FROM THE STREETS TO STREET WORKER: TRANSITIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN AND OUT OF CRIME

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the criminal desistance processes of the One Vision One Life (OVOL) street gang workers (N = 45) and the role that OVOL violence prevention work and/or any other factors play in this process. Through an ethnographic research design utilizing multiple methodologies, the purpose of this study was then to understand the street gang workers past personal and criminal experiences, the challenges they face upon their violence prevention employment with OVOL, and the strategies that they adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime. The findings reveal that while OVOL employment is an opportunity for legitimate work, the general reality for street workers is that this type of work is not only dangerous but that the organization also lacks a level of structure, resources, and training for its employees. Therefore, desistance through OVOL employment and work is declared by only a small subsample of the street workers who participated in this study, and these street workers specifically express that the OVOL Director offered them employment and work at the right-point-in-time in their lives—thus serving as a sort of intervention for them. The majority of the street workers then contend that it was their personal agency or will to give up crime, and, coupled with and compounded by OVOL employment and work, that they made a personal commitment to the desistance process.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This study examines the criminal desistance processes of the One Vision One Life (OVOL) street workers. The present study builds on a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) evaluation study where I spent nearly 500 hours getting to know OVOL's organizational processes (Wilson, Chermak, and McGarrell, 2010). More specifically, OVOL is a multi-purpose violence prevention program located in the city of Pittsburgh. The basic mission that guides OVOL is to reduce crime and violence and to provide opportunities to at-risk residents. To do so, OVOL employs ex-gang members, and works with them in primarily three targeted high-crime neighborhoods: the North Side, Hill District, and South Side Pittsburgh. As street workers for the OVOL violence prevention organization, their job is primarily to provide case management services and to intervene in and mediate gang and gun violence. In return for their work with OVOL, the street workers are compensated and are provided professional training and educational opportunities in an effort to create upward mobility.

Utilizing Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, in this study I compare the processes that current and ex- or former street workers take to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime. Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that it is structural turning points, like having a good marriage and/or a good job, coupled with human agency or personal choice that aide the within-individual criminal desistance process. Desistance from crime is then explained by these authors as a confluence of social controls, structured routine activities, and purposeful human agency (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 37). In this study I consider OVOL violence prevention employment a type of work and I examine the role that this type of work plays in the lives of current and ex- or former street workers. More specifically, through an

ethnographic research design utilizing multiple methodologies, I sought to understand the street workers past personal and criminal experiences, the challenges they face upon their employment with OVOL, and the strategies they adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime.

Statement of the Problem

John Laub and Robert Sampson (2003) in their book *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70* examine how 52 men in the course of their lives experienced personal transitions and change. In this book the authors examine why and how these men were involved in and desisted from various forms of crime, each of which experiencing his own sort of turning point or transition away from crime at some point during his lifetime. For Laub and Sampson (2003), their research on these men led to a theory of continuity and change in criminal offending, or what they now formally call their age-graded informal social control theory. Their main thesis in this book, and subsequently their theory, is simply that it is institutional turning points, like marriage, a job, or the military, coupled with personal agency, choice, and chance that captures well the life-course reality of much of crime for these men.

In 2007, I had the opportunity to take part in the NIJ sponsored evaluation study of the OVOL violence prevention organization located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (see Wilson, Chermak, and McGarrell, 2010 for more detail). OVOL seeks to prevent violence by using a problem-solving and data driven model to inform how its team of street workers respond to shootings, homicide incidents, as well as ongoing gang and gun threats (Wilson et al., 2010). I specifically took part in the ethnographic component of this evaluation study to better understand the extent to which and how the program has been implemented in three targeted communities. In between the months of May and August of 2007, I spent nearly 500 hours with OVOL's two main directors, five area managers, and over forty line-level street workers where I was invited

to attend staff meetings and to participate in community events, violence responses, and, in short, night outreach efforts.

While in Pittsburgh conducting the ethnography, I spent a substantial amount of my time trying to get to know OVOL's street workers. That is, at the core, OVOL's management (directors and area managers) hires, trains, and works to develop a team of, what they call, community coordinators, and what I refer to here as street workers, who are to be active in and informed about their communities. These street workers, and even management, are long-time residents native to their high crime neighborhoods. Many of these men and women have been incarcerated or are currently on probation or parole for their involvement in the drug trade and other lucrative activities that include various forms of hustling and even money laundering. All however have been at one time former gang or clique members and are now, according to Swartz (2008), committed to changing and living a positive life by helping themselves and others in the communities that they live in.

With a limited amount of knowledge and even understanding of OVOL and the street workers roles specifically, for the ethnography I began by spending a considerable amount of time in the OVOL office informally chatting with street workers about their past experiences, the neighborhoods they grew up and live in, and about the OVOL organization. And what I learned was, simply, that these street workers varied in their past personal and even criminal experiences, much like the men in Laub and Sampson's (2003) study.

In the months that were to follow, I was introduced to and would become increasingly familiar with the OVOL programming model, a model in which OVOL's upper management believes is uniquely positioned to create personal and community change (again for more details see Wilson et al., 2010). In particular, a large aspect of this model relies heavily on the street

workers street level knowledge, intelligence, and, importantly, their willingness to intervene in the lives of some of the most at-risk for violence in the targeted communities. The OVOL model on the one hand then, seeks to provide employment to those street workers who are tired of struggling to earn money, who are tired of trying to avoid incarceration, and many times who are tired of just trying to survive and thus desire a form of personal change. Furthermore, this structure is complemented with a professional supervisory staff who are familiar with the local neighborhoods and are to assist street workers with professional training and education in an effort to create upward mobility. In return, and thus on the other hand, OVOL believes that these men and women have the ability to reach at-risk youth and adults in the community that may be otherwise unreachable to any ordinary professional case manager. Moreover, because of the history that these street workers have within their own community, some of the most at-risk will respect their new direction and guidance over that of anyone else.

While this structure is theoretically set up to position OVOL to do effective work in the targeted communities, it was not until nearly a month after I got to Pittsburgh and consistently showed up at the OVOL office until some of the street workers began inviting me out into their neighborhoods. It was during these times that I would join them as they worked the streets passing out literature, running basketball camps and recreational centers, visiting with shooting victims and their families, as well as conducting violence responses and night outreach in local bars, clubs, on the streets, etc. From this point on, I was essentially allowed to experience firsthand the street workers livelihood. What I came to learn very quickly, however, was that many of the street workers were still closely aligned with their past personal and, especially, criminal experiences. Fundamentally then, while the OVOL organization has a vision and, that is, a commitment to personal and community change, it seems then that a lot depends on the

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street workers own actions and behaviors. And, it was generally known that some of the street workers were still stepping out from underneath the OVOL umbrella so-to-speak to sell, use, or move drugs, hustle, and, furthermore, to continue to take part in their gang or cliques' activities.

For OVOL, this is an implementation issue that is not uncommon in other community based programs that seek to employ and utilize local residents as change makers. Take for example the Youth Manpower Project of the Woodlawn Organization (TWO). TWO was a program selected by the United States Office of Economic Opportunity to address a gang related violence problem in the Chicago Woodlawn neighborhood area (Spergel, 2007). The program's objectives were to reduce this violence related problem by providing training, jobs, educational opportunities, and conflict mediation between two warring gangs, the Blackstone Rangers (also known as the Black P. Stone Nation and El Rukns) and the Devils' Deciples (also known as the Black Deciples and Black Gangster Deciples) (Spergel, 2007). Gang leaders were the principle staff of three local job training center's, two were controlled by the Blackstone Rangers and one by the Devils Deciples. As such, the professional TWO staff members wanted to integrate gangs as organizational equals and, more specifically, wanted to train gang leaders to become local community leaders. However, it was later found in an evaluation of the TWO program that gang members and their leaders did not accept the purpose of the project, they did not substantially participate, and, to make things worse, attendance at the centers were used to plan and organize ongoing gang and criminal activities (Spergel, 1995, 2007).

To account for the implementation issues that I encountered in the OVOL ethnography, OVOL's directors and management team have been known to try to intervene in the street worker's continued criminal practices through informal personal meetings. On occasion there would even be several meetings with a single street worker. Many times, the results of such

meetings would be to provide street workers with some more time to leave their gang or clique, drop their old hustle, and allow them to adjust to their new roles with the OVOL organization. However, to protect the organization, its integrity, and even other street workers, the OVOL management had also gone ahead and released a number of street workers for their continued involvement with gangs/cliques, drugs, and other forms of ongoing hustling and/or crime. Fundamentally then, while OVOL's intentions are to play a significant role in the lives of street workers and their communities, the issue that I struggled with the most during the ethnography was that their personal change processes (street workers) from criminal to conventional was quite controversial for OVOL, and apparently also for the street workers.

With this said, it is clear that the street workers are critical elements of this OVOL initiative and, furthermore, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that such institutions should serve as a turning point for street workers and subsequently lead to a process of conventional reform. The problem here however is twofold: first, Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory of crime has essentially never been meaningfully put into a context like that of OVOL as the institutional turning point for its street workers and, secondly, there has been surprisingly little scientific inquiry into the area of street workers specifically and their own personal experiences and criminal desistance processes. In addition to this, even less information is available regarding the ex- or former street workers role reversal from OVOL and what it means for their own criminal persistence and/or desistance process. Therefore, as a result, little is known about the process that accounts for whatever success or lack of success that street workers have in refraining from crime; and, much of what is known of the desistance processes, we will learn in Chapter 2, is based primarily on Laub and Sampson's (2003) research on 52 of the original 500 Glueck men.

