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The Exploration of the Housing Exclusion Impact Among Michigan Ex-Offenders

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Walden University
2025

Abstract

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by

Jackie A. Harris

MA, University of Detroit Mercy, 1998

BS, Kentucky State University, 1986

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Public Policy Administration

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Abstract

Ex-offenders possibly felt excluded when private landlords or property managers conducted background checks and decided to immediately deny ex-offenders housing opportunities. The problem this study addressed was how landlords and property managers' exclusion of ex-offenders impacted reentry post-incarceration. There was a gap regarding how Michigan private landlords impacted ex-offenders' success factor in securing safe housing upon reentry back to society. The key findings related to the literature in ways that showed how landlords acknowledged outside biases, yet described ex-offender tenants as appreciative, positive, and respectful. The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore how state and federal policies may compel landlords/property managers to grant safe housing to ex-offenders in Michigan. The study included the social exclusion theory as a foundational framework and included an exploration of the dynamics of exclusion and its impact on ex-offenders during the reentry process. This general qualitative study included in-depth interviews with active, former, and retired landlords experienced with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. Landlords in Michigan reported mixed experiences, some highlighted positive outcomes like respectful tenants and improved self-esteem for ex-offenders. Participants desired a greater role of employment and vocational readiness from government sources in shaping housing opportunities for ex-offenders. The implication for social change was that Michigan ex-offenders who sought safe housing found community members who welcomed reentry and supported second chances.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the remarkable individuals who have shaped my journey and inspired me to reach this significant milestone. To my wonderful children, Dasai, Lamont, and Katisha, you are my pride and joy. You guys motivate me to strive for success and excellence. To my precious grandchildren, Kayden, Jalice, and baby Jackie, may you always chase your dreams and know that you are deeply loved. To my sister, Earline, and my brother-in-law, Hunt, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement. To my nieces and nephews, Alexus, Armarni, Anthony, and Adam, may you. This dissertation is dedicated to the remarkable individuals who have shaped my journey and inspired me to reach this significant milestone.

To my beloved mother, Waldine Brown Harris Murray Bates, whose unwavering love and support have been my guiding light. Your strength and resilience have instilled in me the values that have propelled me forward. In the loving memory of my children's mothers, Dana and Theola, whose spirits continue to inspire me and guide us. Your love and dedication to our family will never be forgotten. In memory of my grandmothers, Irish Brown and Lucille Harris, whose legacies of love and wisdom continue to inspire me. And to my late father, Mr. Jackie A. Harris Sr., whose guidance and love have left an indelible mark on my heart.

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strength throughout my life. Lastly, to all my instructors and teachers, thank you for igniting my passion for learning and inspiring me to continue my education. Your dedication has made a lasting impact on my life. This work is a testament to the love, support, and inspiration I have received from each of you. Thanks for being a part of my journey. (SAME/TEAM to my mentor)

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Ex-offenders face many challenges after release and reintegration back into society, with one of the main barriers being housing. In Michigan, public housing authorities alone excluded 284,000 adults with conviction histories—more than 3.5 percent of all adults statewide (Vera Institute, 2022). In fact, the Michigan Public Act 167 prohibited public housing authorities from admitting individuals with certain felony convictions, such as drug-related offenses (FelHus, 2024). Michigan ex-offenders faced many barriers to retaining safe and affordable housing. The Vera Institute (2002) also indicated that broad exclusions did not promote community safety and prevented people most in need of affordable, stable housing from securing it.

This study was needed to explore how state and federal housing policies impact exclusion of ex-offenders who sought stable safe housing upon reentry to society. The social implication for change derived from this study should minimize the stigma of renting to ex-offenders, beginning with the state of Michigan. Ex-offenders possibly felt excluded when private landlords or property managers conducted background checks and decided to immediately deny ex-offenders housing opportunities. Michigan Live (2020) purported that such exclusions felt discriminatory to ex-offenders. However, ex-offenders were not a specific “protected class”. It appears that a protected class did not include convicted persons, regardless of socio-demographic status.

Michigan Live (2020) reported that landlords maintained discretion when the decision not to rent to ex-offenders was solely based solely on criminal backgrounds.

However, Michigan Live also advised that owners were not permitted to practice offensive policies against parolees or protected classes of people. Van Tongeren (2022) indicated in a previous study that researchers outside the Netherlands needed to conduct more research on ex-offenders' housing needs in relation to community safety.

Van Tongeren (2022) described that in the Netherlands, Dutch housing providers often stigmatized ex-offenders as unreliable and unwelcome tenants and considered such individuals as threats to community safety. For the purposes of this study, community safety may have been a form of exclusion and possible stigma from the perspectives of property managers and landlords who sought not to house ex-offenders. The tri-fold purpose of the Van Tongeren study was to build on descriptive legal theory, provide a normative analysis of the law, and broaden the term ex-offender.

In Van Tongeren's (2022) Netherlands study, the Dutch court decided to publish cases from a public database and used the Dutch legal framework concerning ex-offenders. Content linguistic analysis was used as key terms such as housing + convicted, housing + criminal, and housing + offender were applied as the data extraction protocol. Van Tongeren determined when house providers were allowed to deny and ex-offender housing opportunities. The findings of Van Tongeren's study concluded that while there are no out-right violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, several approaches in the Netherlands appeared problematic and at odds with international obligations.

To that end, my study was needed to explore the impact exclusion had on ex-offenders who sought stable safe housing upon reentry to society. The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), recognized that individuals with

criminal histories too often faced daunting and unnecessary barriers to obtaining and maintaining housing, including public housing, HUD assisted housing, and HUD-insured housing, which were often the only types of housing ex-offenders could afford (Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2022). It appeared that HUD understood that there were many obstacles for ex-offenders to gain stable housing upon reentry back into society.

Nationwide 37 states and over 150 cities and counties, Michigan in 2018, adopted what is widely known as “ban the box” so that employers considered a job candidate’s qualifications first—without the stigma of a conviction or arrest record (National Employment Law Project, 2021). The Law Project also claimed that in 2015, President Obama endorsed the-box by directing federal agencies to delay inquiries into job applicants’ records until later in the hiring process. Ex-offenders were unable to secure safe and permanent housing without obtaining gainful employment.

HUD (2022) maintained that it was incumbent upon the organization, to the full extent permitted by law, to administer HUD programs in an inclusive way that required and encouraged program partners to be similarly inclusive. Therefore, the potential social implications of the study was to have less exclusion of ex-offenders who sought a semblance of normalcy by securing safe housing. Chapter 1 included the following topics: background, problem statement, purpose of the study, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, significance, and the summary that led into Chapter 2.

Background

Housing ex-offenders, in much of the world, presented its own sets of challenges. In the United States, individuals released from prison and searching for decent accommodations experience significant hindrance from exclusionary policies, such as blanket ban restrictions (Van Tongeren, 2021). HUD (2022) explained that the blanket ban restrictions targeted ex-offenders by ensuring that regulatory language and guidance documents about when and how criminal records should be used—or not used—to select or terminate tenants. Consequently, HUD attempted to alleviate ban restrictions with inclusive language regarding ex-offender housing guidelines for landlords/property managers. Despite the importance of stable housing for successful reentry, criminal history checks reduced the willingness of housing authorities to rent to applicants (Evans & Porter, 2015; Evans et al., 2019; Furst & Evans, 2017).

In fact, HUD (2022) informed the public about funding recipients and best practices for complying with all relevant laws, including civil rights laws to ensure a more equitable future for the beneficiaries of HUD programs. Even with such formidable efforts, ex-offenders seeking safe housing remained in a struggle in the state of Michigan. Purtle (2020) stated that federal public housing authority policies varied substantially regarding the circumstances under which people with criminal justice histories obtained and retained public housing. Ban the Box prohibited employers from inquiring about criminal histories until late in the hiring process (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2025). As previously stated, ex-offenders are not a protected class.

This study was needed to explore how state and federal housing policies impacted exclusion of ex-offenders seeking stable safe housing upon reentry to society. Hamlin (2020) argued that disparate institutions like public housing and criminal justice functioned in tandem, as a complex spectrum of punishment for ex-offenders who sought safe housing. Hamilin identified that the spectrum of punishment may end with progressive entities that were defined as organizations that did not stigmatize ex-offender housing needs. Hamlin posited that the practice of exclusion of housing in public and private institutions may encourage recidivism. As a negative connotation, the spectrum of punishment included the exclusion of reentry of ex-offenders.

The gap in research regarded comparative studies that only examined the reintegration experiences of different groups of ex-offenders, such as those convicted of different types of offenses or those with varying lengths of incarceration (Hamlin, 2020). Therefore, this study was conducted to explore the impact exclusion had on ex-offenders seeking stable safe housing upon reentry to society. Next, the problem statement was explored for this study.

Problem Statement

Although there were state and federal policies on fair housing, the problem this study addressed was how landlords and property managers' exclusion of ex-offenders impacted reentry post-incarceration. My study was needed to suggest local policies that compelled private property managers and private landlords to adhere to fair renting practices of ex-offenders. Hamlin (2020) suggested that the exploration of the effectiveness of various support programs and interventions in promoting successful

reintegration of ex-offenders. The Ban the Box policy allowed ex-offenders to secure employment (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2025). As previously stated, ex-offenders required gainful employment to secure safe and permanent housing opportunities. The social problem previously stated that Michigan has a housing phenomenon that willfully excluded ex-offenders from securing safe housing.

There was a lack of research that explored the perspectives of landlords/property managers who had ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants. Such data collection may give insight to current housing exclusion policies and or practices as well as inclusive countermeasures that assist ex-offenders. Housing assistance programs for the formerly incarcerated typically provided housing vouchers that could not be used to pay court fees, fines, or debts (Gill et al., 2022). The target population of my study was Michigan landlords/property managers, who were able to provide individual perspectives and experiences regarding the barriers and success factors of ex-offender housing.

Participants included active, former, and retired landlords/property managers who had experience with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. As previously mentioned, HUD programs were meant to be inclusive which required and encouraged program partners to be similarly inclusive (HUD, 2022). Therefore, my study explored the existence of such inclusivity regarding ex-offender housing opportunities in the state of Michigan.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore how state and federal policies may compel landlords/property managers to grant safe housing to ex-offenders in

Michigan. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2025), Ban the Box prohibited employers from inquiring about criminal histories until late in the hiring process. An implication for social change included the language of housing in Ban the Box. Many individuals with criminal records were deemed ineligible for public or supportive housing (Reentry & Housing Coalition, n.d.). Therefore, the intention of this study was to explore and understand the barriers and success factors ex-offenders experienced with securing housing from the perspective of Michigan landlords/property managers.

According to the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) (2022), about 3,300 public housing authorities that serve approximately 1.2 million households, were often inaccessible resources for people released from incarceration. The government agency further stated that exclusionary criteria govern much of public housing, barring people who were formerly incarcerated from moving back with their families. Such housing restrictions affected local public housing development as well as federal housing-choice vouchers under Section B (Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), 2022). Housing ex-offenders was not solely a public agency situation, it also impacted landlords/property managers in local housing developments.

According to HUD (2022), too often, criminal histories were used to screen out or evict individuals who posed no actual threat to the health and safety of their neighbors. The federal housing agency also explained that it made communities less safe because providing returning citizens with housing helped the individuals reintegrate and were less likely to reoffend. Specifically, the HUD (2022) policy for landlords was as follows:

> A 2016 guidance from the Office of General Counsel sets out best practices for all landlords, including avoiding exclusions based on arrest records only; ensuring that any reliance on conviction history is based on evidence showing that it will actually promote safety; and ensuring that any exclusion based in part on conviction history also takes into account mitigating circumstances such as time that has passed since the conviction and evidence of rehabilitation or good tenant history in the more recent past.
>
> 42 U.S.C. § 3601

Housing authority representatives had significant access to working with ex-offenders. Evan et al. (2021) decided that individuals convicted of a crime and punished with incarceration faced difficulties reentering society following the release. There was a lack of research that regarded landlords/property managers experiences, perspectives, and perceptions about housing or refusing to house ex-offenders. The purpose of my study explored the perspectives of active, former, and retired landlords/property managers who had experience with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. Data collection from the landlords/property managers highlighted the barriers and success factors of housing ex-offenders.

Research Questions

I addressed two research questions in this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are the perspectives or experiences of landlords/property managers in Michigan on the barriers and success factors of ex-offenders obtaining public or private housing after incarceration?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): In what ways, if at all, have local, state or federal policies compelled Michigan landlords and property managers to grant or exclude housing for ex-offenders?

Theoretical Framework of the Study

I used the social exclusion theory as its foundational framework that explored the dynamics of exclusion and its impact on ex-offenders during the reentry process. Social exclusion theory, a multidimensional construct, originated from European sociological and policy discourse, emphasizing the interplay of economic, societal, political, and cultural dimensions that contribute to marginalization (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman, 2007; Levitas et al., 2007; Eurostat, 2010). Rooted in the broader context of societal inequalities, the theory encapsulated the structural and systemic barriers that individuals faced, often perpetuated by social policies and stigmatization.

Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman (2007) claimed that the primary proposition of social exclusion theory was that marginalization results from the systemic denial of opportunities and resources necessary for individuals to participate fully in society. Cedeño (2023) proffered that this framework views exclusion as a dichotomous phenomenon, where individuals were either excluded or not, often predetermined by socio-demographic factors such as economic status, cultural background, and systemic inequities. For ex-offenders, vulnerabilities such as unemployment, housing instability, and social stigma exacerbated exclusion and created barriers to reintegration (Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), 2004). Cedeño also mentioned that, conversely, access to supportive systems and gainful employment mitigated exclusion and fostered reintegration. These propositions aligned with the study's aim of understanding how landlords/property managers' perspectives on ex-offender’s influence housing access and the broader phenomenon of exclusion.

Detailed discussions of these propositions and supporting literature was presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 provided historical and contextual insights into housing policies, federal initiatives like HUD, and the systemic challenges faced by ex-offenders. Social exclusion theory provided a robust lens for examining the complex interplay of systemic and societal factors that contributed to the exclusion of ex-offenders from housing opportunities. This study's qualitative exploratory design aligned with the theory's emphasis on understanding exclusion as a multidimensional and context-specific phenomenon. By focusing on landlords/property managers' perspectives, the study sought to uncover how stigma and institutional practices perpetuated or alleviated exclusion for ex-offenders who sought housing.

