so, please write it below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

The survey is complete! With your help, we hope to better prepare others for release and to inform local and state policy makers of the needs and struggles of those released from correctional facilities. Please send this survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope that you received by November 1, 2007. You will promptly be sent the $15 gift card of your choice once the survey is received by the researchers. Thank you.
APPENDIX C: Institutional Review Board Approval

University of New Hampshire

Research Conduct and Compliance Services, Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building, 51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

31-Jul-2007

Kalosky, Jillian
Sociology, Horton SSC
4 Pewter Court
Nashua, NH 03063

IRB #: 4035
Study: An Examination of the Post-Release Status of Inmates Released from the Strafford County Department of Corrections
Approval Date: 17-Jul-2007

The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study.

Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol for one year from the approval date above. At the end of the approval period you will be asked to submit a report with regard to the involvement of human subjects in this study. If your study is still active, you may request an extension of IRB approval.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects. (This document is also available at http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/irb.html.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-2003 or Julie.simpson@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB

Julie F. Simpson
Manager

cc: File
    Rebellon, Cesar
APPENDIX D: Strafford County Department of Corrections Inmate Release Questionnaire Form

It is our goal to assess your individual needs before you are released from the SCDOC in order to help you with your transition into the community.

Name: ________________________ DOB: ________________
Admitted: ________________ Tentative Release Date: ________________
Address: ________________________ Unit: ________________

Phone: ________________
Charge(s): ________________________

1) Do you have outstanding fines? YES NO
2) Do you have to register as a sex offender? YES NO
3) Are there any outstanding warrants for your arrest? YES NO
4) Do you have a no contact order or restraining order on you? YES NO
5) Will you be on probation? YES NO
6) Do you have special conditions set by the court? YES NO
7) Do you have a valid ID? YES NO
8) Do you have a valid driver’s license? YES NO
9) Do you have a means of transportation? YES NO
10) Do you have a doctor or health care provider? YES NO
11) Will you need medication? YES NO
12) Do you need mental health treatment? YES NO
13) Do you need substance abuse treatment? YES NO
14) Will you need public assistance? YES NO
15) Do you have a place to live? YES NO
16) Do you have a high school diploma or GED? YES NO
17) Will you have employment when you are released from jail? YES NO

Interviewer Comments:

Inmate: ________________________ Date: ________________

Interviewer: ________________________ Date: ________________

Note: Correctional Officer, Isabel Padial, of the Strafford County Department of Corrections designed this questionnaire and released a copy to be included in this thesis.