Need for the Study

It is argued here that the aim of OVOL is to aide desistance through affecting the causes of crime by promoting a model that provides employment to former gang or clique members. It is important to recognize that, while OVOL's philosophy identifies the role of the street worker as pivotal in reaching out to at-risk youth and adults in the community who may be otherwise unreachable, the ethnographic portion of the OVOL evaluation study clearly points out that the street workers own reform may also be a critical link in the violence prevention process (see Wilson et al., 2010).

In an environment where street workers intervene in and work to change the lives of others who are similarly situated, it seems reasonable then to seek an understanding of street workers own transitions from criminal to conventional roles. As street workers already have a level of street intelligence and knowledge of their neighborhood and its activities, this could enhance the effectiveness of the street workers using that information to prevent crimes and violence. However, the effects of OVOL's subsequent violence prevention work model on its street workers own reform have not been explored. In order to improve street work practices, there is a need to better understand the street workers desistance process, and to examine how it is being affected by OVOL and any other factors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study then was to: (1) explore the current and ex- or former street workers past personal and criminal experiences, (2) to examine the challenges street workers face upon their employment in violence prevention work, (3) to analyze the post-violence prevention experiences of street workers, comparing the strategies they adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime, and (4) to investigate how street workers take pathways out of

crime, including the nature of available resources and the methods street workers utilize to

maintain desistance. To accomplish the study's goals I utilized an ethnographic research design,

employing multiple methodologies to conduct a comparative analysis of the experiences of street

workers currently employed in violence prevention work with former street workers who were

released from the same violence prevention program. To guide this research, Laub and

Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory was used as a conceptual

framework to provide insights into the street workers desistance processes, and also to interpret

the study results.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND, CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK AND PRIOR RESEARCH, AND

VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background and contextual framework for understanding current and ex- or former street workers criminal desistance process. The chapter presents a selective review of prior research and literature on the subject, and is designed to set the foundation for an exploration of the extent to which violence prevention work employment and other factors aide the street workers criminal desistance process.

Background

In 2007, it was estimated that there were well over 5.2 million crimes of violence in the entire United States (U.S); violent crimes include here homicide, rape, robbery, and both simple and aggravated assault (Department of Justice, 2006). An estimated 16,137 persons were murdered nationwide, over seventy percent of which resulted from the use of a firearm (Department of Justice, 2006). More disturbing is the fact that in a single year it is estimated that over 3,012 children and teenagers are killed by gunfire in the United States (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). That is one child every three hours; eight children everyday; and more than fifty children every week (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002). Not to mention that every year, at least four to five times as many children and teenagers suffer from non-fatal firearm injuries. More generally, analysis of a five and ten year trend show that by 2004 estimates (5.5 murders per 100,000), homicides increased by 3.5 percent from the 2000 estimate (Department of Justice, 2006).[1]

A burgeoning question looms in the realm of the criminal justice sciences and, that is, how is it that we stop the violence and homicides that currently plague many of our

communities, particularly urban communities that are inflicted with some of the highest levels of violence? In the eyes of some policy makers, practitioners, and academics, such incidents have become so severe that they are now considered a public health problem, a sort of epidemic (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Spergel, 2005). For example, in some of the largest U.S. cities (those with 250,000 and over population) the rate of homicides (12.5 per 100,000) are in fact over one hundred times that of the nationwide average rate (5.5 murders per 100,000) (Department of Justice, 2006). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), black Americans, many of whom reside in our inner-city urban regions, made up 46.8 percent of homicide victims and 52.1 percent of homicide offenders from 1996 to 2002 despite the fact that they only represent an approximate 12 percent of the total population. Black males eighteen to twenty-four years old have the highest homicide offending rates; their rates are more than three times the rates of black males fourteen to seventeen years old and four times the rates of black males ages twenty-five and older (Department of Justice, 2006). Data show that blacks are an estimated six times more likely to die of homicides than whites, and seven times more likely to commit murder (Department of Justice, 2006). In the twenty-first century, homicide is then a leading cause, if not the leading cause, of death for black men ages eighteen to twenty-four years old.

Contextual Framework and Prior Research

In order to better understand neighborhood violence and subsequently its reduction we need to think about broader theoretical frameworks that drive us to answer some of our most imminent questions. The purpose of this study was again to explore current and ex- or former street workers criminal to conventional reform processes from their perspectives and experiences. For the purposes of this study, I utilize John Laub and Robert Sampson's (2003) modified version of their original age-graded informal social control theory. In the sections that

follow, a theoretical framework for this study is articulated by first examining the foundations of the criminal desistance literature. Thereafter, a more detailed description of the theoretical framework used for this study follows, along with a selected review of violence prevention programming efforts.

Setting the Stage

Laub and Sampson (2003) have sought a theory of social control that identifies some of the sources of persistence in and desistance from crime.[2] One of their theoretical goals is to expand our understanding of informal and formal social control for individuals across the life-course. To do this they pose a series of questions of which the central question that they ask in their most recent book *Shared Beginnings and Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70* is: (w)hat are the mechanisms underlying the processes of persistent offending and desistance from crime? To answer this, Laub and Sampson (2003) base their study on an intensive 35-year follow-up, and later follow-ups, of the original 500 delinquent boys from the Gluecks' *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (1950). Collecting life history narratives, Laub and Sampson (2003) focus their attention primarily on the roles that family, work, and military as well as formal social control institutions like the police, prison, and parole play in the lives of 52 Glueck men on the course of criminal desistance.[3]

A fundamental premise in Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory of social control begins with the idea that persistence and desistance can be meaningfully understood within the same theoretical framework. Their argument is that persistence in crime is explained by a lack of social controls, few structured routine activities, and purposeful human agency (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 37). At the same time, desistance from crime is explained by a confluence of social controls, structured routine activities, and purposeful human agency (Laub and Sampson,

2003: 37). Fundamentally then, the causes of criminal offending are the same for all persons; however, Laub and Sampson (2003) point out that we must recognize that as one person may have one pathway into crime, another may have multiple pathways. Regardless of the number of pathways, Laub and Sampson (2003) posit that it is possible that the same causal mechanisms account for trajectories or pathways of criminal behavior over the life course. Thus, the dynamics of persistence in crime may be different from the dynamics of desistance from crime but the same general processes of social control, routine activities, and human agency explain both (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

To better understand Laub and Sampson's (2003) basic premise here (above), we must first begin to grasp what it is that they are essentially rejecting and/or, actually, building upon. That is, Laub and Sampson (2003) see that persistent offending and desistance from crime are the two sides of the same coin. These phenomena, persistence and desistance, are for Laub and Sampson (2003) intertwined; however, much of criminological and like literature (sociological and psychological) has emphasized only one side of this coin and, that is, either continuity or desistance from offending.

Continuity in Offending

A vast amount of literature on continuity in offending has been explained through two labels of this process, *population heterogeneity* and *state dependence* (Farrington, 2003; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Nagin and Farrington, 1992b; Nagin and Paternoster, 2000). Population heterogeneity is the argument that behavior over the life course is a reflection of the "kinds of people" or of the differences that vary between persons (Laub and Sampson, 2003). For example, for chronic offenders these differences may be attributed to traits that include low self-control, temperament, low school achievement, hyperactivity-impulsiveness, risk-taking, IQ

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or intelligence (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). In general, chronic offenders have an early onset, a high individual offending frequency, and a long criminal career (Farrington, 2003:224). Nagin and Paternoster (2000:119) argue that "there may be differences between individuals in socialization, personality or biological/constitutional attributes which makes crime more likely over time." Moreover, once these time-stable traits are identified, they are thought to account for not only the continuity in antisocial behavior but all behavior over time (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Laub and Sampsons, 2003). Life-course outcomes according to the population heterogeneity argument are then due primarily to some inherent or acquired trait early on in the life-course (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

State dependence is the second label given in the literature on continuity in offending. As opposed to an emphasis on the "kinds of people," state dependence literature, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), focuses on the "kinds of contexts." That is, this is an argument that suggests past behavior constrains or influences future events (contexts), and, in turn, these affect current and future behavior (Laub and Sampson, 2003:24; Nagin and Paternoster, 1991). Getting arrested and going to prison, for example, may affect one's current and future behavior by weakening future employment prospects which in turn leads to an increased risk for later crime. Laub and Sampson (2003) refer to this as a theory about differences in situations or contexts and their consequences for persisting in and desisting from crime. Nagin and Paternoster (2000:118) point out that "committing crimes has the two-pronged effect of both weakening restraints/inhibitions and strengthening incentives for additional criminal behavior." Thus, once identified, such time-varying characteristics and social contexts, like unemployment status and marriage disruptions, can explain continuity in offending over time (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

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Laub and Sampson (2003) themselves point to a third process of which they see in the literature as a combination of population heterogeneity and state dependence put into one explanation. They go on to explain that while together these processes make clear both time-stable traits and time-varying characteristics in continuity and change in offending over time, theoretically speaking, these models do not explain change in behavior from criminal behavior to conventional behavior. Laub and Sampson (2003: 25) do state however that this combination of population heterogeneity and state dependence is a step in the right direction but, the fact remains, that these only explain one side of the coin—continuity in offending—and again they do not provide insight into the processes of change. In their view, the only way for population heterogeneity and state dependence models to provide any adequate explanation of continuity and change in criminal behavior is to adopt a typological approach, which they found in previous research is not a satisfactory solution (Sampson and Laub, 1997, 2000).