The research questions—centered on the impact of exclusion— were directly aligned with the theoretical propositions of social exclusion theory. The theory underscored the role of societal and institutional mechanisms in perpetuating marginalization. My study's social exclusion theory was an ideal framework for exploring how ex-offender housing dynamics manifested in housing policies and practices. Moreover, the selected theory supported the exploration of solutions with the identification of systemic barriers and opportunities for reducing exclusion, particularly through supportive policies and practices that fostered reintegration.

The social exclusion theory focused on systemic barriers and societal stigmas aligned seamlessly with the study's problem statement, which highlighted the exclusion faced by ex-offenders upon reentry, particularly in accessing housing. This alignment supported the study's purpose of exploring landlords/property managers' perspectives to

understand the structural and interpersonal factors that shaped housing access for ex-offenders. Furthermore, social exclusion theory offered a framework for understanding how societal perceptions and institutional policies contributed to the perpetuation of exclusion, and provided a theoretical foundation for addressing ex-offender housing challenges through informed, policy-driven solutions.

Nature of the Study

I used a general qualitative design for this study, which is an approach particularly suited for capturing the perspectives and experiences of individuals on a specific phenomenon. As noted by Kahlke (2014), the general qualitative approach allowed for methodological flexibility while focused on descriptive and interpretive accounts of participants' experiences. Using a general qualitative research design aligned with my study's objective that explored the exclusion policies and practices against ex-offenders from the perspectives of landlords/property managers in Michigan. That is why the general qualitative design was best suited for the purposes of my study. According to Percy et al. (2015), general qualitative research enabled the researcher to probe deeply into participants' subjective interpretations without the constraints of more structured qualitative methodologies.

The phenomenon under investigation was the stigma and exclusion faced by ex-offenders, particularly in accessing housing opportunities. This study explored how landlords/property managers, who played a pivotal role in implementing housing policies, perceived inclusionary and perceived exclusionary practices. There was a lack of knowledge regarding landlords/property managers' perspectives which was critical to

understanding the barriers ex-offenders faced and contributed to the broader discourse on societal reintegration (Cedeño, 2023; Evans et al., 2021). By focusing on this topic, the study sought to generate insights into the intersection of public policy and housing discrimination, addressed insights about systemic inequalities and offered potential pathways for reform.

The methodology for this study included data collection through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with approximately 15 Michigan landlords/property managers who have experience with ex-offenders as applicants or tenants. The modified instrument used for these interviews was adapted from a validated tool developed by Dr. Hamlin in 2020. For the purposes of my study, I gained permission to use and modify it from Dr. Hamlin. Participants were recruited based on a specific criteria such as active or retired landlord/property manager status, years of experience, and direct interactions with ex-offenders in housing contexts.

Interviews were conducted virtually to accommodate the researcher's physical accessibility needs. Kullman and Chudyk (2025) traditional methods of member checking involved participants conducting transcript reviews. I also conducted member-checking for data collection transparency purposes. Virtual interviews also captured non-verbal communication observed that supplemented verbal responses. Data analyzed used thematic analysis which allowed for the identification of recurring patterns and themes, consistent with the principles of qualitative descriptive studies (Kim & Joy, 2020; Liu, 2016). Themes were identified and associated with my populations' sociodemographic

variables such as race, age, gender, and professional experience. By doing so, I further enriched the analysis and facilitated nuanced interpretations of my study's findings.

Kostere and Kostere (2021) noted that methodological rigor was further enhanced by the flexibility inherent in the general qualitative approach. Kostere and Kostere also recognized that using a general qualitative design made it suited for exploring the complex and multifaceted issue of exclusion in housing policy implementation. The insights generated by my study's findings contributed to academic knowledge, informed public policy, and advocated for equitable housing practices.

Definitions

My general qualitative exploratory study's unique terms that defined circumstances and instances that related to the ex-offenders housing experience. Less than a dozen terms, retrieved within five-year parameters of research, were identified in this study. Therefore, the following definition of terms were used in my study:

Ban the Box: Also called the Fair Chance Act, proposed that employers remove the conviction history question from job applications that ensured that applicants were first judged based on individual qualifications while still permitting employers to examine applicants' criminal histories at a later point in the hiring process (Eivaz, 2020).

Public Housing Authority: A state, county, municipality or other governmental entity or public body or agency or instrumentality of these entities that was authorized to engage or assist in the development or operation of low-income housing under the United States Housing Act of 1937 in accordance with 24 CFR §5.100 (Law Insider, n.d.).

Housing Excluding Ex-Offenders: The policy adopted by housing authorities of denying prospective tenants with a criminal record access to housing is an important barrier to ex-offenders seeking somewhere to live (Peterson & Holmen, 2024).

Ex-Offender Stable Housing: Stable housing is a critical need for offenders at reentry and an urgent need for offenders returning to rural communities (Bowman & Eli, 2020).

Ex-Offender Stigmatization: Stigmatization of offenders was widespread because ex-offenders were not protected under federal law and thus discrimination laws do not apply (Evans et al., 2021).

Stigmatization and Recidivism: The relationship between stigmatization and recidivism was impacted by a number of factors including gender, age, race/ethnicity, and class. Some groups, such as women, minority groups, young offenders, and those from working class backgrounds tended to be more negatively affected by stigmatization (Quinn-Hogan, 2021).

Safe Umbrella: The perceived comfort that halfway houses provided ex-offenders seeking safe stable housing (Schwarz, 2020).

Unique terminology will add credence to the nature of my study since project managers should be versed upon each term. These definitions were placed in historical context and applied in Chapter 2. However, the next section will discuss the assumptions of my study.

Assumptions

My general qualitative exploratory study had at least three assumptions. As a researcher, I think my study assumed that the modified Hamlin (2020) interview instrument captured data to reach saturation from the participant responses. The second assumption was that my population of landlords/property managers provided data that answered my research question. Lastly, the third assumption was that my anticipated participants responded with truthful responses during the in-depth interviews. This study had scope and delimitations.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of my study included active, former, and retired landlords/property managers who had experience with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. My first delimitation was that my study excluded any other Midwest states in the country and international locations. The second delimitation was that housing authority agents were not invited to participate in this study. The third delimitation was that no in-depth interviews were conducted in person. Next, the limitations of my study were briefly described.

Limitations

My study had several limitations. The first limitation was the use of the modified Hamlin (2020) interview questions as the sole instrument for this study's data collection which may limit transferability. The second limitation did not exclude participants by socio-demographics such as race, age, gender, and culture. The third limitation used a virtual platform, instead of in-person interviews, as the source of data collection. Another

limitation of my study used a general qualitative method approach as a research design. My research design was limited by only recruiting private landlords and property managers, as opposed to public H.U.D. employees, as my study's population. It excluded any housing authority employees.

Researcher bias was removed to conduct this study with integrity. I mitigated my research bias by creating a reflexive journal that kept me as unbiased as possible during data collection. Next, I discussed how my study was significant.

Significance

The problem this study addressed was how exclusion from public housing implemented by landlords/property managers impacted ex-offender's successful reentry after incarceration. Despite its ostensible mission to integrate the formerly incarcerated and provide much-needed housing to the poor, the housing development indirectly reproduced the stigma of criminal history (Hamlin & Purser, 2021). Ex-offenders treated like outcasts through exclusion experienced recidivism. The authors further declared that even though housing developments produced a sense of ambivalence among residents, who were both grateful for the quality of the new housing and were resentful of ongoing forms of carceral supervision and control.

Data collection from voluntary private landlords as participants gave insight to current housing exclusion policies and or practices as well as inclusive countermeasures that assisted ex-offenders. This data collection was significant and added to both the body of knowledge as well as provided constructive insight for the national HUD public policy regarding housing ex-offenders. Data collection from landlords/property managers also

offered a perspective regarding Ban the Box employment barriers and successes that impacted ex-offenders' housing opportunities. Gill et al. (2022) noted that providing flexible financial assistance for housing and case management facilitated success. Gill et al. also mentioned efficient housing helped individuals with criminal records achieve stability after reentry. Since private landlords/property managers were not government regulated, perhaps the data collection revealed common methods of inclusion for ex-offender housing opportunities that kept Michigan communities safe.

The implication for social change was that Michigan ex-offenders who sought safe housing found community members who welcomed reentry and supported second chances. My study's lens used the perspectives of landlords/property managers as it related to ex-offender housing and added to the body of knowledge as another implication of social change. Lastly, the HUD public policy regarding ex-offenders needed an amendment as a countermeasure that safeguarded housing opportunities for ex-offenders reentry into society. The next section presented a summary of Chapter 1.

Summary

Chapter 1 discussed the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of my study. This summary highlighted the main points of Chapter 1. Cedeño (2023) proposed that the social exclusion theory also influenced the lives of individuals and families that found themselves in social disadvantage. The purpose of my general qualitative exploratory study was to analyze how landlords/property managers make efforts in securing housing for ex-offenders.

The intention of this study was to explore and understand the barriers and success factors ex-offenders experience with securing housing from the perspective of Michigan landlords/property managers. The key phenomenon my study investigated was the exclusion policies and practices against ex-offenders from the perspectives of private landlords/property managers. To do so, I used the validated interview instrument (2020) developed by Dr. Hamlin in Chicago.

This data collection was significant, added to both the body of knowledge and provided constructive insight for the national HUD public policy regarding ex-offenders. The scope of my study included active, former, and retired private landlords/property managers who had experience with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. Chapter 2 provided an elaborate review of literature regarding the history of ex-offender housing in the United States.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem I addressed in this study was how the practices of social exclusion of housing implemented by landlords/property managers impacted ex-offender's successful reentry after incarceration. The purpose of my general qualitative exploratory study was to analyze how landlords/property managers made efforts in securing housing for ex-offenders. A synopsis of the current literature included the national HUD policy, the social exclusion theory, inclusive communities, history of ex-offender housing, Michigan Department of Correction, public policies for housing ex-offenders, private and public housing opportunities, landlords and property managers, gap in the research, and the Chapter 2 summary.

Literary Search Strategy

The literature review consisted of primary sources such as books, peer- reviewed journal articles, dissertations, professional websites, and federal government publications. Articles were accessed through Google Scholar, Scholarly Journals, and the following Walden University research databases: Criminal Justice, Public Policy. The following scholarly journals were reviewed: *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, American Journal of Public Health, Criminal Law and Philosophy, Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, Achieving Evidence-Based Practices in Community Corrections to Promote Recovery, Critical Criminology, Housing Studies, Efforts of the Criminal Justice Community, The Prison Journal.* My extensive database searches included the following key words and phrases: *ex-offender*

housing, exclusion theory, property managers and ex-offender housing, HUD policies for ex-offenders, ex-offender housing outcomes, Michigan housing policies. My literary search strategy was successful for the historical content of my study. Using this search strategy yielded over 250 articles, of which 125 were germane to the topic.

Theoretical Framework

Social Exclusion Theory

The present study employed social exclusion as its foundational framework, to explore the dynamics of exclusion and its impact on ex-offenders during their reentry process. Many researchers proclaimed that the social exclusion theory originated from European sociological discourse, emphasizing the economic, societal, political, and cultural dimensions that contribute to marginalization of the less fortunate (Jehoel et al., 2007; Levitas et al., 2007; and Eurostat, 2010). As previously mentioned, the history of HUD indicated willful participation in excluding ex-offenders from housing. Subsequently, Meier's (2020) research indicated that homelessness is both a cause and consequence of social exclusion, as individuals experiencing homelessness face stigma, discrimination, and reduced access to essential necessities such as housing.

Ex-offenders who experienced social exclusion of basic needs such as housing, employment, civic engagement could recidivate or become homeless as non-preferred possible outcomes of reentry. Also, Parsell and Watts (2017) in Australia, determined that policies and societal structures contributed to the exclusion of the homeless by limiting affordable housing options and imposing punitive measures such as criminalizing sleeping on the streets. Since being homeless was one outcome of social

exclusion ex-offenders may experience upon reentry, my research theory was solely based on the social exclusion theory.

There were many interpretations of the social exclusion theory. For instance, Duffy's (2009) interpretation of the social exclusion theory related to homelessness, stated homeless individuals who do not have a stable residence are excluded from social life participation due to being homeless. Simply put, being cut off from participation in society is the exclusion that outcasts experience. However, Floris' (2024) California, research stated social exclusion occurred due to various factors such as a lack of funds, a lack of education, a lack of access to affordable housing, these socioeconomic barriers are elements of the homeless exclusionary process. Floris' interpretation of the social exclusion theory resonated with my study the best. Furthermore, Floris noted that social exclusion often defined beings as socially invisible, thereby assigning a position of inferiority to exclude individuals as equal members of society due to perceived undesirable social circumstances.

My study used the social exclusion theory based on the Floris' definition. Floris' (2024) described the social exclusion theory as a pervasive and troubling phenomenon that affected society's most vulnerable members. Ex-offenders were identified as a vulnerable group of people. Floris added that homeless ex-offenders were often excluded from society because of criminal participation, and a lack of resources possessing material goods such as cars, employment, clothing, and housing. It seems that socially excluded individuals were deprived of necessities which are required to live life, such as housing and employment.

Being socially excluded as mentioned earlier, consists of the perception of being incapable of voting, employment, paying taxes and contributing to society's norm (Floris, 2024). There appeared to be a negative stigmatism attached to society's labels that originated from a position of superiority, meant to exclude individuals as equal members of society. Floris explained how the social exclusion theory sought to understand the causal role of institutional actions in creating and perpetuating the social exclusion of vulnerable individuals. Social exclusion was practiced by institutions' who leveraged the lack of inclusion practices against vulnerable populations.

Floris further commented how social exclusion was easily recognized when institutions used methods of exclusionary policies and practices. Taket et al. (2009) established that the language of social exclusion recognized marginalizing, silencing, rejecting, isolating, segregating and disenfranchising as the machinery of exclusion, as its processes of operation. Floris (2024) concluded that researchers must shed a light on the demands of an inclusive society of equals to combat social exclusion.

Based on the aforementioned instances of social exclusion, this general qualitative research design employed the social exclusion theory as its foundation. The social exclusion theory was the best fit with this research on homeless ex-offenders who faced challenges securing safe and equitable housing. However, inclusive communities were the positive response to social exclusion.

History of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

The first agency responsible for housing was the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 1965, HUD (2021) was developed by President L.B.