Desistance from Offending

Some of the earliest work on criminal desistance has come from attempts to explain the age-crime relationship, or what Laub and Sampson (2003) categorize as aging, maturation, and developmental accounts. Within this line of inquiry, Quetelet (1833) argues that the proclivity for crime declines with age because of the "enfeeblement of physical vitality" (Brown and Miller, 1988:13). The process of aging out of crime has been described by Goring (1919) as the "law of nature;" here he compares desistance from crime to a biological process. Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1940) developed their theory of "maturational reform" where maturation was the key to desistance from crime. And, Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990:136) suggest that "(c)rime declines with age. Spontaneous desistance is just that, change in the behavior that cannot be explained and change that occurs regardless of what happens." From this perspective, age has a

direct effect on criminal behavior and remains invariant across social, temporal, and economic conditions (Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1995:135).

While there remain many scholars who believe in age and maturational reform and feel that they are the most influential explanations for the desistance process, there are yet other scholars who argue that age alone cannot explain change; instead, these scholars point to a developmental process (Gartner and Piliavin, 1988; Giordano et al., 2002; Gove, 1985; Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996). There are three themes that seem to account for the desistance process under this developmental argument. First, Shover (1985, 1996) and others (Mulvey and LaRosa, 1986) argue that changes in offending, the desistance process, is linked to age and aging due to the changing calculus of one's decision making. Here aging influences a more subjective contingency or what Shover (1996:130) calls "orientational, resolve-enhancing contingencies." Thus, men turn away from crime because they take fewer risks, become more rational, gain a new perspective on the self, as well as have a growing awareness of time as a fluttering resource, and experience a change in their aspirations and goals (Shover, 1996: 131). To put it more simply, the argument suggests that (1) desistance is ontogenetic, or normative, and expected across the life span; and, (2) cognitive change is a precursor to behavioral change or what Maruna (2001) calls "identity deconstruction."

The second theme found under the developmental account of desistance combines the changes in socially structured roles, psychological well-being and maturation, and biological factors (Gove, 1985). Gove (1985:118), for example, reviews six sociological theories of deviance, such as labeling, conflict, differential association, control, anomie, and functional theory, and proposes that "all of these theoretical perspectives either explicitly or implicitly suggest that deviant behavior is an amplifying process leading to further and more serious

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deviance." Gove (1985) contests this amplifying process by suggesting himself that there are peaks and declines in deviant behavior that are due to peaks and declines in physical strength, energy, psychological drive, and the need for stimulation. Gove (1985: 136) concludes that "biological and psychological factors appear to play a critical role in the termination of deviant behavior." Consequently, the changes in socially structured roles, psychological well-being, psychological maturation, and biological factors such as physical strength, physical energy, psychological drive, and the need for stimulation provide reasonable accounts of desistance from crime with age (Gove, 1985).

A third developmental account may be, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), one of the most influential to date and, that is, Moffitt's (1993, 1994) conceptions of the life-course-persistent offenders and adolescent-limited offenders. In her theory, Moffitt (1994) posits that each of the categories possesses a unique natural history and these two antisocial trajectories have unique etiologies that in part account for the differences in desistance. Life-course persistent offenders, for example, have a continuous history of antisocial behavior, without desistance, that stems from neuropsychological deficits in conjunction with disrupted attachment relationships and academic failure (Moffitt, 1994). For life-course persistent offenders, it is not the traits or the environment per se but the reciprocal interaction and reactions to them (Moffitt, 1994:28). That is to say, antisocial dispositions infiltrate into all domains of adolescence and adulthood and this diminishes the likelihood of change (Moffitt, 1994:28). Adolescence-limited offenders, on the other hand, are involved in antisocial behavior only during adolescence and not in early childhood or adulthood. Moffitt (1994) explains that virtually all of these offenders desist from criminal behavior over time but are involved in antisocial behavior due to situational contexts and a maturity gap. However, because adolescence-limiteds have no history of

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antisocial behavior resulting from neuropsychological deficits in early childhood, the forces of continuous continuity are weaker (Moffitt, 1994). On top of this, adolescence-limited offenders have more pro-social skills, academic achievements, stronger attachments, and characteristics that facilitate desistance from crime (Moffitt, 1994).

In sum, Moffitt (1994:45) argues that the age of desistance from criminal offending will be a function of age of onset of antisocial behavior, mastery of conventional pro-social skills, and the number and severity of 'snares' encountered during the foray into delinquency. Snares are consequences of crime, such as incarceration or injury that constrain conventional behavior (Moffitt, 1994). Moreover, Moffitt (1994: 45) finds that adolescence-limited delinquents can profit from opportunities for desistance, because they retain the option of successfully resuming a conventional lifestyle. Life-course-persistent delinquents may make transitions into marriage or work, but their injurious childhoods make it less likely that they can leave their past selves behind (Moffitt, 1994: 45).

An Emerging Life-Course View

For Laub and Sampson (2003) a major objective of the life-course perspective is to link social history and social structure to human lives as they unfold under emergent properties. That is to say that no matter whether one is interested in understanding persistence or desistance in crime, a life-course perspective looks to within individual variations over time, leading to a focus on continuity and change and its embeddedness in historical and other contextual features of social life (Laub & Sampson, 2003). In terms of the literature concerning persistence in offending, Laub and Sampson (2003: 34-35) therefore reject the notion of population heterogeneity and state dependence models for two specific reasons: (1) traits, whether derived from genetics or childhood experiences, do not sufficiently predict behavior over time; and, (2)

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they do not sufficiently account for change—there are too many outcomes that cannot be explained by focusing simply on the past.

Another important aspect of life-course criminology for Laub and Sampson (2003) is that while incorporating individual differences and notions of law-like development such as aging, some changes in the life-course result from chance or random events. Other changes stem from "macro-level shocks" of which are beyond individual choice; like, for example, war, depression, natural disasters, revolutions, job closings, and industrial restructuring (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 34). Yet, another important aspect of the life-course perspective is a focus on time-varying situations and social contexts that may impede or facilitate criminal events.

Laub and Sampson (2003) therefore also disagree then with the age, maturation, and developmental accounts of the desistance processes in offending. For Laub and Sampson (2003) change here, in terms of developmental accounts, is still primarily explained by childhood characteristics and experiences as though some people are more programmed early on for change than are others. Their fundamental disagreement with developmental accounts then concerns the enduring psychological traits and past experiences of which seem previously determined for individuals. Laub and Sampson (2003) contrast these accounts by posing a theoretical commitment to the idea of social malleability and variability, and exogenous influences across the life-course. They wish to emphasize the constancy of change, especially the dynamic processes that serve to socially reproduce stability (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 34).

Structural Transitions or Else Human Agency in the Life-Course

There is a vast amount of literature arguing beyond the above understanding that persistence or desistance from crime and deviance is solely a product of age or other developmental processes. In fact, Sampson and Laub (1993) present a new line of inquiry in

their earlier book, *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. It is here where Sampson and Laub (1993) begin to develop their own age-graded social control theory, of which they highlight external or structural forces of social control. More specifically, they assert that informal ties to social institutions (marital attachment and commitment to stable employment) can aid in the process of reform by fostering a stake in conformity (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 141). As a result, one has more to lose from social sanctions and, therefore, they are less likely to participate in criminal behavior. In addition, Sampson and Laub (1993) argue that strong social bonds increase social capital, making it possible to achieve certain ends that would not have been previously available (Coleman, 1988; Sampson and Laub, 1993). A fundamental theme here is that while individual traits and childhood experiences are important for understanding behavioral stability, experiences in adolescence and adulthood can redirect criminal trajectories ("turning points") in either a more positive or a more negative manner. Furthermore, while Sampson and Laub (1993) posit that marital attachment may inhibit offending as this social institution functions as a form of informal social control, Laub, Nagin, and Sampson (1998) demonstrate that the effects of a good marriage on crime cessation is gradual and cumulative. It is Warr (1998), however, who argues that spending less time with delinquent peers is the primary driving force for reform.

Drawing from and integrating elements of the broader life-course perspective (Elder, 1985), Sampson and Laub (1997) go on to explain adolescent's antisocial behavior and delinquency, as well as criminality in early adulthood. In particular, they argue that serious delinquency and adolescent life events (for example, incarceration) attenuate social and institutional bonds (such as employment) in adulthood, and can thus increase the likelihood of continued offending (Sampson and Laub, 1997). This argument is closely aligned with the

conception of state dependence above; importantly however, Sampson and Laub (1997) add that regardless of juvenile bonds, strong adult social bonds can aid in the desistance from crime and deviance. Thus, in this latter case, they take note of the structural processes that can lead one to a change from criminal to conventional roles.

In addition, while Sampson and his colleagues (1993, 1997) as well as other scholars (Akers, 1998; Warr, 1998) state that structural transitions, like getting married, finding a job, and spending less time with or drifting away from delinquent peer groups, alone explain reform, others began to posit that a personal decision to desist itself, and, that is, human agency, produces behavioral change (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996). For example, Giordano et al. (2002) and Shover (1996) posit that in order to better understand reform, there has to be a focus on pathways as a function of self-identity, choices, actions and lifestyle. Research on these cognitive and behavior shifts emerges from symbolic interactionist theory, which suggests that the impact of "turning points" (such as marital attachment and job stability) on an individual's life may depend on the actors' level of awareness about their problems, motivation and openness to change, or interpretation of events (Maruna, 2001). Working to develop primarily a theory of cognitive change, Giordano et al. (2002: 1000-1001) suggest four stages to the transformation or desistance process: (1) openness to change; (2) exposure to "hooks for change" or turning points; (3) fashioning an "appealing and conventional replacement of self;" and (4) a lifestyle transformation in the way the actor views the deviant behavior. Giordano and colleagues (2002) further argue that while these transformations may occur together, essentially a solid replacement of one's old self may be the central factor in long term behavior change.

Similarly, in his book *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, Maruna (2001) points out that in order for former prisoners to successfully abstain from committing crime they must make sense of their criminal past and rationalize their decision to desist from crime. Through self-narratives, Maruna (2001) argues that individuals are afforded the opportunity to redefine their checkered pasts in a way that provides meaning in their lives. The way many ex-offenders derive meaningful purpose in their life is by helping other individuals who find themselves in trouble with the law, which include working as mentors, social workers, counselors, or volunteering and becoming an active participant in their community (Maruna, 2001; Travis et al., 2001). Many returning prisoners in Maruna's (2001) study voice that taking on the role of a responsible productive citizen is important in reintegrating into their neighborhood. However, according to Travis et al. (2001), depending on state and federal laws, returning prisoners face numerous barriers, such as the loss of the right to vote, serve on juries, and hold executive office, as well as limited employment opportunities and housing choices. These barriers thus may themselves hinder successful reintegration, a finding of which Laub and Sampson (2003) couples with human agency to develop even further their original 1993 age-graded informal social control theory—the major framework that guided the present study.

Extending Age-Graded Informal Social Control Theory

Fundamentally, Laub and Sampson (2003) claim that above all else neither structural nor individual action/choice or human agency alone can adequately explain the underlying mechanisms of desistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Refining their earlier work, and while utilizing the life-course perspective in this modified version of informal social control theory, Laub and Sampson (2003) contend that both structural support and human agency are together

important elements in constructing trajectories over the life-course. That is, their focus is on the structural sources (detailed below) of both continuity and change and the role of personal agency in the processes of persistent offending and desistance from crime. For them, turning points play a central role in their theory, especially when linked to the interaction of human agency, life-course events, situations, and historical contexts (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 35). In fact they posit that there are emergent experiences that result from person-environment interactions, of which there are built in contingencies and thus one must also recognize and appreciate the role of chance. In their study of 52 of the original 500 Glueck men, for example, they conclude that "[c]hoice alone without structures of support, or the offering of support alone absent a decision to desist, however inchoate, seems destined to fail" (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 43). In other words, both changes in societal forces and an individual's resolution to change are implicated in the process of reform (Piquero, 2004).

More specifically, and as stated early on in this chapter, one of Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical goals is to expand our understanding of informal and formal social control and their features across the life course by identifying sources of persistence in and desistance from crime. Again, in their argument, the most basic premise is that the causes of offending and, subsequently, reform are virtually the same for all persons. And, by this Laub and Sampson (2003) mean that persistence in and desistance from crime is explained by social controls, structured routine activities, and purposeful human agency. To explain this theory, their attention is mainly on such institutional sources as work, family, the military, and to a lesser degree on community organizations, and neighborhood hangouts (for example, bars or taverns) as well as formal social control institutions like the police, prison, and parole. Thus, the point being here that not only do they seek to examine an array of institutions that they believe

influence both formal and informal social control, Laub and Sampson (2003: 38) also recognize that such institutions are embedded in specific local culture (place) and a specific local context (time) of which the Glueck men were provided with some semblance of chance and a choice.

Work, Marriage/Family, and the Military

Laub and Sampson (2003) believe that the best hope for unpacking the processes of persistence and desistance from crime is a life-course theory of crime that incorporates a dynamic view of social control, situations, and individual choices that vary within individuals over time. In particular they point to an important question or a major gap in the life-course literature: (i)f crime is so seductive, how does one exit the temptation (Laub and Sampson, 2003)? For these criminologists then, there is a need to better recognize "the actions that active criminals take in order to improve their chances in life" (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Accordingly, Laub and Sampson (2003) in their age-graded informal social control theory explain that there are an array of institutional structures, situations, and persons that, they believe, influence both formal and informal social control and, therefore, help to improve criminal's life chances during the desistance process. Institutions that serve as a form of day-to-day structuring that may aide criminals are, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), work, family, the military, and these interact to generate social controls, a set of routine activities that, and coupled with human agency, may lead to reform.

As institutions, the aim of work, family, and the military for Laub and Sampson (1993, 2003) is to help sustain desistance by affecting the proximate causes of crime. Laub and Sampson (2003: 47) argue theoretically that this is so because these institutions: (1) increase informal social controls of which interdependency is reciprocal and embedded in the social ties between individuals and social institutions, (2) they lead to a meaningful change in routine

activities, (3) provide direct social control, and (4) they give one a sense of identity and provide meaning to life. Work, family, and the military can then be central experiences of adult life and a "regulating" force (Wilson, 1996: 52).

Expanding on the above paragraph, Laub and Sampson (1993, 2003) generally find in their studies of the Glueck men that involvement in work, family, and the military reorders short-term situational inducements to crime and, over time, re-direct long-term commitments to conformity. For Laub and Sampson (2003) desistance from crime is then a process that takes place over time, and they contend that the processes of behavior change are strikingly similar for both work and family.

For example, Sampson and Laub (1993) in their book *Crime in the Making* argued that job stability, commitment to work, and mutual ties binding workers and employers increase informal social control and, all else equal, lead to a cessation in criminal behavior. Similarly, marriage alone may not change criminal behavior; marriage is an investment in social bonds that grows and the incentive then for avoiding crime increases because there is more at stake (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 41). It is through work and marriage here then where Sampson and Laub (1993) began to develop an age-graded informal social control theory based on the reciprocal nature of social capital that is invested in employees by their employers and spouses in a marriage. As such, employers often take chances by hiring workers for an open position. Hoping that their investment will payoff, the opportunity provided by the employer may trigger a return investment in social capital by the employee (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Or, on the other hand, marriage is important because obligations and restraint between spouses means that there are significant costs for translating criminal propensities into action (Sampson and Laub, 1993). Theoretically speaking here then, work, like marriage and even the military (detailed below),

provides the context for interdependency, of which Sampson and Laub (1993) argue is reciprocal

and embedded in social ties between individuals and these social institutions generally.

In addition, Laub and Sampson (2003) continued to build on their original age-graded

informal social control theory by similarly arguing that, depending on the nature of work,

employers, much like spouses in a marriage (or maybe even a drill sergeant in the military), can

provide a direct form of social control to his/her employees. Employers can keep their

employees in line and even take them under their wing (Laub & Sampson, 2003). Laub and

Sampson (2003) furthermore explain that a central element in the desistance process is also the

"structured role stability" found to move across work and marriage as life domains. And that is

to say that Laub and Sampson (2003) found in their study of the 52 Glueck men that those men

who desisted from crime shared a daily routine that provided both structure and meaningful

activity. Thus, work, especially full time work, is a sort of control in the sense that it leads to a

change in the employees' routine activities (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Marriage can also mean

an introduction to new family (in-laws), friends, and lead to parenting responsibilities and even

residential change. As a result, for the Glueck men who desisted from crime, the structure of

work and marriage was fully embraced (Laub and Sampson, 2003), and one result, was a

disassociation from delinquent peers in adulthood--a major factor in explaining their desistance

from crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Moffitt, 1998). Thus, as a result, a major element in the

desistance process is the "knifing off" (Sampson and Laub, 1993) of individual offenders from

their immediate environment and, furthermore, offering them a new script for the future (Caspi

and Moffitt, 1995; Laub and Sampson, 2003; see also Maruna, 2001).

Finally, for Laub and Sampson (2003), work and marriage can lead to a change in one's

sense of self.   And that is, work, like marriage, can give a person a sense of identity and purpose

or add meaning to their lives. For example, work for some Glueck men allowed them to keep their honor and dignity; a good job was one of Laub and Sampson's (2003:47) principle mechanisms for enabling young men to be taken seriously, to be seen as useful, and to grow up. Moreover, marriage meant getting serious, becoming an adult, and having someone to care for and to take care of (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

According to Laub and Sampson (2003) the military experience for the Glueck men was particularly peculiar in the sense that service in the military set in motion a chain of events and experiences that shaped these individuals future lives. First, military service removed disadvantaged youths away from prior wayward influences and social stigmas (for example, criminal records) and introduced them to a sort of discontinuity in the life course (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Essentially, the Glueck men who were involved with the military were knifed off of past experiences and introduced to new rules and structures, of which had the potential of reorganizing their social roles and life opportunities (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Secondly, the military provided training and education to many disadvantaged youth as well as structural benefits like the G.I. Bill, which enhanced later attachment to work and marriage. Thus, in short, the military served as a sort of bridging environment for the disadvantaged Glueck men in the sense that the military changed their routine activities, provided direct supervision and support, as well as provided discipline, strong leadership training, social responsibility and male role models and relationships (Elder, 1986:236-238; Laub and Sampson, 2003). All in all, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), work, marriage, and the military may then each serve as a critical structural turning point for criminals who wish to desist from crime and deviance.

Justice System Involvement

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Important to Laub and Sampson (2003) and life-course research generally is how events like juvenile and adult incarceration influence later outcomes. Laub and Sampson (2003) believe that incarceration especially had consequences for the Glueck men and that such experiences affected them over the life-course. In fact, exploring the idea of cumulative continuity (Sampson and Laub, 1997), which posits that delinquency incrementally mortgages the future by generating negative consequences for the life chances of stigmatized and institutionalized youth, Laub and Sampson (2003: 51, 291) found that incarceration had a negative effect on later job stability and thus related to continued offending over the life course. Consequently, social bonds to employment were directly influenced by criminal sanctions (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Laub and Sampson, 1995; Sampson and Laub, 1993).