Johnson, and focused on improving housing conditions and consolidated the five existing federal housing agencies (1) The Federal Housing Administration (FHA), (2) The Public Housing Administration (PHA), (3) The Federal Mortgage Association (Fannie Mae), (4) Urban Renewal Administration (URA), (5) The Community Facilities Administration (CFA), (Donovan, 2010). Additionally, Sperling (2017) noted that the HUD's mission was meant to create and provide safe, affordable homes, in inclusive communities for the entire American society. HUD (2021) was initially created to assist low-income individuals with subsidized, affordable, safe housing. HUD emphasized promoting fair housing with less discrimination.

Under the HUD umbrella, the FHA was introduced in 1934. Peck and Jenkins (2022) discussed that FHA was developed to ensure all Americans had the opportunity to own homes and live in any community they choose, free from harassment or prejudices. HUD was given the assignment to create communities where all of America would be welcome. Soto (2018) stated that HUD was responsible for enforcing housing laws, developing housing programs, educating individuals regarding their housing rights, and outlawing housing discrimination. HUD had other responsibilities besides overseeing and enforcing the 1968 FHA. HUD played a pivotal role in shaping housing policy in the United States. Sauter (2021) claimed that HUD's policies included the introduction of Section 8 vouchers which means subsidized housing in each state. Subsidized housing was also recognized as affordable public housing because of discounted rent.

Sauter (2021) noted that public housing was controlled by local and state requirements that were regulated federally by HUD. Sauter further mentioned that rent at

a Public Housing Authority (PHA) was economically affordable and was subsidized by the U.S. government, based on the tenant's income, making it affordable for tenants. In fact, HUD oversaw PHA's and ensured the agencies followed all government housing regulations and policies for subsidized facilities. Additionally, Sauter discerned that HUD was responsible for making sure PHA's provided a safe, secure, and clean environment for individual tenants.

Donovan (2010) recognized that besides being given authority to oversee the U.S. public housing program, HUD was given authority over the Housing and Community Development Act (HCDA). Donovan reported that the HCDA implemented the section 8 voucher program in 1974, that gave private landlords access to low-income subsidized tenants who could afford private rent with government financial assistance. Section 8 assistance covered most but not all costs associated with renting units to qualified applicants. Furthermore, in 1993, Congress introduced HUD's HOPE VI program. The 1993 HOPE VI program was implemented to tear down old public housing units and replace them with new units. However, Donovan noted this caused problems because the new units were not specifically built just for use by subsidized tenants and included units which were offered to the public based on affordability and current rent rates.

Donovan (2010) clarified that even though the public were eligible for the HOPE VI program, subsidized tenant patrons were still eligible for tenancy at the new units at subsidized prices. Additionally, HUD (2024) was run by an individual who was nominated by the current sitting President of the United States and confirmed by the United States senate. HUD continued to note that once the senate confirmed the nominee,

that person was given the title as the director of HUD. The current director of HUD (2024) is Marcia L. Fudge was nominated by President Joe Biden for the position and confirmed by the current U.S. Senate.

There were many government programs that maintain good qualities, such as HUD were introduced as providers of low-income subsidized housing for individuals. Subsequently, Fritz (2008), mentioned HUD was developed to prevent discrimination when it came to public housing but, HUD reinforced discrimination with its total ban on individuals with prior criminal records. It appeared that there was a negative aspect of HUD focused on banning ex-offenders from securing public housing because of past criminal histories.

Additionally, during the 1988 congressional sessions, Congress developed amendments to the Fair Housing Act. Also, Hirsch et al. (2002) addressed a concern that new amendments gave PHA's the power to conduct criminal background checks on future tenants and the ability to ban ex-offenders from subsidized housing for any period the PHA had chosen. Donovan (2010) claimed that the PHA ban was for life, or any amount of time chosen by the PHA. Donovan explained that, for example, in Seattle Washington, a prostitution arrest resulted in a ban from public housing for a period of 2 to 5 years and in Chicago an arson arrest resulted in a lifetime ban from public housing.

As Hirsch et al. (2002) mentioned previously, the 1988 Congress gave HUD and PHA's the power to ban ex-offenders from public housing; however, homeless ex-offenders were the ideal candidates to reside in public housing. Banning an ex-offender had a negative impact on the ex-offenders returning to the community, with the stigma of

not being welcomed. For example, Torres and Apkarain (2018) stated that a court in Virginia in 2003, and a Charlotte court in 2018, upheld PHA's right to ban individuals from their property. The use of banishment policies by PHA's were profusely challenged in court. With this in mind, Mora (2015) acknowledged that in the case of *New York v. Davis*, the court upheld PHA police right to stop anyone on the PHA property, who was suspected as a banned trespasser.

Torres and Apkarain (2018) concluded that decisions rendered at these court hearings sustained that PHA's must have a banishment policy in place that contains the offenses for banishment, how long a banishment period can last, and keep a ban list. Finally, Goldstein (2003) research showed 85 % of PHA's had a ban policy and most violators were charged with trespassing if no other crimes were committed. PHA's based the banishment policies on the specific deterrence theory of criminal justice. Torres and Apkarain (2018) discussed how the deterrence theory focused on the individuals not being involved in criminal activity due to already being penalized for example, banning the individual from the PHA property, reduced the individual's chances of returning and violating the ban.

The literature showed that HUD exercised the authority to ban individuals. Surprisingly, Donovan (2010), mentioned that *Lowell Housing Projects v. Melendez*, a Massachusetts court upheld the eviction of a family due to one of the family members being convicted of robbery away from the PHA property. With that said, the HUD ban extended to family members as well. However, Hirsch et al. (2002) dictated that the One-

Strike Law was introduced during the United States get tough on drugs and crime stance by former U.S. Presidents Regan and Clinton.

Additionally, in 2002, the United States Supreme Court heard a case that challenged HUD's one-strike law, the court ruled in HUD's favor regarding its one strike policy on drugs and crime at PHA properties (Stinson, 2004). HUD's One-Strike Law ban appeared to target ex-offender family household members. Under HUD's One-Strike Policy, there was an extreme challenge for ex-offenders to qualify or receive the opportunity to live in safe public housing. Donovan (2010) noted that HUD's defense focused on the one-strike laws required to ensure the safety of the other tenants residing at subsidized properties. Stinson recalled how a California court ruled in favor of the Oakland Housing Authority and upheld the eviction of *Rucker v. Oakland Housing Authority*, though Rucker's granddaughter was the individual caught participating in drugs on the subsidized property.

The California case of *Rucker v. Oakland Housing Authority* was a profound example of a significant challenge that ex-offenders who sought stable safe housing faced. Congress and courts began to levy harsh penalties and fines for various drug crimes during the one-strike period. Moreover, Congress and the courts did not prioritize protections for ex-offenders impacted by the one strike law at the PHA's properties. Michigan has state litigation that addressed ex-offenders securing safe housing. Next, I discussed the theoretical framework of my study.

Inclusive Communities

Inclusive communities were a positive response to social exclusion and were pivotal for ex-offenders' reentry survival. In India, Gopalan et al. (2024) reported that family support and community connections played a vital role in the social inclusion of ex-offenders during reintegration. Some stateside organizations voluntarily sought to assist social inclusion of ex-offenders who reentered into society. In America, Fast Capital (2024) as an organization recognized that inclusive communities promoted diversity and encouraged people from different backgrounds to come together and provide equal opportunities. Fast Capital's slogan ensured that everyone had access to the same opportunities, regardless of individual backgrounds, was crucial for building inclusive communities. Next, Figure 1 showed society how to build inclusive communities.

Figure 1

Five Key Strategies to Building Inclusive Communities

- Fast Capital (2024)

With this in mind, Michigan's Midland Community Former Offenders Advocacy and Rehabilitation (2013)addressed the errant ways of ex-offenders and provided tools to

assist with transition into society. Transitional tools included a search for housing, food, clothing, medical and mental health referrals, employment readiness, addiction counseling and mentoring. Local organizations that specialized in ex-offender rehabilitation were great cornerstone examples of an inclusive community. Michigan has multiple resources to share with ex-offenders. In Hastings, Michigan, the Starting Over for Success (SOS) (2023) organizational mission was to reduce the disenfranchisement of ex-offenders, assist in rebuilding lives through relevant job training, gainful employment, and access to housing and other community resources.

Conversely, there were local city issued ordinances that mandated social inclusion of ex-offenders. For instance, Renting to Felons (2023) reported that in 2019, Detroit passed a city ordinance which made it easier for felons to rent a home, Detroit City Code Sec. 26-5-1 Fair Chance Access to Rental Housing. The ordinance excluded felons, who were registered sex offenders with a lifetime registration requirement or with a conviction for manufacturing methamphetamine in public housing (Felon Free News, 2025).

Otherwise, ex-offenders had access to applying for federally funded low-income housing programs in Michigan. Renting to Felons (2023) also encouraged ex-offenders that it's better to use a second chance apartment finder to search for private landlords. For that reason, it seemed that private landlords / property managers represented another source of inclusive communities that contributed to ex-offenders gaining positive reentry experiences.

Reentry for Ex-Offenders

The National Institute of Justice (2023), defined reentry as the process of helping ex-offender's transition back into society after being incarcerated. Reentry is best understood as ex-offenders returning home or returning to one's previous community and can be a daunting task for any ex-offender. Decidedly, not having stable housing makes the reentry process extremely difficult for ex-offenders. Also, the National Institute of Justice recalled how a lack of housing makes participation in reentry programs, such as finding employment, getting mental health or physical health checkups, educational programs, and employment training a significant challenge.

The perceived goal of reentry was to help the ex-offender with a successful reintegration back into society to become a law-abiding citizen. However, Sauter recanted that the literature supported how important housing was emphasized, and how ex-offenders who served time in prisons were 10 times more likely to face homelessness. Sauter also noted that even though subsidized public housing is more economical, reentry ex-offenders are not eligible for subsidized housing due to their criminal record. Contrastly, Starting Over with Success (2023) debated that even when a landlord rejects ex-offenders based on a criminal background, landlords are mandated to allow ex-offenders to provide evidence of rehabilitation, and must consider the evidence provided. To mitigate the risk of homelessness, ex-offenders had access to limited housing options to choose from during reentry, some of which represented transitional housing, subsidized housing, private housing, or residing with family and friends.

Different from public housing, private housing was owned by private owners known as landlords and property managers. Sauter (2021) explained that landlords charged a privately set monthly rent fee where ex-offenders had to compete with all of society to secure a limited number of private homes available during the reentry process. Ex-offenders who reentered society required gainful employment to financially provide essential basic needs like housing. As far as financial services, Sauter discussed barriers that prohibited bank accounts and food stamps for abolished ex-offenders. Additionally, a lack of skills combined with a lack of education, and substance abuse problems, inhibited a successful community reentry (Rosenfield & Grig, 2022). According to the National Institute of Justice (2023), reentry programs were ideally developed in three phases:

> (a) first, reentry programs taking place during the release of offenders which aim at connecting ex-offenders with various services that they might need or require; (b) second, reentry programs that are long-term and aims at giving support and guidance to ex-offenders as they permanently return to their communities; (c) third, reentry programs that are introduced during the time of incarceration and aims to prepare prisoners for their eventual release.

Interestingly, Barak and Stebbins (2021) halfway house research posited that ex-offenders released into familiar surroundings were more likely to have a negative reentry process due to community demographics such as high unemployment, a lack of affordable safe housing, single parent households, and low individual incomes. Unfortunately, returning to familiar neighborhoods also increased the chances of recidivism, which defeats the reentry process. Kirk's (2012) Louisiana study confirmed

that ex-offenders returning to original communities tempted ex-offenders to participate in criminal activities. Alternatively, Barak and Stebbins declared that when ex-offenders were released into unfamiliar communities, they have a better reentry and recidivism success rate. Barak and Stebbins (2021) also noted ex-offenders experienced alienation, negative stigmas, marginalization, and disenfranchisement upon reentry to society.

Ban the Box

Ex-offenders who reentered society required jobs to survive. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (2025), Ban the Box was introduced in the 1990's, and prohibited employers from inquiring about criminal records until late in the hiring process. Ban the Box was meant to assist ex-offenders gain employment by removing barriers.

Schneider (2021) Minnesota research reported that the ban the box initiatives sought to give ex-offenders a fair chance to present individual qualifications for employment before any past conviction history was revealed. Doleac and Hanson (2020) research occurred in various U.S. cities and recorded that Ban the Box policies led to a 5 percent decrease in employment for low-skilled young Black male ex-offenders. Underrepresented and marginalized groups of people had to overcome discrimination daily, and as an ex-offender that added to the fundamental challenge of reentry from the lack of gainful employment.

Ex-Offenders Reentry Challenges

Individuals not serving life sentences earned the right to return home through reentry. Rade et al. (2017) postulated that ex-offenders who experienced negative

receptions from the community upon reentry to society experienced the first barrier of being incarcerated. Furthermore, Cox (2022) debated that the United States primarily focused on building large prisons and believed in mass incarceration, and less on the reentry of ex-offenders. Cox also expressed concerns about how the current United States prison system did not prepare released ex-offenders with skills or direction to succeed once back into the community.

Barak and Stebbins (2021) mentioned that when an ex-offender reentered society, community demographics such as high employment rates, lack of safe and affordable housing, single parent homes, and low individual incomes impacted the reentry period. Cox (2022) claimed that besides not having a support system, returning ex-offenders had difficulties securing services such as physical help, mental health help, substance abuse help, employment help, and housing assistance. Many challenges of reentry required an ex-offender wrap-around support system. Community norms impacted ex-offenders' reentry efforts by not having a stable support system, which manifested as ex-offender stigmatization and discrimination.

Barak and Stebbins (2021) halfway house research articulated that an individual's race and ethnicity played a role in the ex-offender reentry, for example, Blacks and Latinos were stigmatized more than other races and cultures. Sadly, ex-offender discrimination was often race-based. Barak and Stebbins wrote that when Blacks and Latinos with criminal records applied for employment, these individuals were less likely to receive a call back when compared to white counterparts.

Stigma and Ex-Offenders

Unfortunately, there were certain stigmas attached to being an ex-offender without a safe resident dwelling. Meier (2020) mentioned that attitudes were based on information an individual has learned, this attitude then turns into one's own perception or view. Believing a stereotype or negative stigma is harmful to one's mental wellbeing. Brinol et al. (2019, p.1.) described attitudes toward someone or something as general evaluations people had regarding people, places, objects, and issues.