For example, cumulative disadvantage posits that arrest and imprisonment may lead to or spark failure in school, unemployment, weak community bonds, and in turn increase involvement in adult crime (Sampson and Laub, 1997; Thornberry, 1987). What Laub and Sampson (2003) find in their study of the Glueck men is that many of these men were sent to either the Lyman School or the Industrial School for Boys, large institutions set up to impose discipline and punishment on young criminal and deviant boys. While incarcerated the Glueck men as boys were subjected to an extreme regiment of activities that included marching from their rooms to meals and other activities (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Physical and verbal punishments were common and included cold showers, being kicked for minor infractions like talking, or hitting inmates with wooden paddles or straps on the soles of their feet. These experiences coupled with later criminal justice involvement led Laub and Sampson (2003:291) to the conclusion that for the Glueck men the system is not only corrupt but has counterproductive effects when considering "the long run of individual lives."

Human Agency and the Situational and Historical Context of Crime and Violence

Laub and Sampson (2003: 278) have argued up to this point that there are multiple

pathways to desistance and their data indicate that desistance is facilitated by self-described

"turning points," or changes in structural life circumstances like a stable job, a good marriage, or

the military, and, to a lesser degree, the criminal justice system. In combination with these

structural institutions and thus potential turning points, Laub and Sampson (2003) further argue

that individual actions or human agency and situational and historical contexts also matter when

considering criminal to conventional reform. Seeking a theory that links structure and human

chance and choice, Laub and Sampson (2003) therefore contend that desistance is not a single

event but a process realized over time. In other words, agency is a process that is reciprocally

linked to situations and larger structures past and present as well as future (Laub and Sampson,

2003).

Human agency is generally defined as personal choice or will; thus, meaning that

individuals make choices and are active participants in the construction of their lives (Laub and

Sampson, 2003:38). For Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory,

human agency is an emergent process both spatially and temporally. As such, "(t)he individual

life course has to be conceptualized not as a behavioral outcome of macrosocial

organizations…but as the result of the subject's constructive activity in dealing with the

available life course programs" (Sampson and Laub, 1986:272). Following Becker and Murphy

(2000), Laub and Sampson (2003) believe that choice and structure are in interaction with one

another and produces behavior that cannot be reconciled by focusing on either one or the other.

What is important here for Laub and Sampson (2003) is that there is interplay between agency,

action, and structure through time or, as Emirbayer (1997:294) put it, "agency is path dependent as well as situationally embedded."

Therefore, for Laub and Sampson (2003) in their recent study of the original Glueck men, the questions that they asked while collecting their life-history narratives of these men were apparently designed to reveal human agency or choices and the contexts within which criminal persistence and desistance occur. That is, it became important for Laub and Sampson (2003) to ground crime and social control in the situational and the historical contexts that the Glueck men faced. The result of their work offers a critique of crime over the life-course. As discussed earlier in this chapter, developmental criminology, for example, posits that childhood risk characteristics are embedded over the long term and these characteristics are seemingly all that really matter (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1991; Moffitt, 1993). On the other hand, structuralist approaches to criminology argue that it is location within the social structure, such as poverty, social class, and a good job or marriage are all that really matter (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Merton, 1938; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Wilson, 1987). Laub and Sampson (2003) challenge these deterministic theories by positing that the men they studied were, alternatively, active participants in constructing their lives. Generally, what Laub and Sampson (2003:281) found was that there are both objective and subjective factors or contingencies in the processes by which some offenders commit crime at a higher rate for longer periods of time than other offenders.

Laub and Sampson (2003) use the term "situated choice" to capture this theoretical idea. Fundamentally interested in the interaction between life-course transitions, macro-level events, situational context, and individual will, Laub and Sampson (2003: 281) recognize above all else that the social environment and the individual are influenced by the relations between structure

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and choice. That is to say events and their actions are contingent upon other events and actions; and, intercontingencies are, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), events and actions of which are dependent upon the events and actions by other people. For example, a stable and good quality job may serve as a turning point for some people because of the event itself, the individuals' subjective state, and the behaviors of others around them, as well as subsequent events resulting because of the fact that the individual is now employed (Sampson and Laub, 2003).

To illustrate this idea of situated choice, let us now put into context one factor that Laub and Sampson (2003) posits sustains crime, alcohol. For Laub and Sampson (2003) one reason that alcohol sustains crime is because it makes work and marriage more difficult. In fact, one "persistent" offender told Laub and Sampson (2003: 56) that "(a)s soon as I started on a drink, I'd wind up walking off the job." Furthermore, Laub and Sampson (2003: 56) posit that if alcohol is a major part of one's life then their life-style activities are going to revolve around bars, clubs, and partying with others who are similarly situated—"tonight I am going drinking." Moreover, Laub and Sampson (2003: 56) point out that one man that they interviewed had never met a woman who was "not a drunk." What Laub and Sampson (2003) found in their study of the Glueck men was then that heavy drinking was a dominant feature in their group of "persistent" offenders and not so much for the desisters they interviewed. In fact, it was the desisters who had gotten help in order to deal with their heavy drinking problem, and the reasons they did so, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), are embedded in both structural (work, marriage, and military) and personal choice.

Interestingly, and as a set of final points in their expanded version of the original age-graded informal social control theory, Laub and Sampson (2003) posit that even the most

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hardened offender is not a persistent offender in the true sense of the term (Moffitt, 1993). In

fact, they find that in their results of this long term study of the Glueck men that virtually all

offenders eventually desist from crime, but do so at different rates and ages over time. In

addition, Laub and Sampson (2003: 286) similarly uncover an enormous heterogeneity in

offending over the life course; some of the Glueck men started early and stopped, others

continued on for long periods of time, and still others showed zig-zag patterns of offending over

time. For Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory of crime, development is a constant interaction

between individuals, their environment, and random chance or "random developmental noise"

(Lewontin, 2000: 35-36). Thus, Laub and Sampson (2003) conclude that this description

essentially captures well the life-course reality of much of crime.

Despite an abundance of research findings on the predictive validity of the persistence

and desistance processes of behavioral change, there has been little, if any, attempt to examine

meaningfully Laub and Sampson's (2003) modified age-graded informal social control theory.

That is, institutional turning points, coupled with personal agency, choice, and chance is largely

omitted in studies on desistance. While Laub and Sampson's (2003) work here is

groundbreaking in the sense that it offers a "new" theoretical middle ground, it remains to be

seen what this theory may mean when put into the greater context.

In particular, the Glueck data, on which the analyses above are based, are limited because

they contain only information on the offending patterns of white men growing up in the early to

mid-twentieth century (Piquero, 2004). Criminologists, with a few exceptions, thus know very

little about the longitudinal patterning of crime among non-whites and females growing up in the

late twentieth and early twenty-first century.[4] Furthermore, much of Laub and Sampson's (2003)

analysis and subsequent findings for their theory are based on the context and adult experience of

marriage. Thus, the extent and manner of which key formal and informal social control agents,

such as employment, and the local neighborhood context fosters changes in criminal activity

were not empirically assessed (Piquero, 2004).[5]

Because of this relatively large gap in the life-course literature, and my interest in street

workers criminal desistance processes, in the following section I provide a select review of the

relevant literature on violence prevention. Beginning with a discussion on the circumstances

behind the violence, the purpose is to show that currently some of the most successful violence

prevention programs are community-based cross-institutional approaches that employ street

workers and street work practices. Stemming as far back as the 1930's when Clifford Shaw

developed the Chicago Area Project, where we saw the emergence of the "curbstone counselor,"

street work and street work programming has been modified considerably since this era and into

the post-industrial era. However the fact remains that while such programs as Ceasefire Chicago

and Baltimore's Safe Streets Program have produced some successes in violence reduction at the

community level, there are standing issues at the individual street worker level that remain to be

empirically examined. And, it is within Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical framework

where I contribute to the literature by considering violence prevention as a type of work and,

thus, through this study I have assessed its role in the lives of current and former street workers.

Violence Prevention

The Circumstances Behind the Violence

As was alluded to in the beginning pages of this chapter, the levels of gun related

violence and homicides in many of our inner-city communities are being committed by juveniles

and young adults and, currently, these statistics are well above any recent national average.

Unsurprisingly then, the issue of violence has received national attention from policy makers,

practitioners, and researchers for reasons that are clear (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1968; Spergel, 1966, 2005). As a result of such issues and endemic dangers, scholars have been examining the impact of various community and neighborhood traits and, specifically, the circumstances behind the transition of urban labor markets as they transformed from manufacturing and industrial means of production to a service-based economy to explain the emergence of crime and violence (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Wilson, 1987).

The core of this sociological and criminological research has been centered on inner-city urban regions and research findings reveal that there are both proximate and fundamental causes that must be addressed; these causes include: the threats that gangs generate, their (gangs) values that reinforce violence, the lack of legitimate activities in urban neighborhoods, as well as fundamental issues like racism, unemployment, the lack of jobs, and the demise of the family in urban America (Anderson, 1999; Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Wilson, 1987). From within this framework, policy makers have thus been developing and scholars have begun exploring a variety of initiatives targeting gangs and, moreover today, violence in the inner-city urban communities (Klein, 1968, 1971; Spergel, 1966, 2007).[6] Increasingly, what we are seeing from such efforts is the emergence of community-based action programming that is being implemented and systematically evaluated in targeted distressed and at-risk urban communities all over the United States, and even abroad (see for example Braithwaite, 1989 for a start).

The Community-Based Cross-Institutional Approach to Reducing Violence

Currently, one of the more popular movements in the construction of programs or initiatives that focus on community violence prevention and its reduction is the cross-

institutional approach of which the aim is to integrate social-intervention and suppression and, more frequently, opportunities provision and community mobilization to reduce violence (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Spergel, 2005; Spergel and Curry, 1993). The cross-institutional approach is generally an effort to bring together a broadly based network of community coalitions that tend to be both bureaucratic (police, courts, schools, hospitals, treatment centers, etc.) and not (urban community institutions, local residents, clergy, gangs and gang members, probationers, parolees, etc.). Important to this discussion is that at the core of this generally popular cross-institutional coalition is this notion of "community justice." Community justice is a broad, loose field of inquiry organized around localized procedures of deliberation and conflict mediation (Karp, 1998). More specifically, while there is increasing interest in the cross-institutional networking to community violence prevention and its reduction, a fundamental assumption of these community-based action efforts is individual and community involvement and empowerment (Karp, 1998; Kurki, 2000).[7]

Accordingly, community justice calls for authority and accountability at lower bureaucratic or organizational levels as well as from community members and community organizations (Clear and Karp, 1998: 18). That is, in terms of community justice, the focus is on solving neighborhood problems, such as violence, and, importantly, doing so by drawing on the help of local residents, their personal initiative, and resources. In addition, those local residents willing to participate are bolstered with extra-local resources often necessary to create viable local institutions and practices (Clear and Karp, 1998: 16). That is to say that amidst these growing efforts toward violence prevention, generating local participation is a primary key to treating crime as a societal or human health problem, as opposed to the alternative metaphor of "war."[8] Furthermore, such participation in community organizations (or sometimes termed

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participatory democratic organizations) plays an important role in helping local individuals and, particularly, participants to define their political interests, concerns, and develop as public citizens by moving beyond their own immediate self-interests (Bennett, 1998; Mansbridge, 1985; Mill, 1975). In the realm of violence prevention programming initiatives, there is now a category of work set aside specifically for local residents and is designed to serve these purposes.[9] This type of work that is so uniquely in line with community justice ideals it will be referred to here as street work.

Street Work and Street Work Practices

Street work and street work practices have been around for approximately eighty years (Spergel, 2005). Street work is then not necessarily a new phenomenon and, moreover, across this eighty year timeline there have been numerous paradigm shifts in street gang work practices. Generally speaking, these shifts occur because of the ongoing evolution of our global political, economic, social/cultural structures, and, increasingly now in the post-industrial era, because of the limited affects these street-level efforts have been on "gangs" and, most importantly, violence (Hagedorn, 1998; Spergel, 1990, 2005). Of importance here is the shift of street gang work from professional social work-type practices on gangs and groups to a recruitment of gang members as core members of locally based crime prevention programs specifically (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Spergel, 2005).

Detached Gang Work and Programming

The contemporary roots of formal outreach efforts to reduce crime and violence and socialize street youth's are found in charitable and religious organizations and, later, agency approaches like Boys Club and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) (Spergel, 1966; Brace, 1973). Within the first half of the twentieth century, gang work was primarily conducted

by youth-outreach programs hiring detached workers (also known as street gang workers and outreach workers) from established youth agencies, colleges and universities, and, sometimes even, individual professional practitioners such as counselors and social workers to work with inner-city residents and, particularly, gangs in a group and recreational fashion (Austin, 1957).[10] The detached or professional street gang worker, the supposed primary agent of change, was to work to establish rapport with the local inner-city residents and youth to bring the gang and society together (Klein, 1971). However, by the 1940's large waves of people from the southern United States, Mexico, and Puerto Rico came to the factories of the North to help sustain America's World War II effort (Wilson, 1987).

With large numbers of low-income families, the situation made it difficult for schools and social agencies to adequately meet the socialization needs of the newcomers, especially, the young males (Spergel, 2005). By the 1950's and 1960's some African American and Latino youth who were not acceptable to, or did not accept, the established youth programs or traditional schooling approaches formed troublesome street groups (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). These street groups became increasingly identified as youth gangs. Gang delinquency in this era was primarily characterized by disorderly conduct and non-lethal inter-gang fighting (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Spergel, 1966). To subside the everyday pressures and strains found in the overcrowded regions of many inner-cities that were in transition (Shaw and McKay, 1942), a social-work ideology was adopted and guided the development of specialized youth gang projects (Spergel, 1966). For example, the Group Guidance Project of the Los Angeles County Probation Department through the use of their detached workers tried to reduce gang acts by: (1) identifying street groups and their members who were oriented to delinquent gang activity, (2) developing a group-counseling relationship with them and their parents to aid in adjusting them

to community standards, (3) reducing the isolation of these youth and their parents from established mainstream institutions, and, (4) promoting better understanding and cooperation among citizens and established agencies in the community in addressing the problem (Los Angeles County Probation Department, 1982). The theory at this time was simple: gangs were expected to break up naturally (Norman, 1963).

Detached workers in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and others worked for their agency on the streets, and they were described as being very independent and self-assured, belonging to two worlds (Klein, 1965; Spergel, 1966). As Spergel and Klein put it,

> He (detached worker) is of the delinquent group and its subculture, but also of the world of respectable and conforming people…He tries on the one hand, to change the delinquent, and on the other, the people and institutions which have, in large measure, produced him. (Spergel, 1966: xiii)
>
> A detached worker (gang worker, social worker, street-club worker) is an individual, usually with a streetwise orientation, who is assigned to one or more urban street gangs. His modus operandi differs from that of the usual agency worker that his primary task is to attach himself to the delinquent gang where and as it exists—on a street corner, on the playground, in a garage, at a hamburger stand, or in any other spot where boys seem to congregate. (Klein, 1965: 183)

Thus, while the detached worker is employed by an agency, the detached worker may have little immediate structure or support, such as an office, regular hours, guidance from colleagues or supervisors, as he is on the streets of the neighborhood at odd hours of the day and night (Klein, 1965).[11] According to Bernstein (1964) and Korbin (1982), at first, those agencies sponsoring these youth detached workers sought to preserve their independence, and their positions were not routinized.

Malcolm Klein would later conduct several evaluations on these traditional street-gang and detached or extension-work programs, and, in short, conclude that programs that focus on the gang-as-a-group are ineffective. Based on his evaluations of the Group Guidance Project

(Klein, 1968) and the Ladino Hills Project (Klein, 1971), Klein recommended that such

programs be abandoned; he claims that these programs increase gang cohesion, while little

attention is paid to individual counseling, job placement, or other youth-worker interventions.

He further argues that the "worker work's in a vacuum, detached not only from his own agency

but from others concerned with gang prevention" (Klein, 1971:54). Walter B. Miller (1958)

similarly concluded that the problem of delinquency reduction lies in the recalcitrance of the

adults in community agencies and institutions. And furthermore, Cooper (1967) reports that

detached workers control over spontaneous attacks by groups of boys is pretty much limited to

times when the worker is present, or when one of the local residents is willing to act as his

representative. Klein (1971: 55) therefore advised then that too many of the factors which bring

boys to the point of gang membership and conflict are not within the capability of a detached

worker program to manipulate.

In line with Klein's recommendations, coupled with the rise of the Civil Rights

Movement, urban rioting, and the emergence of a subcultural gang theory (Cloward and Ohlin,

1960), there was a shift in ideology by the 1960's regarding the causes of urban problems and

delinquency (Rosenbaum, 1988). Traditional outreach programs focusing on delinquent groups

or gangs were largely abandoned. In an attempt to address poverty and gang problems through a

more institutional or structural approach (as opposed to the above individual-youth or small

group approach), federal legislation inspired the development of community-action programs

(Rosenbaum, 1988; Spergel, 2005). While these programs continued to use detached workers,

they were also expected to involve the community to reduce crime rates, the potential for urban

riots, and conflict of alienated residents. They primarily did so through social intervention

practices and opportunities provision; they were to connect youth organizations like the Youth

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Jobs Center, the Youth Services Corps, schools, and juvenile courts to develop a network of opportunities (Rosenbaum, 1988; Spergel, 2005).

Detached workers were integrated into the community-service system where they were now expected to be elements of local community institutional-change efforts, referring low-income, minority-group youth to the world of education, work, and a broader range of community based services to help them "make it" in the legitimate world (Bibb, 1967; Rosenbaum, 1988). The expectation was that inner-city residents and, particularly, gang youth would not have to use conflict behavior or illegal opportunities to achieve social and economic status (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960; Coleman, 1974; Rosenbaum, 1988). According to Spergel (2005) however, significant changes did not occur. While youth and criminal justice agencies did not significantly alter their established approaches, detached workers continued their own traditional practices of outreach group work, recreation, and brief individual youth and adult counseling (Spergel, 2005: 12).

Apart from the implementation issues that plagued these community-based action approaches and increasingly the disconnection between criminal justice agencies and detached workers, at the core the purpose was to develop a systematic neighborhood-development approach which was intended to emphasize neighborhood improvement, along with delinquency control and youth socialization (Rosenbaum, 1988). A central feature of programming for youth was to enlist the participation and efforts of local residents in order to cohere and empower them (Rosenbaum, 1988). To quell the delinquency problem, the emphasis remained on street outreach, however by now also requiring high levels of commitment and activity from indigenous residents and local groups rather than on professional detached or social-agency

workers (Rosenbaum, 1988; Spergel, 2005). This practice itself was not new and reaches as far

back as the 1930s and 1940s when Clifford Shaw founded the Chicago Area Project (CAP).