Outside influences and opinions impacted the population of vulnerable people. Meier (2020) recalled that one who had a favorable stimulus possessed a positive attitude while one who favored a negative stimulus produced a negative attitude. Positive attracted positive and negative appealed to negativity. For example, if an individual associated the word bad with being an ex-offender, one had a negative attitude toward ex-offenders. Most individuals stereotype people who had contact with the criminal justice system as being associated with something negative. Meier also emphasized that negative attitudes turned into prejudices that developed into a dislike for a particular group of individuals. Some communities had negative attitudes and prejudices directed at ex-offenders' reentry back into particular neighborhoods. Similarly, Rade et al. (2016) synthesized studies agreed that people with conservative views and never associated with ex-offenders had negative impressions of ex-offenders.

To clarify, Rade et al. (2016) stated that individuals possessed a more negative attitude towards ex-offenders who committed sex crimes and crimes against children. In contrast, Glock and Kleen (2020) posited that people and communities who associated or

had contact with ex-offenders on a regular basis maintained a positive attitude towards ex-offenders in Germany. The fact that there were members of society that demonstrated grace for ex-offenders was a hopeful incentive and sentiment that prevented recidivism.

Recidivism of Ex-Offenders

Recidivism is a significant occurrence among ex-offenders. Middlemass and Smiley (2020) New York research wrote 75 percent of released prisoners are rearrested within three to five years. Researchers have shown that housing instability is associated with recidivism and homelessness increases one's chances of having contact with the police (Brekke et al., 2001; Rosener & Harmon, 1995). Ex-offenders who don't sustain stable safe housing become a part of the homeless population. In Baltimore, Maryland Fischer (1992) research discussed how many aspects of homeless life were criminalized such as trespassing and homeless people resorted to illegal activities to survive. Being homeless placed ex-offenders in a revolving cycle of incarceration.

Homeless ex-offenders who committed crimes for reasons based on street survival, were often incarcerated and released back into the homeless community. Schlay and Rossi (1992), discerned that 8 to 92% of the U.S. homeless population had some form of contact with the criminal justice system. To place into proper context, Reece and Link (2023) believed that housing instability had direct consequences for reoffending behavior, and stable housing has been shown to reduce recidivism. Basically, having stable housing reduced the chances of an ex-offender getting trapped in the revolving cycle of reoffending. In fact, not having a stable residence significantly increased an ex-offender's chances of recidivism.

Research illustrated that it did not matter if the ex-offender was incarcerated for a misdemeanor or felony. Returning to the homeless community typically ncreased one's chance of reoffending and recidivism. In tandem, more researchers found that people on probation who lacked housing increased the individual risk of recidivism by 35% and 49% (Jacobs & Gottlieb, 2020). Finally, ex-offenders who experienced homelessness were more likely to be trapped in the revolving door cycle of the criminal justice system.

Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)

Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) primarily focused on holding offenders accountable for their actions, while keeping the communities of Michigan safe (MDOC Reentry Strategic Action Plan, 2019). The Reentry Strategic Action Plan (2019) detailed several MDOC programs, such as education, self-help, vocational training, and job placement programs. Rehabilitated and educated ex-offenders with jobs upon reentry stand a good chance of housing stability. MDOC received nationwide recognition for having a 10% decrease in Michigan's prison population and recorded the lowest recidivism rate in the state's history (Reentry Strategic Action Plan). MDOC utilized the Offender Success Model Strategy (OSMS) that promoted reintegration and public safety and the most popular OSMS was the vocational village program. Fortunately, the intention of the vocational village program seemed similar to the primary purposes of inclusive communities.

MDOC Reentry Strategic Action Plan (2019) reported that offenders obtained state and national certifications upon completion of the village program. Additionally, MDOC assisted vocation village participants with securing employment offers and

assisted with pre-release planning. MDOC Reentry Strategic Action Plan further stated that part of the pre-release planning included supportive services such as housing assistance, work transportation, and the purchase of work tools.

MDOC in 2022 started the Employment Readiness Program (ERP). Reentry Strategic Action Plan (2019) literature mentions in the Employment Readiness Program offenders are taught basic computer skills, simulated web skills, digital, financial literacy, resume workshops, cosmetology, 3D printing, robotics, and teaching (Reentry Strategic Action Plan, 2019). Additionally, the 2019 Strategic Action Plan reported, MDOC established a partnership with the Michigan Department of State to assist offenders with obtaining birth certificates, driver's license, social security cards, and State of Michigan identification cards, to assist with eliminating employment barriers.

MDOC not only had rehabilitation programs. MDOC (2019) participated in housing programs for offenders. “Implementing housing strategies to both prepare and connect returning homeless offenders with both transitional housing and permanent housing opportunities with the goal of achieving permanent supportive housing as close to their prison release date as possible.” (Reentry Strategic Action Plan, pg. 3., 2019). Sauter (2021), defined transitional housing as a temporary residence used until permanent housing was secured. Examples of transitional housing were halfway houses, whereas permanent housing was defined as residing regularly at one’s own address.

Furthermore, MDOC (2019) annually contracted with halfway houses throughout the state of Michigan providing over 1,000 beds at over 300 locations across the state and services over 3000 parolees. MDOC collaborated with the Michigan State Housing

Development Authority (MSHDA) in ways that provided Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8) and assisted ex-offenders with securing safe housing. MDOC helped patrons secure fair, affordable housing alternatives by aiding with completing applications, explained the rental screening process, and other housing needs.

MDOC (2019) developed partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies to provide services for Michigan's ex-offenders. MDOC's collaboration of meaningful partnerships enabled vocational training, educational programs both high school and college courses, mental and physical health programs, substance abuse programs, and housing programs to reduce recidivism. MDOC's Reentry strategic plan credited and strengthened partnerships with federal, state, and local entities in the development and implementation of evidence-based programs and services that targeted the risks and needs of prisoners, parolees, and probationers (Reentry Strategic Action Plan, p.4., 2019). Seemingly, MDOCs wraparound care dynamics attempted to keep Michigan citizens and communities safe.

Michigan HUD Policies

HUD was responsible for providing funding for Michigan's Housing Choice Voucher program (MSHDA) (2025). MSHDA Section 8 tenants used the vouchers to secure housing, apartments, townhouses, or duplex rental units. Besides Section 8, HUD was also responsible for the 1986 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program which encouraged private investment in affordable housing developments in Michigan. HUD supported local communities. Specifically, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was developed to fund economic development, housing

rehabilitation, and services aimed at revitalizing low- and moderate-income neighborhoods (Housing and Community Development Fund (HCDF), 2025). Michigan HUD enforced fair housing laws that ensured all individuals including ex-offenders, maintained equal access to housing, eliminating certain discrimination.

According to HCDF (2025) HUD assisted the state of Michigan and its local governments with planning long-term developments and housing, which ensured that federal funds were directed toward the most pressing needs of communities. HUD provided programs that supported homeownership in Michigan, such as the FHA loan program, which insured mortgages for low-income borrowers. Additionally, HCDF's Home Investment Partnership Program (THIPP), provided funding to local governments for first time homebuyer assistance and home rehabilitation. Essentially, Michigan HUD made public housing more attainable for ex-offenders, with the assistance of THIPP, homeownership is attainable for ex-offenders.

In 1966, HUD practices involved the Affordable Housing Development and Preservation initiative by working with developers and local governments in ways that ensured affordable housing options throughout the state of Michigan (MSHDA, 2025). HUD (n.d.) in 1968 established Fair Housing Enforcement by providing training to local governments and real estate professionals that ensured all fair housing regulations were complying. HUD in 2000 introduced the Housing First Approach which focused on providing permanent housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. HUD elements were followed by support services to address mental illness, addiction,

and employment needs. Ex-offenders who qualified for HUD opportunities were given the option of safe public housing.

Inevitably, Michigan HUD policies expanded affordable housing, promoted fair housing, and adequately addressed homelessness. Michigan HUD policies worked with partnerships that invested in programs that ensured equal access to housing opportunities for all Michigan residents. To help ex-offenders directly, the state of Michigan created legislation that supported its most vulnerable population.

Michigan Clean Slate Legislation Public Policy

Michigan's Clean Slate (2020) Legislation started a new approach for criminal record expungement. Michigan's Clean Slate Legislation (2020) allows ex-offenders with up to three felonies and an unlimited number of misdemeanors to petition for record expungement. Government legislation helped expunge certain records for ex-offenders and helped with success in gainful employment and housing. Michigan's Clean Slate Legislation's automatic expungement component became operational in April 2023. The state expanded how expungement facilitated sealing of eligible misdemeanor convictions after seven years, and non-violent felonies after ten years.

The Michigan legislature (2020) also explained that expunged record exclusions included offenses such as assaultive convictions, serious misdemeanors, and any conviction punishable by ten years or more. Criminal records that qualified for expungement may have significantly helped improve ex-offenders' reentry experiences. Michigan legislature (2020) stated, expungement led to improved socioeconomic outcomes and an easier reintegration path back into society. Michigan presented a

formidable sense of leadership in supporting policies that indirectly build inclusive communities.

Michigan's Clean Slate Legislation expungement eliminated certain barriers that impeded ex-offender gainful employment. Community Renewal Society (2021) indicated that cleared criminal records enhanced employment and increased chances to secure housing. Ex-offenders who retained jobs and maintained safe places to live thrived in society. The Michigan legislature (2020) detailed how expungement led to improved socioeconomic outcomes and facilitated ex-offender reintegration back into society. Fiscally speaking, gainfully employed and safely housed ex-offenders were positive financial contributors to the main society. In summation, ex-offenders with criminal histories were often met with opportunities and barriers during reentry.

Michigan Affordable Housing

MDOC had an important role, when it came to rehabilitation and reintegration of Michigan ex-offenders. Dyb (2009) sustained that homelessness, and recidivism had a bidirectional association upon one another. Fortunately, the state of Michigan along with private partners intervened and instituted housing resources for felons reintegrating back into the community, aptly named, the Felon Friendly Housing or Second Chance Apartments (Felon Friendly News January 2025). The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) provided nonprofit housing assistance for returning felons/ex-offenders. According to Felon Friendly News (2025), the Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness (MCAH) helped individuals secure affordable housing by providing guidance on applying for housing assistance programs or by offering direct

resources that prevented homelessness. Local state organizations also assisted ex-offenders procure some sense of normalcy upon reentry to the community.

Felon Friendly News (2025) described public housing as government-owned rental units designed to provide affordable housing for low-income families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. Besides nonprofit housing assistance, the state of Michigan offered public housing to ex-offenders. Ex-offender rent was based on income but regulations against criminal records prohibited many felons/ex-offenders from public housing. One of the popular programs offered by MSHDA is Section 8, paid for rental housing by covering a portion of the rent, based on the applicants' income. Felon Friendly reported that transitional housing was supplied by the state until permanent housing was secured.

More importantly, Michigan's Felon Friendly News (2025) listed various apartment complexes as the best felon friendly apartments that helped ex-offenders with the reentry experience. Dyb (2009) research stated that securing housing upon reentry was crucial to community reintegration, and Michigan adequately supplied resources to assist ex-offenders with the housing community reintegration process via state reentry programs. Some local areas provided additional support with city ordinances that helped ex-offenders gain safe and secure housing.

Detroit Fair Chance Access to Rental Housing

The City of Detroit (2018), Michigan, amended the 1984 Detroit City *Code Sec. 26-5-1 Fair Chance Access to Rental Housing ordinance*. According to Detroit (2018) city offices, the amendment mandated new rules in which landlords could not ask about a

renter's criminal background until later in the rental application process. Detroit attempted to give ex-offenders an advantage in securing safe housing upon reentry. Detroit's (2018) Fair Chance Ordinance legally applied to landlords with 5 or more housing units, which covered all apartment buildings in the city. The Fair Chance Ordinance law didn't stop landlords from rejecting renters with criminal records, yet it did provide some safeguards. Detroit's city ordinance has a profound 10 step distinct process:

> (1) The renter requests a rental application; (2) The application form cannot ask about criminal history; (3) Landlord reviews the application (income, credit history, evictions, etc.); (4) If the renter is eligible for an apartment, the landlord provides a conditional lease agreement; (5) At this point, a landlord may investigate the renter's criminal background; (6) If a criminal background is disqualifying, the landlord must allow the renter to provide evidence of rehabilitation; (7) After reviewing the evidence provided by the renter, the landlord can (a) proceed with the rental, or (b) deny the application; (8) A renter faced with a rejection can file a complaint with the City of Detroit's Civil Rights, Inclusion, and Opportunity (CIRO) Department; (9) CIRO conducts an investigation; and (10) Landlords in violation of the Fair Chance Ordinance may face prosecution.
>
> - City of Detroit (2018)

Ten guardrails were set in place to protect ex-offenders from the denial of the rental process upon reentry. Coincidentally, Detroit's city ordinance also helped landlords refuse applicants who sought housing. In fact, Detroit's (2018) Fair Chance Ordinance, landlords could reject a rental applicant with a criminal background if any of the following apply:

> Ineligible for public housing; lifetime registered sex offender; violent or drug-related felonies; felonies committed in the last 10 years; imprisonment in the last 5 years; crimes against landlords, management,

> employees, agents, or tenants; arson; metal theft; vandalism; and property damage.
>
> - City of Detroit (2018)

However, when conflict of housing developed among the ex-offender and the landlord, Detroit had significant arbitrary notes in its ordinance. For example, when a landlord rejected an ex-offender as an applicant because of the criminal background; the landlord had to permit the ex-offender to provide evidence of rehabilitation and strongly consider the evidence provided during the decision process (City of Detroit, 2018). Detroit impressed upon its landlords to manage ex-offender applicants with humanity. In fact, Detroit Fair Chance Ordinance (2018) dictated that there were four steps landlords had to consider as evidentiary support of ex-offender rehabilitation that included: (a) Letter from the employer; (b) Letter from parole/probation officer; (c) Proof of completion of community service; and (d) Character reference from a volunteer program. Detroit appeared to take significant measures that protected one of its most vulnerable populations, ex-offenders.

Private Landlords and Property Managers

Sauter (2021) research in Germany noted that private landlords set predetermined fees for rent and were hesitant about renting to ex-offenders because of the association with ex-offenders returning to the community. Sauter also mentioned that a primary reason private landlords refused to rent to ex-offenders was to keep the community and neighbors safe. Sauter (2021), emphasized when ex-offenders returned to the community, a competition for safe housing among a limited number of available housing options ensued.

Meier (2023) reported that private landlords refused to rent to many ex-offenders. However, Meier clarified that there was an acceptance to rent to ex-offenders with misdemeanor convictions when compared to ex-offenders with felony convictions. Also, HUD (n.d.) in 2016 approved policies that assisted private landlords with conducting ex-offender criminal background checks. HUD in 1996 developed the Housing Opportunity Program Extension (HOPE) Act. The HOPE program required PHA's to evict and prohibit tenants who engaged in drugs or any criminal activity.

Unfortunately, Meier (2023) discovered that HUD policies enforced barriers that denied housing to ex-offenders. The research Walter et al. (2017) completed in the U.S. identified statistics that showed an increase in drug evictions and doubled background denials of tenants after the introduction of HOPE. As private landlords/property managers ensured safe community housing, there were unknown challenges and successes of ex-offender housing from the perspectives of landlords/property managers.

History of Dr. Hamlin's Instrument

Hamlin (2022) stated that cities across the United States began to set up pilot programs so ex-offenders moved into PHA's under certain conditions, and the city of Chicago was chosen to participate in this new endeavor. Hamlin recognized that allowing ex-offenders access to public housing was unheard of during the 1990's, when PHA's One-Strike rule was enforced nationwide. On the other hand, the (2014) Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), reentry pilot program allowed ex-offenders to obtain public housing despite having a criminal record.

According to Hamlin (2022), the program focused on testing what effect stable housing had on recidivism. Also, the program emphasized rehabilitation as a means to prevent recidivism and eliminate barriers to community reentry. If the program was successful, the CHA program was referred to other housing authorities. After two years in 2016, Hamlin (2022) began to conduct interviews with a population of participants that consisted of the CHA staff and the housing service providers. Hamlin (2022) used a qualitative methodology with a case study design. Additionally, Hamlin noted that the use of the interviews established deep insight from the participants. Some of the themes Hamlin (2022) discovered from the interviews focused on reducing reintegration barriers, cutting down on recidivism, and a reunion of family members.

Hamlin's (2022) research offered insight to policy makers who sought to create more inclusive housing policies for ex-offenders. Furthermore, Hamlin concluded that the CHA housing program was a starting point, and she criticized the prior role public housing authorities had initially in mass incarceration and ex-offender barriers. More importantly, Hamlin's research explained how public housing enabled and restricted reintegration of ex-offenders.

Gaps in Research

Although state and federal policies on fair housing existed, the problem this study addressed was how public housing exclusion implemented by landlords/property managers impacted ex-offender's successful reentry after incarceration. The purpose of my general qualitative exploratory study was to analyze how landlords/property managers made efforts in securing housing for ex-offenders. It is unknown in Michigan

how private landlords/property managers impacted ex-offenders' success factor in securing safe housing upon reentry back to society.

By using Dr. Hamilton's (2020) validated interview instrument, I accurately responded to my study's research questions: RQ1: What are the perspectives or experiences of landlords/property managers in Michigan on the barriers and success factors of ex-offenders obtaining public or private housing after incarceration? RQ2: In what ways, if at all, have local, state or federal policies influenced the decision-making process for Michigan landlords and property managers in granting or excluding housing for ex-offenders? By answering my study's research questions, I successfully added to the body of knowledge.

Summary

Chapter 2 included research on the history of HUD, HUD's federal housing policies, HUD's federal housing programs, HUD's blanket ban on criminal records, and HUD's one-strike laws. Another area discussed entailed ex-offender reentry after incarceration. Other issues regarding reentry focused on stigmas attached during reentry, discrimination occurring during reentry, and the recidivism chances during reentry. Moreover, Michigan HUD's policies, practices, and responsibilities that specifically impacted ex-offenders were explored.

Also, Chapter 2 literature reviewed studies, programs, and policies that pertained to ex-offenders, social exclusion, and inclusive communities. Furthermore, the literature covered legislative initiatives such as national HUD policy, the Fair Housing Act, Ban the Box Legislation, and regulations that bound landlords to guarantee fair housing

opportunities. Finally, Chapter 2 provided an elaborate review of the literature regarding the history of ex-offender housing in the United States, specifically in Michigan. This review of the literature provided constructive insight into public policy matters regarding ex-offender homelessness. Chapter 3 discussed the methodology of my study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this general qualitative research explored how state and federal policies impacted property managers/landlords on granting public housing to ex-offenders in the State of Michigan. Chapter 3 discussed the role of the researcher, rationale, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, summary, and the transition to Chapter 4. First, I shared my study's research design and rationale.

Research Design and Rationale

This study had included research questions. Both research questions sufficiently added to the body of knowledge.

RQ1: What are the perspectives or experiences of landlords/property managers in Michigan on the barriers and success factors of ex-offenders obtaining public or private housing after incarceration?

RQ2: In what ways, if at all, have local, state or federal policies influenced the decision-making process for Michigan landlords and property managers in granting or excluding housing for ex-offenders?

There was a lack of research that explored the perspectives of landlords/property managers who had ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants.

Such data collection gave insight to current housing exclusion policies and or practices as well as inclusive countermeasures that assisted ex-offenders. The phenomenon under investigation was the stigma and exclusion faced by ex-offenders, particularly regarding accessing housing opportunities. This study explored how

landlords/property managers, who played a pivotal role in implementing housing policies, perceive and perceive exclusionary practices.

The rationale for my general qualitative approach was to explore the perspectives of private property managers/landlords regarding ex-offenders as rental applicants and/or tenants. As noted by Kahlke (2014), the general qualitative approach allowed for methodological flexibility that focused on descriptive and interpretive accounts of participants' experiences. The general qualitative aligned with the study's objective that explored the exclusion policies and practices against ex-offenders from the perspectives of landlords/property managers in Michigan.

According to Percy et al. (2015), general qualitative research enabled the researcher to probe deeply into participants' subjective interpretations without the constraints of more structured qualitative methodologies. Phillips and Burbules (2000) defined interpretivism as knowledge constructed through individual perceived experiences, interactions, and interpretations based on personal interactions. The phenomenon being investigated regarded the ex-offender housing research as the stigma and exclusion faced by ex-offenders. My population of private landlords/property managers provided perceptions of ex-offender challenges in securing housing opportunities. Therefore, I analyzed participant interpretivism using my respondents' in-depth interviews that revealed similar and dissimilar perceptions of ex-offenders who sought housing.

Role of the Researcher

As for participation, my role in participation was full and unlimited. Creswell and Poth (2018) clearly stated that the researcher watched and recorded behaviors and interactions without fully engaging directly in the process. As an observer, I was an active listener who demonstrated my full participation during each in-depth interview. As the researcher, I initiated in-depth conversations using open-ended questions and follow-up questions related to ex-offender housing. Therefore, my role as the researcher entailed noting nonverbal observations that captured an array of qualitative data. I did not have any personal or professional conflicts nor had any power of my participants that impeded my ability to be objective during the data collection process.

However, one ethical issue addressed was based on my previous employment as a law enforcement officer in Oakland County, Michigan. During my 30-year law enforcement career, I had contact with numerous ex-offenders who sought housing or who were homeless. However, any person who shared an encounter with me in my professional capacity as a law enforcement officer, was excluded from research participation. Familiar participants were purposefully excluded to avoid any possible conflicts of interest. Furthermore, since I am retired, I did not foresee any population recruitment issues that impacted my research methodology.

Researcher Bias

My researcher bias was mitigated for this study. Walden University Laureate (n.d.) defined bias as an undesirable influence of the researcher on the participants. I utilized several strategies that prevented conscious biases in the research. The first

strategy I utilized was reflexivity through completing my reflexive journal to essentially pull out any potential unforeseen biases. Another strategy conducted was member-checking.

During the member-checking process, the interviewee was permitted to review and confirm the accuracy of responses before data analysis. This ethical form of transparency managed any researcher conscious biases. Additionally, I enlisted a professional independent reviewer to check my methodology, analysis, and conclusions with the expressed intention to identify and remove any researcher biases in my findings.

Methodology

The methodology of my study entailed a specific participant population, only involved in-depth interviews with active, former, and retired landlords/property managers experienced with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan. I considered using a narrative qualitative approach and determined that a general qualitative approach was the best approach for my study. According to Nikolopoulou (2022), purposive sampling was indicated when participants had first-hand knowledge of the experience. Therefore, my purposeful sampling method and justification of the sampling method were explored. For instance, the criterion for my participants met the following requirements: (a) be an active, former, or retired private landlord/property manager in Michigan, and (b) have experience with ex-offenders as applicants and or tenants in the state of Michigan.

Boddy (2016) suggested that phenomenology-based research required between 5 to 15 participants to achieve saturation of experiences and perspectives from the

respondents. Based upon this recommendation, my sample size was 10 participants and data saturation was met. With regard to contacting and recruiting participants, I employed social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Boddy also noted that the relationship between saturation and sample size involved the data being replicated and repeated by the sample participants, which informed the researcher that data saturation occurred. Gierczyk et al. (2024) declared that snowball sampling occurred when initial contacts agreed to become research participants and asked to recommend other contacts who fit the criteria. As an alternative option, I used a snowball method of sampling. To do so, I found at least one voluntary participant who met my study's criterion and asked for possible referrals for additional reviews.

Instrumentation

My instrument was a modified version from Dr. Hamlin's (2020) validated instrument that was initially introduced to interview ex-offenders who were granted public housing despite having a criminal record (see Appendix A). As discussed in Chapter 2, Hamlin's study explored the new housing program piloted in Chicago, Illinois, at a public housing project. Dr. Hamlin gave consent to use the instrument and a modified version of the instrument being used for interviews. The modified instrument captured the perspectives of private landlord/property manager participants with experience with ex-offenders as applicants and'or tenants. The modification ensured data collection sufficiently responded to my study's research questions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Data collection details included audio recordings, note taking from verbal and nonverbal communications during in-depth interviews with my study's population. Participants were recruited with an invitation to participate in my study (Appendix B). Researcher observations were noted during data collection accuracy and transparency. Each in-depth interview took approximately 45 minutes to one hour to conduct. Prior to conducting interviews, participants signed a consent form (Appendix C). Written transcripts of recorded online or phone call interviews occurred after each completed participant interview. The transcripts were placed in a document and separated for clarity. My primary form of recruitment used an online platform. However, when that method proved unsuccessful at reaching data saturation, I used the alternative method of snowball sampling prospective participants.

Data collection frequency lasted until data saturation was reached. Therefore, I had no less than 7 participants and no more than 15 respondents for my study. I anticipated that I would reach data saturation well before the 15th interview.

Liamputtong (2020) declared that debriefing as a structured process ensured closure of the research relationship amongst the researcher and participant. Therefore, after each interview, I advised each interviewee of my intentions to reach out to discuss data collection transparency.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis began with a multi-tiered coding process. Saldaña (2021) defined coding as the process of systematically categorizing data to identify themes, patterns, and

meanings. I used a coding table to aid in data analysis. Belotto (2018) explained that coding enabled researchers to interpret large text segments and reframe information in meaningful ways, which contributed to a robust analytical process. Saldaña (2009) noted that field notes and other forms of written participant transcripts were useful for all coding methods: evaluation, emotion, holistic, and process coding. Table 1. described the qualitative coding methods, sources, occurrences, and purposes that were used during data analysis.

Table 1

Research Coding

Code	Source	Occurrence	Purpose
Emotion Coding: One cannot separate emotion from action; they are part of the same flow of events, one leading into the other (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 7).	Goleman, 1995; Prus, 1995	Emotional actions associated with ex-offender applicants	Capture verbal and nonverbal emotional qualitative data that resonates with emotions such as happy, annoyed, disgusted, and empathy.
Evaluation Coding: Assigns judgments about the merit and worth of programs or policy (Rallis & Rossman, 2003).	Patton, 2002; Rallis & Rossman, 2003	Perspectives of public policy and programs designated for housing ex-offenders	Capture qualitative data that reflects social exclusion practice knowledge and experiences; and wrap around care knowledge and experience.

Code	Source	Occurrence	Purpose
Holistic Coding: Grasps basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than analyzing line by line (Saldaña, 2009).	Dey, 2003	Data saturation	Capture qualitative data the reflect repetition of emotions, actions, policy evaluations
Process Coding: Search for ongoing action / interaction / emotion taken in response to situations, or problems, often with purpose or reaching a goal or handling a problem. (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 96 - 97).	Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Charmaz, 2002; Corbin & Strauss, 2008**;** Strauss & Corbin, 1998	Emotions associated with perspectives that explore the ex-offender application processes	Capture qualitative data that reflects the private property managers and or landlords professional perspectives based on experiences with ex-offender as rental applicants

Data collection coding aligned with my literature review by incorporating all four methods of coding for data analysis. Saldaña (2021) mentioned that generating initial codes was done by identifying key phrases of words and assigning labels and categories to the phrases or words. This study employed an interactive coding strategy for data analysis, beginning with broad categories and refining them into more specific codes as a part of the process. Ravitch and Carl (2016) recommended that In-Vivo coding method was particularly utilized, relying on participants' exact words to label data, rather than

researcher-generated phrases. However, I only coded participant transcripts to find categories that became patterns which revealed emerging themes.

Emotion coding was based on private property managers / landlord emotional actions associated with ex-offender applicants. This coding was used to identify participants' emotions during the interview process regarding encounters with ex-offenders as rental applicants. Evaluation coding was based on private property managers / landlords perspectives of public policy and programs designated for housing ex-offenders. Holistic coding was based on the aspects of data saturation such as private property managers / landlords conveying the same qualitative content. Generally regarded how participants recognized, encouraged or discouraged exclusion practices among ex-offender applicants. Process coding was associated with private property managers / landlord perspectives that explore the ex-offender application processes.

Once the first cycle of the coding process was complete, I applied the second cycle of coding that reorganized data which determined patterns categorized for data analysis. Saldaña (2009) established that a compilation of qualitative data from secondary coding demonstrated patterns and categories that ultimately revealed emerging themes. When theme detection was evident, there were no discrepancies worth reviewing. Discrepant cases, if found, were displayed and discussed in Chapter 4.

During data analysis, I used data triangulation to confirm and disconfirm my participant responses. The concept of data triangulation involved using multiple data sources to identify and address inconsistencies (Lincoln & Guba, 1982; Shenton, 2004). To this end, I used Hamlin's (2020) results along with my study's literature review as

data points as my methods of data triangulation. Therefore, my study did not have issues of trustworthiness.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1982) emphasized the importance of trustworthiness, dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability in qualitative research that ensured the rigor and reliability of data. My study defined dependability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability as each related to data collection. Credibility, as described by Shenton (2004), involved an accurate representation of what occurred in the field of research. My study's internal validity was credible by employing the data triangulation, member-checking, peer debriefing, and field note observations.