CAP and the Emergence of "Curbstone Counseling"

Detached work represents an early philosophy of street work that is not so much in line

with community justice practices and, moreover, its ideals per se. The type of street work that

does seem to align itself with the definition of community justice stated above stems back to the

early Chicago School era and, specifically, to Clifford Shaw (1930) who recognized a long time

ago the value of people who have been involved in criminal activities in their neighborhood.

More specifically, Shaw designed and founded the Chicago Area Project or CAP, a

project intended for local citizen group action in order to generate gradual civic improvement

(Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). That is, Shaw envisioned and employed local adults, including ex-

convicts, probationers, and parolees, in their respective neighborhoods to walk the streets and

counsel the youth (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). Known as "curbstone counselors," these now

law-abiding citizens would advise the local residents and particularly youth in the local language

and manner to engage in legitimate behaviors (Spergel, 2005). Shaw's curbstone counselors

mediated and advocated for youth if they were truant, had conduct problems, were arrested, or on

probation; they were to get representatives of bureaucratic institutions, like school officials,

police, court officials, and probation officers, to better understand the neighborhood residents

and respond to their individual interests and problems (Schlossman and Sedlak, 1983). In some

instances the local adults advocated and lobbied for the youth, giving the community and its

members a voice in the decision-making between the people and the formal criminal justice

system (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Spergel, 2005).

However, while Shaw emphasized local neighborhood efforts and responsibility in addressing delinquency, he did not address larger structural factors that were significantly accountable for local problems—such as, for example, governmental and commercial factors (Spergel, 2005). The CAP organization/program was therefore not designed to create pressure on government leaders and other external agencies in order to modify their rules and policies or to provide greater social and economic opportunities for such youth (Snodgrass, 1976). The curbstone counselor, a defining feature of Shaw's approach, nonetheless, still remains intact to this day, more than sixty years after he founded the CAP project.

To combat these structural limitations, the more contemporary community-based approaches of the 1960's, 70's, and the 1980's sought to reduce the gang violence problem through an Alinsky-style of community organizing (Alinsky, 1946; Spergel, 2005).[12] That is, Saul Alinsky, one of Shaw's former CAP workers, would later recognize this structural and agency disconnection issue and therefore redefine Shaw's approach by working to build broad based local community coalitions. He would do so by organizing local citizens and empower them to attack and negotiate with the institutions responsible for a variety of local neighborhood social and economic problems (Alinsky, 1946). Other programs such as the Youth Manpower Project of the Woodlawn Organization (TWO) and the Crisis Intervention Network (CIN) would continue to follow this Alinsky-style approach (Spergel, 1972).

By the 1990's and into 2000, there have been a variety of initiatives that have explored the possibilities of integrating social intervention, suppression, opportunities provision, and community mobilization approaches to preventing and controlling gang activities and, especially, violence (Spergel, 2005). To date, the effective integration of these various approaches has not been adequately articulated, planned, or achieved (Spergel, 2005: 24). Like that of the 1930's

and 1940's, new waves of immigration, population movements, and the growing segregation of

low-income Latinos and African Americans in certain areas have made this difficult due to the

rise in gangs and gang members across all regions (Decker and Van Winkle, 1996; Klein, 1995).

Youth gangs developed in suburbs, medium and small size cities, Indian reservations, and rural

areas (Klein, 1995; Spergel, 1995). Gang violence is now unfortunately more lethal than that of

the 1940's, and many of the youth in gangs are increasingly involved in selling and using drugs

or other illegal substances (Klein, 1995). Traditional detached worker and indigenous street

worker programs and agencies continue to exist but, according to Spergel (2005), still in

ambiguous relationship with other programs and agencies concerned with the overall gang

problem.

The indigenous nature of community-based action programming, of which most cross-

institutional approaches now seem to employ in one way or another, has since the CAP era

however been a primary feature of violence prevention programming. Importantly, the primary

figures of concern are indigenous local residents, and, coupled with violence prevention street

work practices, these local residents are hired into community-based action programs as street

workers—a term that has been previously referred to in the sociological and criminological

literature (Klein, 1971; Spergel, 1966). In line with community justice ideals, such

programmatic efforts that utilize street work practices and, thus, street workers aim much of their

efforts toward crime, violence, and homicide prevention and its reduction. That is, these

organizations rely on and, increasingly today, employ informal practitioners that include local

community residents and, since the CAP era, former or current gang or clique members,

probationers, and parolees (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). The reasoning is grounded in the

individual male and female street workers themselves. Organizations rely on street work

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practices and street workers specifically for their street level knowledge, understanding, smarts, and skills; it is assumed that they are better able to access and acquire information on individual community interests, needs, and problems than are the aforementioned detached or more professional workers (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993).

In the case of violence prevention programming in the post-industrial era, a significant part of their street work duties as indigenous street workers is to intervene in and mediate violence related conflicts and potential gang or clique related retaliation efforts. The outcome is a recent evolution of formal and informal support groups in order to meet the myriad and often critical personal, social, and economic needs of local residents and, particularly, gang youth and older, former gang-affiliated adults who are most at-risk of the violence in their communities (Spergel, 2005: 21).

CeaseFire and Safe Streets Successes and Related Issues

There have been two programs of recent interest to utilize street workers and street work practices successfully, Ceasefire Chicago and Baltimore's Safe Streets Program (Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009). Systematically developed to prevent gun crime and violence, both CeaseFire and Safe Streets rely heavily on the efforts of their street workers to employ a highly personalized yet well disciplined approach to a program model that generally includes the following intervention framework or street work practices: (1) mediate and intervene in conflicts, (2) outreach to and provide alternatives for most at-risk persons, (3) provide safe havens and programs for at-risk persons, (4) develop and maintain strong community coalitions, (5) send a unified message about gun violence and no shooting, and (6) a rapid response to all shootings (National Institute of Justice, 2004: 4; Skogan, 2008; Webster et al., 2009). The goal of the street workers intervention into the daily lives of his/her fellow residents for Chicago and

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Baltimore, and like programs, is to provide opportunities, treatment or rehabilitation, change values, control, or any of these in varying combinations (Spergel, 1966: xiii; Skogan, 2008; Webster et al., 2009). As a street worker, his or her objective is to modify local delinquent activity and attitudes by developing socially appropriate behavior and values.

For Chicago and Baltimore there have been recent efforts to evaluate the CeaseFire (Skogan et al., 2008) and Safe Streets Program (Webster et al., 2009). The evaluation findings on personal interviews and other data (trends of violence and police records) in these two cities provides indirect evidence of the success of street work, as violence has been down by one measure or another in over ninety percent of the targeted area neighborhoods examined statistically (Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009). Due in part to the active role street workers played in their targeted communities, the evaluations likewise indicate that shootings (including attempts) declined by as much as twenty-four percent (Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009). There were also distinctive declines, nearly thirty five percent, in those who were actually shot or killed in the target neighborhoods of which these two programs and their street workers were active in (Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009).

The findings in Chicago and Baltimore, therefore, go along ways for our understanding of what it takes to quell human related issues of violence and homicide. Put broadly, Chicago and Baltimore provide further evidence for the assumption that community organizations seem better suited to maintain face-to-face contacts with community residents than police departments (and possibly other government authorities), and residents are more likely to respond to local leaders and organizations (Kurki, 2000). In fact, previous research indicates that community crime prevention programs that are run by community organizations appear to last longer than those established by police departments or other city agencies (Bennett, 1998; Lindsay, 1988).

Some of this success has been attributed to their multi-issue agenda, as it has been found that groups focused only on crime prevention experience considerable difficulties maintaining participation and often fade rather quickly (Bennett, 1998; Bursik and Grasmick, 1992; Skogan, 1988). Likewise, and as we now know from the evaluation and outcome studies in Chicago and Baltimore, the problem-oriented services of street work appear effective on some level. In the context of community justice, the assumption that street workers work through their own outreach efforts to get more of the local at-risk residents involved and empower them with the extra-local resources often necessary to create viable local institutions and personal practices now appears to have some grounding due to the efforts of CeaseFire and the Safe Streets Program (Clear and Karp, 1998; Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009).

Since 1977, the National Crime Control Policy enacted two federal initiatives, the Community Anti-Crime Program (1977) and the Urban Crime Prevention Program (1980), to help make cross-institutional intervention processes a priority by providing funds directly to community organizations to help mobilize neighborhood residents to fight against crime and violence (Krug, 1982; Roehl and Cook, 1984; Rosenbaum, 1988). And there is no doubt that, with the successes of both Chicago and Baltimore, there is certainly going to be a continuous interest in the growth of such similar types of programs across the U.S. Federal and State funds are already allocating some resources for these types of community-based action programs, especially for those who intend to take on certain community justice ideals and make strides toward formalizing community related street work practices (Bennett, 1998).

The problem here, however, is that the findings on both Ceasefire Chicago and Baltimore's Safe Streets Program are based on the results of a limited amount of evaluation studies, of which one should not consider definitive. Previous studies of community activism

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and crime prevention programs indicate that there are generally two fundamentally related issues

for community-based initiatives that resemble both Chicago and Baltimore. The first issue is

that sustaining participation in community-based programs has been and is a challenge (Bennett,

1998). In fact, relatively few individuals, particularly local residents, begin participating in such

programs because of their concern about crime and other community problems (Bennett,

1998:32). This has consequences for those community action programs that are being funded (or

on the brink of funding) and implemented all over the U.S. More generally, local individuals,

including the gang or clique affiliated street workers found in Chicago and Baltimore as well as

elsewhere, are recruited on more of a face-to-face basis through acquaintances who are members

or a community organizer (McCourt, 1977; Prestby and Wandersman, 1985). Thus, recruitment

in this fashion is an ongoing process for these organizations as there is much residential turnover

(Sampson and Laub, 1997; Skogan, 2008). Several evaluation studies attest to this and have

provided evidence that generating and maintaining participation is one of the major

implementation difficulties for community crime prevention programs especially (Lavrakas and

Bennett; Rosenbaum, 1986; Skogan, 2008).