Transferability

My study was transferable with the collection of thick rich perspectives of ex-offender housing benefits and challenges. Ravitch and Carl (2016) discerned that reliability was maintained from the outset and throughout a study when the stability of participant responses validated data consistency. By using data triangulation, I ensured the reliability of my study's data collection. My study's transferability added to the body of knowledge for future research that now includes public housing authority representatives.

Dependability

Using Hamlin's (2020) modified instrumentation, this study's results served as the basis of the sample generalizations as transferability to other participants in future

replicated studies. I employed steps that ensured dependability such as member checking and peer debriefing which allowed the data collection of participants' honest responses. Korstjens and Moser (2018) acknowledged that dependability ensured consistency, and confirmability, which emphasized researcher neutrality, were prioritized. Lincoln and Guba (1982) implied that dependability was integral to establishing trustworthiness since both were required for accuracy and consistency to be present within a study's execution. Therefore, my study was dependable.

Confirmability

Rubin and Rubin (2012) established that confirmability was present when researchers reported research findings in a transparent manner that allows the audience to understand the process of collecting and analyzing the data. I applied coding, pattern and theme detection during data analysis in ways that affirmed both dependability and confirmability. As stated in Chapter 3, documenting my personal dissertation journey in my reflexive journal was used to determine confirmability. Doing so I ensured that my research findings were reliable and unbiased.

Ethical Procedures

My participants received a formal invitation to participate in my study as directed by Walden University IRB. My IRB approval number 07-16-25-1154532 was displayed to demonstrate formal acceptance of my data collection process. Online platform participants received an invitation to participate in my in-depth interviews that did not require any partnership agreement.

Alternatively, participants were recruited using the snowball sampling method and belonged to private agencies or sole proprietors that did not require a partnership agreement. A consent form was sent to reach my population of private property managers and/or landlords. Ethical concerns regarding data collection were also addressed during recruitment of participants for my study. Ethical concerns were addressed that ensured no social, emotional, or physical harm occurred to my participants during the interview process as conveyed in the formal invitation.

Also, my informed consent form entailed that participation was voluntary, and participants could have quit participating at any time. It also explained that no participant descriptions were reported in my study regarding personal identifications of private landlords/property managers in Michigan. Participants who responded to the consent form with 'I agree' were scheduled accordingly. As for the protection of confidential data, the data was secured in a locked box for 5 years then will be destroyed. During the 5 year period, soft copies of the digital consent forms, audio recordings, video files, and hard copies of field notes were kept secure using a data-encrypted flash drive and in a locked box for safekeeping.

There was no financial compensation for any participants of my study. However, in the event that I had in-person in-depth interviews, lunch would have been provided. Otherwise, voluntary participants were interviewed over the phone or online and not compensated for time spent with me.

Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the role of the researcher, rationale, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical considerations of my study. Chapter 3 was used as a step-by-step guide for data collection, as approved and directed by Walden University's IRB. Chapter 4 displayed my study's results based on data collection of my respondents.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore how state and federal policies may compel landlords/property managers to grant safe housing to ex-offenders in Michigan. There were two overarching research questions that guided my study.

RQ1: What are the perspectives or experiences of landlords/property managers in Michigan on the barriers and success factors of ex-offenders obtaining public or private housing after incarceration?

RQ2: In what ways, if at all, have local, state or federal policies compelled the decision-making process for Michigan landlords and property managers in granting or excluding housing for ex-offenders?

In Chapter 4, I discussed the study's setting, public policy demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, summary, and a transition to Chapter 5. First, I disclosed the setting where data collection took place.

Setting

At the time of data collection, the housing climate for ex-offenders was recently addressed by the state of Michigan. According to Michigan (2025), on July 24, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) announced the Housing Access for Justice-Involved Individuals pilot program. The state of Michigan had just launched a funding program developed to house formerly incarcerated persons. Both branches, Michigan and LEO, intended to increase the number of landlords in selected areas, willing to rent to ex-offenders through targeted education and incentives.

This recent housing pilot program endeavor was meant to increase housing opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals and incentivize private landlords.

My study's data collection began in early August. In this study's setting, I used Zoom as the online platform to conduct participant interviews. There were no personal or organizational conditions that influenced the randomly selected participants or any of the 10 interview experiences. Data collection adhered to the protocol mentioned in Chapter 3. Therefore, there was no influence regarding the interpretation of my study's results. Next, I shared my study's demographics.

Demographics

Although I planned to interview both landlords and property managers, only landlords participated in this study. That said, my study's demographics contained 6 distinct landlord characteristics.

Table 2 illustrated participant details without revealing any personal information. All participants titles were private landlords (nine) and no private property managers (zero); age ranges were Baby Boomers 1945 - 1964 (three), Generation X 1965 - 1979 (two), Millennials 1980 - 1994 (two), and Silent Generation 1926 - 1944 (two); all participants were African American (AA) / Black (nine); Educational Backgrounds were Associate Degree (two), Bachelor's (four), Doctoral (one), Master's (one), Some College (two); and Years of Experience were less than 10 years (one), at least 10 years and less than 20 years (seven), at least 20 years and less than 30 (two).

Table 2

Participant Demographics

Participants	Title	Generational Age	Race	Gender	Educational Background	Years of Experience
Participant 1	Landlord	Silent	African American	Female	Bachelor's	17
Participant 2	Landlord	Millennial	African American	Female	Bachelor's	6
Participant 3	Landlord	X	African American	Female	Associate	13
Participant 4	Landlord	X	African American	Female	Bachelor's	10
Participant 5	Landlord	Silent	African American	Male	Some College	25
Participant 6	Landlord	Millennial	African American	Male	Associate	12
Participant 7	Landlord	Baby Boomer	African American	Male	Doctorate	26
Participant 8	Landlord	Baby Boomer	African American	Male	Bachelor	20
Participant 9	Landlord	Baby Boomer	African American	Male	Some College	15

Participant data collected was profound. All participants were college educated, African American and successful landlords. No private property managers were available to participate in my study. The gender of my study's population was majority male. However, the largest differentiating factor was variation of age ranges and years of experience. Data collection details provided results procured from my in-depth interviews.

Data Collection

Participant in-depth interviews were completed in one month's time. One participant who previously agreed to participate in my study, became unavailable when I began the data collection process. Other than that, there were no significant variations that occurred in data collection from the plan detailed in Chapter 3. Therefore, instead of

10 participants, my study only consisted of 9 respondents. Once I secured the first two interviews, the remaining 7 were recruited by using the same snowball sampling method discussed in Chapter 3. My first interview took place on August 8, 2025, and the last interview occurred on August 25, 2025, spanning a 17- day period.

The first week I recorded the first interview and the second week I recorded 5 interviews. For week 3, I collected data from two participants each week; during week 4, I conducted the last interview with the final participant. A total of 9 private landlords voluntarily participated in my generic qualitative study. All interviews took place on the Zoom online platform.

Data was digitally recorded and as the observer-participant, I also documented field notes using my observations sheet. The duration of data collection average time for each participant interview was 31 minutes. There were no variations in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. There were no reported unusual circumstances encountered in data collection. My generic qualitative study's data analysis was thorough and complete.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with participant coding analysis. My study also focused on participant renting to ex-offenders activities during the time of data collection. Table 3 demonstrated participant renting habits regarding activity with justice-involved individuals. Out of the landlord participants (9), most continued to rent to justice-involved individuals (8), and a sole (1) participant no longer continued to rent to justice-involved individuals.

Table 3

Michigan Landlord Renting to Justice-Involved Individuals Activity

Landlords	Rents to Justice-Involved Individuals	No Longer Rents to Justice-Involved Individuals
9	8	1

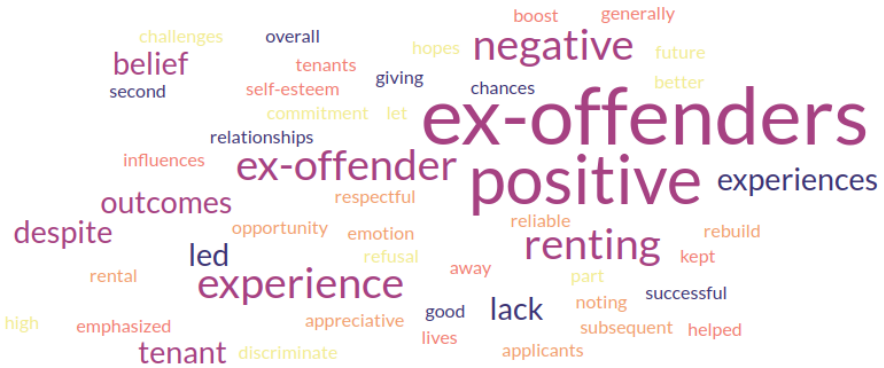
Data analysis commenced once I received all interview transcripts back from participant member-checking. Saldaña (2021) defined coding as the process of systematically categorizing data to identify themes, patterns, and meanings. Data analysis began with the use of four codes: emotion, evaluation, holistic, and process. table to aid in data analysis. Belotto (2018) explained that coding enabled researchers to interpret large text segments and reframe information in meaningful ways, which contributed to a robust analytical process. Through initial and secondary coding, I noticed data patterns that became categories.

Data analysis began with a multi-tiered coding process based on the coding table identified in Table 1, as described in Chapter 3. Transcripts were first coded line-by-line using hand coding, on my coding worksheet, to capture qualitative data for each code. Red indicated landlord renting to ex-offenders emotions codes, blue represented housing policy evaluation codes, and green described landlord experience and prospective holistic codes. Purple denoted landlord process codes and yellow implied participant policy recommendations for housing. Codes were then grouped into broader categories, which were further refined into emergent themes. Once categories and emerging themes were detected, I used free online software for word cloud generation.

Figures 2 - 5 summarized the quad-tiered coding approach. First, the emotion coding pattern represented the range of categorized emotions experienced by participants regarding the rental process that involved ex-offenders. Figure 2 word cloud was a compilation of the most Emotion coding based among Michigan landlords' experiences.

Figure 2

Emotion Code Pattern



There were many positive emotions described by participants. P3 listed “Positive experiences with ex-offender tenants, who were generally reformed individuals not prone to repeat offenses.” P5 listed “potential for ex-offenders to become productive citizens, positive experiences with renting to ex-offenders.” P7 stated they had “positive experience with renting to ex-offenders, noting that they were respectful, reliable, and appreciative of the opportunity to rebuild their lives.” Most landlords had positive reactions to ex-offender rental applicants and positive sentiments about ex-offender tenants.

However, one participant had a negative experience that jaded the perspective of renting to ex-offenders. P2 listed “negative experience with an ex-offender tenant that

was a let down despite high hopes." Other participants recognized ex-offender personal struggles. P1 listed "ex-offenders struggle with negative mindsets."

Positivity Theme

Overall, the majority of landlord participants maintained a positive disposition regarding ex-offenders and tenants on private property. Landlords understood the stigma associated with ex-offenders and continued to offer housing opportunities. Most landlords believed in giving ex-offenders second chances and empowered ex-offenders with tools of sustainability to maintain independence and discourage recidivism.

Second, the evaluation coding pattern represented the range of categorized perspectives of housing policies experienced by participants regarding government ex-offender housing programs. Participants revealed individual assessments of government housing assistance. Figure 3 word cloud was a compilation of the most Evaluation coding based among Michigan landlords' perspectives.

Figure 3

Evaluation Code Pattern

Participants were not impacted by Michigan housing policies. P1 listed “Local, state, or federal policies had no impact on the decision-making as a landlord.” P8 stated “city or state policies did not influence my decision to rent to an ex-offender, the state provides no meaningful support structure for ex-offenders.” Many felt that ex-offenders were underprepared with job and trade skills for gainful employment meant for sustainable living. P4 listed “Despite judges recommending educational or vocational programs in court, these instructions are not followed by correctional facilities.”

One participant appreciated the government regulations for property owners to create safe dwellings for rental prospects. P9 listed “city provided clear procedures, timelines, and requirements for obtaining permits and ensuring properties meet code standards.” However, most landlords were not impressed with federal, state, and local housing initiatives meant to support ex-offenders upon re-entry to society.

Disappointment Theme

There was a consensus that disappointment was prevalent among my study’s participants. Participants’ perspectives reflected the notion that the government was largely irresponsible with monitoring programs in place during incarceration that were designed to empower ex-offender re-entry success. Landlords were committed to housing ex-offenders despite the lack of government assistance.

Third, the holistic coding pattern presented the degree of data saturation as categorized perspectives of ex-offender housing practices experienced by participants. Participants had consistent responses regarding the overall phenomenon of housing ex-

offenders and lack of government housing assistance. Figure 4 word cloud demonstrated common perspectives that illustrated Holistic coding.

Figure 4

Holistic Code Pattern

All participants reached a consensus that determined data saturation. P3 listed "motivation was based on a personal belief in second chances and a desire to help." P2 shared the importance of finding "second chance" landlords willing to provide opportunities." All landlords believed and encouraged second chances regarding offering housing opportunities to ex-offenders. P4 listed "often struggle to secure employment, everyone should be given a fair chance." P5 shared "prison system and government provide inadequate support for ex-offenders' reintegration."

P9 listed "set up to fail with minimal resources and opportunities." Incarceration did not enforce vocational training to prepare ex-offenders for re-entry. P7 listed "main barriers include the stigma against hiring ex-felons and the difficulty in finding employment and housing assistance." Ex-offenders' self-esteem was attached to the negative societal stigma that described ex-offenders. P1 listed "including the stigma attached to their criminal records and the limited resources available to assist them."

Participants desired financial incentives for landlords who rent to ex-offenders. P6 shared “governments at various levels should implement programs and provide tax incentives for landlords to encourage the acceptance of ex-offenders, resources to support their reintegration, such as stipends for landlords and transitional homes”. P8 shared “suggested providing incentives for private landlords to rent to ex-offenders, importance of financial education and incentives for landlords to rent to ex-offenders.” The theme that mostly resonated with the holistic code was the desire to give justice-involved individuals second chances with housing opportunities for self-sustainability.

Second Chances Theme

All nine participants conceded that the belief of second chances. Overall, whether the decision to give second chances were faith-based or personal practices, each participant sustained the importance of giving folks a chance at redemption. There was an overwhelming compassion to help those in need.

Fourth, the process coding pattern captured the participant rental process as practices experienced by participants. Participants had consistent responses regarding the overall phenomenon of housing ex-offenders and lack of government housing assistance. Figure 5 word cloud presented the nuanced perspectives that described Process coding.

Figure 5

Process Code Pattern

Participants acknowledged that there were different methods to finding, being approached and recruiting ex-offenders for housing options. There was a strong awareness of known ex-offender stigma and individual vulnerability, and that was highly respected. P6 listed "actively sought to rent to ex-offenders, explained that he approached ex-offenders directly through parole offices and job fairs, rather than waiting for them to approach him." Certain participants actively recruited ex-offenders with housing opportunities.

P2 shared "importance of case-by-case evaluations and word-of-mouth referrals." P8 listed "received support from a church upon release." Some participants received referrals to house ex-offenders from faith-based sources and word of mouth from trusted sources. P1 listed "tenant screening but emphasized his focus on finding reliable tenants who can maintain the property."

Others screened potential ex-offender housing candidates for employment stability factors. P5 shared "initially encountered ex-offenders through Facebook and

Craigslist ads.” Some participants used social media platforms to seek out ex-offenders who are looking for housing.

Proactive Renting Theme

Participant codes regarding the process of renting to ex-offenders were positive. There was a sense that participants genuinely wanted to help this vulnerable group of people in a proactive manner. Many participants acknowledged the call of action that actively sought out justice-involved individuals as tenants.

Thematic analysis revealed the following major themes as seen in Figures 2 – 5, using qualitative coding across 9 interviews using Emotion Coding, Evaluation Coding, Holistic, and Process Coding. The synthesis addressed the two core research questions on ex-offender housing barriers and success factors among landlords. Although four themes were defined, my study was not without its share of discrepant cases.

Discrepant Cases

Some participant perspectives deviated from dominant patterns. While the majority of participants aligned with the dominant themes, several cases offered alternative perspectives. For example, Participant P8 listed "Ban the Box was supported as a positive step.” There was a singular instance regarding a positive reflection of a government policy. Most participants did not think there were helpful government policies.

Participant P2 commented “landlords often favor female applicants, especially those with children, due to stereotypes about women's reliability in paying rent and maintaining properties.” Gender preferential treatment for renting purposes did not come

up with any other participant. P10 stated the landlord, “only will rent to students who have structured lives.” The caution insinuated that justice-involved individuals lacked structured lives and was a deal breaker that prevented the opportunity of housing. These cases of discrepancy did not contradict the central findings but rather provided enriched perspectives that deviated slightly from the consensus of participant responses.

Participant responses that deviated from the thematic analysis described preferential treatment for women with children and the preference of tenants with structured lives as ideal renting candidates. These cases illustrate an insight into where housing policy initiatives could be amended to reflect lifestyle responsibilities and structure. Discrepant cases added nuance to the findings and provided insight into the variability of participant lived experiences. By following my data collection steps from Chapter 3, my study’s credibility and confirmability represented the evidence of trustworthiness**.**

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility was enhanced by employing data triangulation and member checking. Shenton (2004) explained that credibility involved an accurate representation of what occurred in the field of research. Consistent with Chapter 3, member checking was performed where participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts and validate interpretations. This process took less than one week to complete. Some participants provided minor points of clarification while others were content with the

content that was reviewed. Minor clarifications were made as a result of their feedback and then I began the process of data analysis.

Transferability

My study was transferable with the collection of thick rich perspectives of ex-offender housing benefits and challenges. Ravitch and Carl (2016) discerned that reliability was maintained from the outset and throughout a study when the stability of participant responses validated data consistency. As stated in Chapter 3, data triangulation ensured the reliability of my study's data collection. My study's transferability added to the body of knowledge for future research that now includes public housing authority representatives.

Dependability

Using Hamlin's (2020) modified instrumentation, this study's results served as the basis of the sample generalizations as transferability to other participants in future replicated studies. With my participants' honest responses, my study was dependable. Korstjens and Moser (2018) acknowledged that dependability ensured consistency, and confirmability, which emphasized researcher neutrality, were prioritized. As previously mentioned in Chapter 3, my study's internal validity was credible which employed data triangulation, member-checking, peer debriefing, and field note observations. Doing so confirmed that my study was dependable. Lincoln and Guba (1982) implied that dependability was integral to establishing trustworthiness since both were required for accuracy and consistency to be present within a study's execution. Therefore, my study was dependable.

Confirmability

My reflexive journaling minimized researcher bias and enhanced the objectivity of the study's findings. Rubin and Rubin (2012) established that confirmability was present when researchers reported research findings in a transparent manner that allowed the audience to understand the process of collecting and analyzing the data. My study's findings were credible and transparent throughout the data collection and analysis. As stated in Chapter 3, consistently documenting personal thoughts, reflections, and assumptions in my reflexive journal helped me remain objective. In doing so, my study's confirmability was established. My study's results significantly added to the body of knowledge.

Results

My generic qualitative study results successfully answered both research questions. I provided details that aligned my methodological coding mechanisms with participant responses. Doing so yielded a thick description of rich data collection.

Research Question 1

The results of my study highlighted responses for both research questions that were sufficiently answered by my population of private landlords in the state of Michigan.

RQ1 was: What are the perspectives or experiences of landlords/property managers in Michigan on the barriers and success factors of ex-offenders obtaining public or private housing after incarceration?

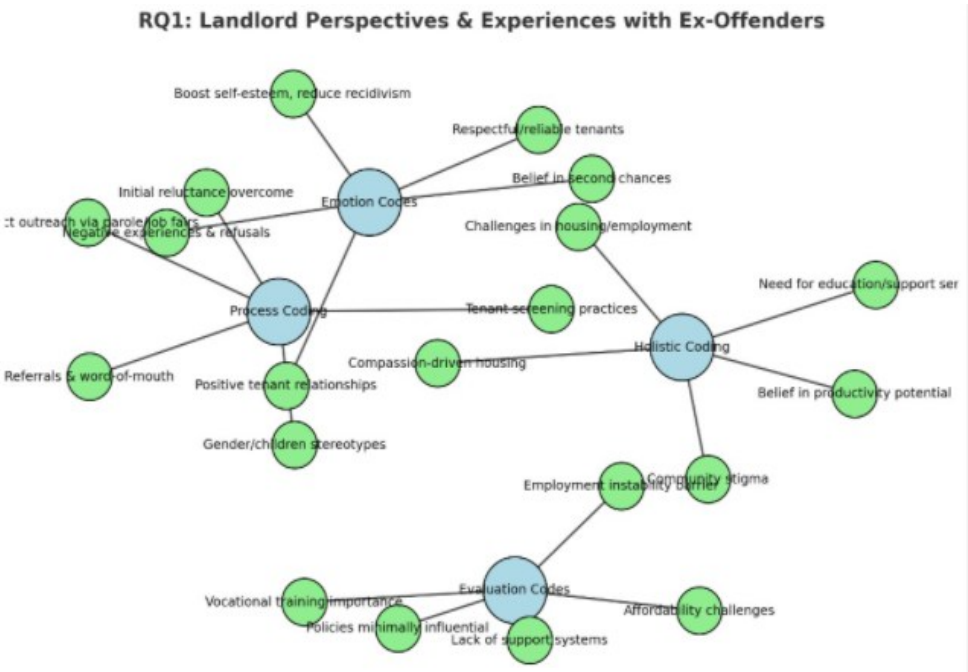
Participant responses reflected five poignant answers to this research question.

Landlords expressed mixed experiences, some praising respectful and reliable ex-offender tenants while others cited disappointment leading to refusal of future applicants. P3 listed “Positive experiences with ex-offender tenants, who were generally reformed individuals not prone to repeat offenses.” Successful outcomes often came when ex-offenders had vocational training, employment opportunities, or support networks that encouraged stability. . P7 shared “main barriers include the stigma against hiring ex-felons and the difficulty in finding employment and housing assistance.” Barriers identified include stigma, employment instability, affordability issues, and lack of community support systems for ex-offenders transitioning after incarceration.

P4 lamented “often struggle to secure employment, everyone should be given a fair chance.” Some landlords emphasized compassion and second-chance beliefs as their motivation, viewing housing as essential for boosting self-esteem and reducing recidivism. ” P2 defined the importance of finding "second chance" landlords willing to provide opportunities.” Negative experiences were tied to unmet expectations, financial challenges, or tenants lacking belief in their ability to succeed, leading to strained landlord-tenant relationships. Figure 6 illustrated how different codes (emotions, evaluations, holistic insights, and processes) connected to landlords’ perspectives and experiences with ex-offenders.

Figure 6

Landlord Perspectives and Experiences with Ex-Offenders Diagram



Research Question 2

My study's second research question evolved around my study's public policy.

RQ2 was: In what ways, if at all, have local, state or federal policies compelled Michigan landlords and property managers to grant or exclude housing for ex-offenders? Participants offered candid responses that adequately answered my study's second research question.

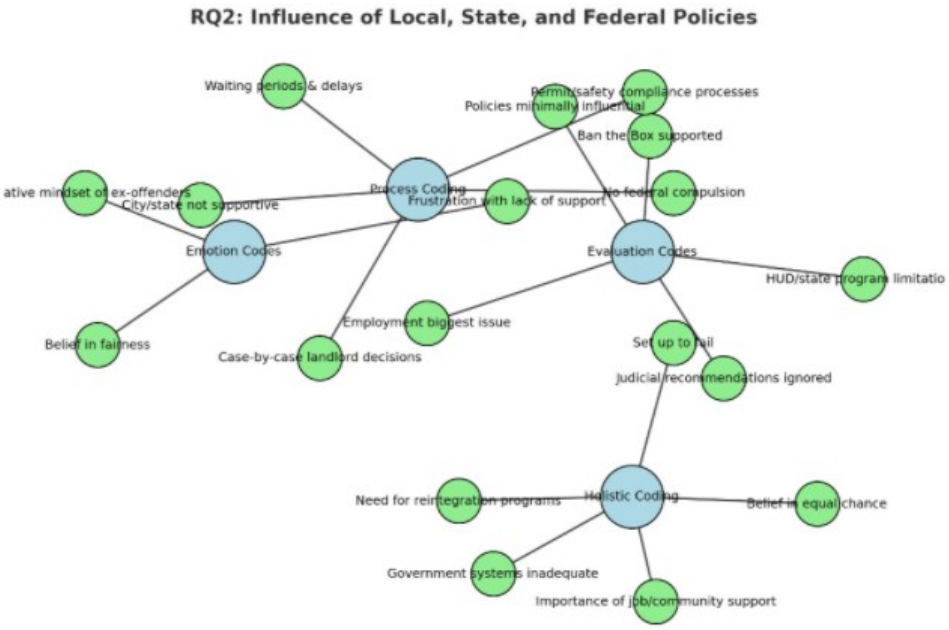
P8 listed "Ban the Box was supported as a positive step." Many landlords reported policies had little to no impact on their decision-making when renting to ex-offenders. Some acknowledged "Ban the Box" as a positive step but noted limited practical support from housing systems. P9 listed "set up to fail with minimal resources and opportunities." Incarceration did not enforce vocational training to prepare ex-

offenders for re-entry. Landlords emphasized that Michigan policies and federal structures failed to provide meaningful reintegration programs, leaving ex-offenders “set up to fail.”

P5 shared “prison system and government provide inadequate support for ex-offenders' reintegration. Employment remained the biggest issue, with few governments support to bridge housing and job stability for returning citizens. Policies requiring safety compliance for properties influenced general rental practices but did not specifically compel housing inclusion or exclusion for ex-offenders. Figure 7 demonstrated how the same coding categories linked to the role, or lack, of policies impacted landlords’ decisions.

Figure 7

Influence of Local, State, and Federal Policies



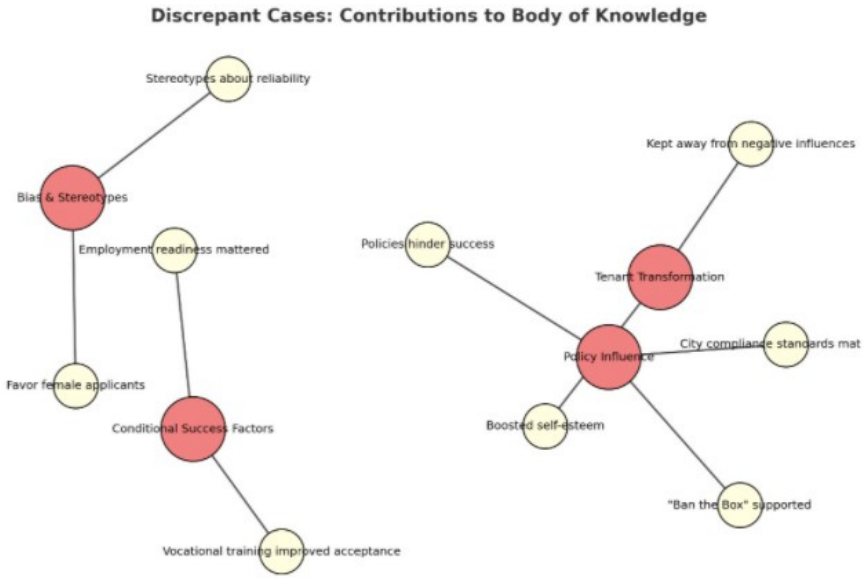
Discrepant Cases and Nonconforming Data

Data anomalies did not pose a distraction. Discrepant cases add nuance, reveal overlooked biases, and demonstrate conditional pathways where housing outcomes for ex-offenders can shift, enriching the overall body of knowledge. While most landlords viewed policies as ineffective, discrepant cases showed policies like “Ban the Box” had some positive influence, suggesting policies may work under certain conditions or contexts. The tendency to favor female applicants with children underscores how implicit biases shape rental decisions beyond criminal records, adding an important gendered and familial dimension to the housing discussion.

By noting that city compliance standards and safety requirements influenced decisions, these cases complicate the narrative that policies have no impact, showing indirect regulatory effects on landlord practices. Cases where vocational training or employment readiness improved landlord willingness to rent demonstrate that success isn’t just about compassion. It was tied to practical readiness markers like skills and stability. Experiences where renting boosted ex-offenders’ self-esteem and helped them avoid negative influences highlight how housing can serve as a protective factor, reinforcing theories of rehabilitation and reintegration. Figure 8 displayed how the discrepant cases revealed four themes that added to the body of knowledge: Policy Influence, Bias & Stereotypes, Conditional Success Factors, and Tenant Transformation.

Figure 8

Discrepant Cases: Contributions to Body of Knowledge



Summary

In summary, participant responses for both research questions were honest and thorough. Regarding the first research question, landlords in Michigan reported mixed experiences, with some highlighting positive outcomes like respectful tenants and improved self-esteem for ex-offenders. Others cited negative encounters leading to rental refusals. Key barriers included stigma, employment instability, affordability, and lack of supportive reintegration structures, though vocational training and compassion were often success factors.

Responses for the second research question were also germane and added to the body of knowledge. Most landlords noted that local, state, and federal policies did not compel their housing decisions, even though “Ban the Box” was occasionally viewed positively. Instead, participants emphasized inadequate government reintegration support,

minimal HUD/state assistance. Lastly, participants desired a greater role of employment and vocational readiness from government sources in shaping housing opportunities for ex-offenders.

In conclusion, four thematic trends were derived across 9 interviews. The data aligned with the two research questions, framework, and literature. Chapter 5 interpreted my study's findings in ways that aligned with the existing literature. Chapter 5 also discussed my study's implication for social change and provided recommendations for practice, policy, and future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this general qualitative study was to explore how state and federal policies may compel landlords/property managers to grant safe housing to ex-offenders in Michigan. The nature of my study adopted a general qualitative design, an approach particularly suited for capturing the perspectives and experiences of individuals on a specific phenomenon. I summarized my study's key findings.

Landlords in Michigan reported mixed experiences, with some highlighting positive outcomes like respectful tenants and improved self-esteem for ex-offenders. Most landlords noted that local, state, and federal policies did not compel their housing decisions, even though "Ban the Box" was occasionally viewed positively. Discrepant cases add nuance, reveal overlooked biases, and demonstrate conditional pathways where housing outcomes for ex-offenders can shift, enriching the overall body of knowledge. As a researcher, I provided ample interpretations of my study's findings.

Interpretation of the Findings

Research Question 1

Researcher interpretation was possible since researcher bias was mitigated to ensure that the conduct of this study was filled with research integrity. I mitigated my research bias, personal thoughts and judgements with a reflexive journal. Journaling kept me unbiased during data collection.

In my interpretation, landlord experiences were unexpected to the previous preconceived notions of the researcher. For instance, prior to data collection, I thought

that landlords would shy away or purposefully exclude ex-offenders from the rental application process entirely. In contrast, my participants responses scoffed at this notion because all 9 interviewees, P1-P9, believed in giving ex-offenders a second chance. I thought that government assistance enforced vocational training. P1-P9 experiences proclaimed. in concert, that no government assistance actively trained ex-offenders for gainful employment upon reentry.

Research Question 2

Next, I thought that somehow private landlords were, in some way, responsible for ex-offender homelessness in Michigan. Instead, participants P4 and P7 discussed methods of how to recruit ex-offenders with the intention of providing safe housing and gainful employment. Additionally, if an ex-offender was fortunate enough to gain secure housing I was under the impression that private landlords would alert the authorities at the first sign of non-compliance. Participants P4, P5, P7, and P9 expressed vehement displeasure with the state, county, and local lack of efforts to ensure safe housing for this vulnerable population.

I used three methods to interpret the findings of my study. The interpretation of the findings used data triangulation with literature review, theoretical framework, and Hamlin (2020) results. The existing literature in research both confirmed and disconfirmed participant responses.

Literature Review Comparison

Previous research noted HUD barriers for ex-offenders (Donovan, 2010; Fritz, 2008). However, participants confirmed policies rarely influenced rental choices and

emphasized strong personal beliefs in giving people second chances. Previous research stressed vocational training's role in reintegration (Gopalan et al., 2024; SOS, 2023). Landlords confirmed the preference of ex-offender tenants with job readiness and demonstrated work skills. Existing literature highlighted ex-offender stigma and discrimination (Cox, 2022; Rade et al., 2017). Participants confirmed ex-offender bias. Landlords acknowledged the outside bias and described ex-offender tenants as positive, respectful, and appreciative.

Existing literature emphasized strict housing bans (Hirsch et al., 2002; Torres & Apkarain, 2018). However, participants disconfirmed reliance on such policies. Landlords' decisions to rent to ex-offenders stemmed from personal discretion. The literature underscored community support (Fast Capital, 2024; Gopalan et al., 2024). As participants, landlords confirmed with compassionate responses in regard to uplifting ex-offenders. Landlords' perceptions of housing were expressly considered as a chance to rebuild lives. Prior research discussed Ban the Box policies (Doleac & Hanson, 2020; Schneider, 2021). Participants confirmed the support for fairness or treatment for ex-offenders.

However, landlords disconfirmed the efficacy of government opportunities for secured stable housing. Previous research linked employment instability to reentry barriers (Cox ,2022; Rosenfield & Grig ,2022). Landlords confirmed prioritizing job stability and vocational training when considering ex-offenders as tenants. Next, I discussed my study's findings and themes from Chapter 4.

Social Exclusion Theory Comparison

Floris (2024) claimed that socioeconomic barriers enforce exclusion and invisibility. Participants confirmed and noted ex-offenders face stigma, limited housing, and employment barriers. Meier's (2020) opined that social exclusion caused homelessness and a social consequence. Participants confirmed social exclusion and homelessness among ex-offender rental applicants. Taket et al. (2009) explained that the idea of social marginalizing and rejecting were mechanisms of social exclusion.

Landlords confirmed and echoed the sentiment from observed stigma and financial challenges that limited ex-offender reentry opportunities. Floris (2024) discussed that exclusion was predicted by the emphasis on persistent ex-offender social inferiority. Participants disconfirmed social inferiority. All landlords demonstrated inclusion and provided housing for ex-offender tenants rooted in the personal belief of second chances.

Participants disconfirmed and stated how positive landlord–tenant relationships revealed ex-offenders were reliable and respectful, In an opposing viewpoint. Floris' social exclusion theory assumed systematic denial across institutions regarding ex-offender opportunities. Participants disconfirmed systemic denials as part of the ex-offender rental process. Landlords screened ex-offenders on case-by-case evaluations and vocational training opportunities which refuted social exclusion. The interpretations of my study's findings also included data triangulation with Hamlin's (2020) study.

Previous Study Comparison

Hamlin (2022) argued policy reforms shaped reintegration. However, participants disconfirmed and stressed landlord initiative, compassion, and word-of-mouth over structural policy support. Hamlin's findings claimed that policies shaped reintegration. My study's participants disconfirmed and consistently stated that stated local, state, and federal policies offered minimal support, leaving ex-offenders "set up to fail". Hamlin's findings confirmed my study's participants' perspectives that stable housing reduced ex-offender recidivism.

Participant responses aligned with Hamlin's (2020) report that ex-offender tenants were reliable, appreciative, and avoided negative influences. Hamlin's instrument emphasized rehabilitation. Rehabilitation was confirmed through participants' advocacy for vocational training, education, and job opportunities as key to successful reentry for ex-offender tenants. Hamlin's assertion that housing authorities drove inclusion was disconfirmed. My participants, as landlords, highlighted compassionate beliefs of second chances as a reliable renting process mechanism for ex-offender's tenant prospects.

Participants did not rely upon systemic government housing programs. Hamlin's (2020) instrument focus on reducing reintegration barriers was confirmed. My participants stressed stigma, employment challenges, and long housing waitlists as major obstacles that impeded ex-offender housing opportunities. The interpretation of the findings did not exceed the data, findings, and scope. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, my study presented significant limitations.

Limitations of the Study

My general qualitative study had several limitations. The first limitation was the use of the modified Hamlin (2020) interview questions as the sole instrument for this study's data collection which limited transferability. The second limitation did not exclude participants by socio-demographics such as race, age, gender, and culture. The third limitation used a virtual platform, instead of in-person interviews, as the source of data collection.

Another limitation of my study used a general qualitative method approach as the research design. My research design was limited by only recruiting private landlords as opposed to government housing specialists or H.U.D. employees, as my study's population. No property managers volunteered to participate in my study. I purposefully excluded any housing authority employees from participating in my study. My study developed several recommendations for policy, property owners, and future research.

Recommendations

My study's recommendations were grounded in positive social change. As a scholarly agent of social change, my suggestions will provide direction for further research where my study was limited. First, my study's recommendations originated from my participants' responses.

Participant Recommendations

Participant responses consisted of six ex-offender housing recommendations for the state of Michigan. First, ex-offender reintegration required comprehensive "Second Chance" programs that reduced stigma, expanded vocational training, and implemented

mandatory trade opportunities within correctional facilities to improve employability and long-term stability. Next, participants recommended the implementation of networked community-based support services such as counseling, halfway houses, and advocacy organizations. Such a network should provide crucial guidance, reinforce rehabilitation, and expand housing and employment opportunities through education, vocational skills, and financial literacy programs.

Additional recommendations included transportation access, emergency funding, and consistent community resources at incarceration, confinement, and post-release stages were essential for reducing recidivism and supporting successful reintegration. Landlords recommended that public education, employer incentives, and watchdog oversight normalize reintegration. Normalized reintegration would encourage community acceptance and highlight that ex-offenders can positively contribute to society through employment, financial stability, and housing security. Lastly, participants recommended zoning reforms, veteran housing initiatives, neighborhood council engagement, and credit education to highlight structural and policy changes necessary for sustainable reintegration pathways. As the researcher, I also made my own set of recommendations.

Researcher Recommendations

I echo my participant's sentiment of amending current housing policies to enforce vocational structure for justice-involved individuals reentering society. Future research could duplicate my study's population in other regions for a comparative analysis. Further research is needed to determine renter biases that demonstrate preferential treatment based on socio-demographic factors such as race, age, level of education.

Future research could interview housing policymakers to gain insight regarding possible lobbying efforts that impede or support ex-offender housing initiatives. My study's implications for social change were relevant and impactful.

Implications

Based on participant responses and recent government incentives, my research's implications for social change were relevant and adhered to the boundaries of this study. The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) announced the Housing Access for Justice-Involved Individuals pilot program (2025). The state of Michigan launched a funding program developed to house formerly incarcerated persons. Both branches, Michigan and LEO, intended to increase the number of landlords in selected areas, willing to rent to ex-offenders through targeted education and incentives.

This recent housing pilot program endeavor was meant to increase housing opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals and incentivize private landlords. Participant recommendations included landlord incentives, including tax benefits and stipends, coupled with patience and understanding of ex-offender financial constraints, can strengthen housing opportunities and foster rehabilitation. An implication for social change would be for Michigan landlords to capitalize on government financial incentives for renting to ex-offenders and continue to abide by the creed of second chances.

Conclusion

In conclusion, between the Housing Access for Justice-Involved Individuals pilot program and my participants' positive perspectives of renting to ex-offenders, my faith in humanity was restored. The combination of honest responses from my participants who

subscribed to the philosophy of second chances and the state willing to incentivize landlords was unpredictable. The impact of social inclusion was evident among proud landlords who were not forced or paid to house ex-offenders. Social exclusion was a non-factor among landlord perspectives.

Participants' negative perspectives regarding housing ex-offenders were primarily focused on the lack of skills and education provided by government and state prisons. More research is needed to examine the efficacy of vocational training in correctional facilities meant to secure reentry efforts. Landlords were more disgusted with the ill preparation justice-involved individuals received upon release than at the thought of housing ex-offenders. However, future research should be conducted as a comparative analysis regarding the perceptions of landlords and property managers. As a wonderful effort of humanity, one participant hired ex-offenders housed on rental property to ensure the means for sustainable living. Further research should examine and explore the impact of second chances from the perspectives of justice-involved individuals.

Michigan landlords provided a safe haven of opportunity that uplifted justice-involved individuals' wellbeing. Landlords belonged to inclusive communities that promoted and welcomed justice-involved individuals; where the majority did not regret the decision to give ex-offenders a second chance. Within the recent Michigan movement to secure housing for formerly incarcerated persons, I plan to consult and facilitate nonprofit agencies that promote housing for justice-involved individuals.

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Appendix A: Modified Hamlin Interview Questions

Demographic Questions:

What generation were you born? - 1995 - 2005 (Generation Z) - 1980 - 1994 (Millennials) - 1965 - 1979 (Generation X) - 1945 - 1964 (Baby Boomers) - 1926 - 1944 (Silent Generation)

What is your gender? - Male - Female - Nonbinary - Transgender Woman - Transgender Male - Other: _____

What is your race? - White - Native American - African American / Black - Latin X - Asian - Other: _____

What is your position / title? How many years of service do you have? - 0 - 5 years - 6 - 11 years - 12 - 17 years - 18 - 25 years - 26 - above

What is your highest level of education? - High School - Some College - Associate Degree - Bachelor's Degree - Master Degree - Doctoral Degree - Professional Certification - Other (Type of Certification): _____

Interview Questions:

1) What are the main difficulties your ex-offender clients have encountered since being released? Please explain.

2) How, and in what ways, have these challenges affected ex-offender daily life and relationships? Please explain.

3) Please describe what support HUD, state or local housing policy systems have been most helpful or not helpful for ex-offenders? Please explain why.

4) Please describe what kinds of additional resources or support do you believe would aid in ex-offender reintegration? Please explain why.

5) With regards to this private property, was there something that I failed to ask about the ex-offender rental process or housing that you would like to add?

Appendix B: Invitation

Subject line:

Interviewing private landlords and property managers in June and July.

Email message:

There is a new study about the perspectives of private landlords and property managers with experiences of ex-offender tenants and rental applicants that could help amend ex-offender housing policy language to better understand and help ex-offenders safe and secure housing. For this study, you are invited to describe your perspectives regarding ex-offenders seeking housing.

About the study:

- One 30-60 minute Zoom interview that will be audio-recorded and video-recorded via Zoom built-in recording feature since Zoom since this platform does not permit only audio-recording
- You will not receive any compensation for your voluntary participation
- To protect your privacy, the published study will not share any names or details that identify you

Volunteers must meet these requirements:

- 18 years old or older
- Private landlord or property managers
- Have experience with ex-offender tenants and rental applicants

This interview is part of the doctoral study for Jackie Harris, a Ph.D. student at Walden University. Interviews will take place during IRB # 07-16-25-1154532.