The second related issue is that crime prevention activities present their own difficulties

(Bennett, 1998; Spergel, 2005). Take for example the Youth Manpower Project of the

Woodlawn Organization (TWO). TWO, again, was a program selected by the U.S. Office of

Economic Opportunity to address a gang related violence problem in the Chicago Woodlawn

neighborhood area (Spergel, 2007). Woodlawn was a neighborhood in transition from a mainly

white to an all black, lower class population and was increasingly known for its burgeoning

gang-violence problem (Spergel, 1972). The program's objectives were to reduce this violence

related problem by providing training, jobs, educational opportunities, and conflict mediation

between two warring gangs, the Blackstone Rangers (also known as the Black P. Stone Nation and El Rukns) and the Devils' Deciples (also known as the Black Deciples and Black Gangster Deciples) (Spergel, 2007). The TWO staff members collaborated with and were at times advised by the Chicago Urban League, the Xerox Corporation, the First Presbyterian Church, and a select number of faculty of the University of Chicago (Spergel, 1972). Gang leaders were the principle staff of three local job training centers, two were controlled by the Blackstone Rangers and one by the Devils Deciples. However, while the professional TWO staff members wanted to integrate gangs as organizational equals and, more specifically, wanted to train gang leaders to become local community leaders, a multiplicity of conflicting organizational goals and objectives was confounded by the Chicago Police Department's newly organized gang unit's emphasis on suppression of local gang's and, thus, made this idea very difficult for the TWO project members to implement (Spergel, 2007).

Furthermore, Spergel (2005), in recollection of his evaluation of the TWO program, highlights that gang members and their leaders did not accept the purpose of the project, they did not substantially participate, and, to make things worse, attendance at the centers were used to plan and organize ongoing gang and criminal activities. For instance, the Blackstone Rangers collected weekly taxes or "stipends" from the youth who attended the job training sessions, and the TWO project staff did not know how to control these illegitimate activities (Spergel, 2005). As a result, there was a great deal of political controversy at both local and national levels and the project lasted merely one year and was not funded for a second year (Spergel, 2005).

Particularly because of these latter illegitimate practices, many contemporary scholars question the viability and reliance on former and current gang or clique members, probationers, and parolees to take part in street work (Klein, 1971; Miller, 1962; Spergel, 1995; Venkatesh,

2000). Spergel (2005), for example, explains that it is not known whether the failure of TWO, along with the local community, city and federal government institutions, to address the gang problem in some coordinated and reasoned sense may have contributed to the increasing cohesion and development of the two Chicago gang organizations. He further details that many leaders of the El Rukns and Gangster Deciples were later prosecuted and convicted of felony crimes that included major drug possession and killings. Years after the program was dismantled, Spergel (1995) would find still that most of the local Woodlawn gang leaders went back to their old practices and most either ended up imprisoned for long periods of time or were killed in inter-gang warring. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, Spergel (1995) notes that the two gangs continued to grow in size, were involved in a number of criminal activities, and spread their influence to other cities around the country.

With the successes of Chicago and Baltimore, it is difficult to argue with the idea that community involvement in the form of street work is effective on some level. Certainly these evaluations found results at the community level as shootings and homicides modestly declined in the two cities and their targeted communities (Skogan et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2009). However, experience also provides us with the knowledge that as much as we believe and adopt the community justice ideals, individual involvement, participation, and even "buy in" is an ongoing problem for these agencies—and not to mention then the overall impact that this may have for these programs on violence reduction.

Accordingly, take as yet another brief example One Vision One Life (OVOL), again the Pittsburgh-based violence prevention initiative that organizes a sort of way of work for the street workers who participated in this study. A recent interim evaluation of this program and its overall effects on violence and homicides in three targeted communities was, according to

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Wilson et al. (2010), partly negated because of and limited by its own implementation efforts. Particularly important here is the fact that beyond most other evaluation results, Wilson et al. (2010: 82) found that street workers in Pittsburgh had an evolving variety of responsibilities that "made it very difficult to manage their workload." In contrast, Chicago and Baltimore's street workers specialized in the response to and management of potentially violent conflicts. Nevertheless, a common thread and rarely mentioned dimension to yet be considered is that of the implementation and individual process of carrying out this type of organization and the fact that it may be dangerous for the street workers working for these programs to reduce levels of community violence. Moreover, this type of organization and work may not only be a dangerous sort of occupation, but, like general social work practice may overtime have the unintended effects of causing potential employee frustration for those street workers seeking a concrete, overt solution to the problems of their community. In turn, as the core, street worker motivation and organizational maintenance of this motivation may be a key concern as programs like OVOL, and even Chicago and Baltimore, work to tweak their approaches toward community violence reduction. And, it is within the confines of these fundamentally related issues that this study on street workers criminal desistance processes contributes.

More specifically, while the efforts of Ceasefire Chicago and Baltimore's Safe Streets Program, and consequently their street work practices, have been effective at this larger community level, there has been little, if any, effort to utilize a theoretical framework such as Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory to empirically examine the individual street worker and what works and does not work in terms of the processes of change from a criminal to a conventional role. Therefore, based on Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory which argues that it is structural turning points coupled with human agency, choice and

chance, for this study I compared the processes that current and ex- or former street workers of

the One Vision One Life (OVOL) violence prevention program took to successfully or

unsuccessfully desist from crime. For the present study, I considered violence prevention as a

type of work and, moreover, I considered the OVOL organizations' role in the lives of current

and former street workers. There are four major research questions addressed in this study, and

they are:

> 1. What individual characteristics and circumstances prior to violence prevention employment contextualize current and ex- or former street workers post-employment outcomes?
>
> 2. What experiences do all street workers have upon their employment into violence prevention work?
>
> 3. What impact do current and ex- or former street workers violence prevention work experiences have on the strategies they adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime?
>
> 4. What long-term experiences do current and ex- or former street workers have that lead to successful reform or, alternatively, to unsuccessfully reform?

In the following Chapter, the present study is further described.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Bruce Berg (2001: 7), qualitative research provides insights into "how humans arrange themselves and their settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so forth." For this dissertation my goal has been to explore the strategies that violence prevention street workers adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime; and moreover, to understand the role that violence prevention work plays in this process. To accomplish the study goals I utilized a qualitative ethnographic research design where I employed multiple methodologies to conduct a comparative analysis of the criminal desistance experiences and processes of street workers currently employed in violence prevention work with former street workers who were released from the same violence prevention work program, One Vision One Life. With the assistance of One Vision One Life management (N = 5), I located 40 current (N = 25) and ex- or former (N = 15) violence prevention street workers working and residing in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region who were willing to share their life experiences. In order to capture the complexities of street workers lives, as well as their own experiences and desistance processes, I employed a multi-method research strategy that included an ethnography of the One Vision One Life violence prevention program, formal and informal in-depth interviews with its street workers, supplemented with survey interviews, and an examination of official records. The use of the ethnographic research design, multiple methodologies and data sources provides a means for examining the same topic through multiple lines of sight, or for triangulating qualitative data (Berg, 2004). This is a common strategy utilized in qualitative research as it increases confidence in the validity and reliability of the analysis process. In the sections to follow, I

explain the research setting along with my data collection strategies and methods, sampling, and analysis procedures.

The Setting

For this study, and in order to examine the processes that current and ex- or former street workers take to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime, I again consider violence prevention as a type of work. More specifically, One Vision One Life (OVOL) is a multi-purpose violence prevention program located in the city of Pittsburgh. While the organization has many integrated components, the basic mission that guides OVOL is to reduce gun crime, gang or clique violence, and to provide alternative opportunities to residents in primarily three targeted high-crime neighborhoods: the North Side, Hill District, and South Side Pittsburgh. Because individuals are greatly affected by their immediate environment(s), the street workers cannot be understood apart from the communities that they both live and work in. Table 1 provides select demographic and social indicators for the City of Pittsburgh and the OVOL targeted neighborhoods (please see Chapter 4 however for a detailed description of the history of Pittsburgh and these neighborhoods).

OVOL's priorities in the North Side, Hill District, and South Pittsburgh neighborhoods intersect with the following motto: "we know that we will have to handle the one shooting (with an injury) or homicide, but we will not tolerate the retaliation that comes afterwards." OVOL focuses its efforts on those persons most at-risk of committing or being a victim of violence in high-crime neighborhoods. This goal is accomplished in three broad ways:

(1) Identifying, training, and developing a team of street workers who are active in and informed about their communities;

(2) Utilizing street-level intelligence to intervene in disputes, turf battles and gang/group incidents before they become shootings and homicides;

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(3) Reaching out to those at-risk for violence with services, jobs and assistance.

OVOL not only works in and with the targeted communities and their residents but also with other external organizations and agencies to provide the people in the targeted high-crime neighborhoods with opportunities to pursue another way of life. In short, OVOL strives to secure external organizational resources, link individuals into these resources, and thus stabilize and change the current violent nature and conditions inhibiting the North Side, Hill District, and South Pittsburgh neighborhoods.

The mission, vision, and goals of OVOL are carried out by a small team of individuals headed by an executive director and his two associate directors. The executive and associate directors at one point in time have led a team of up to as many as 50 employees, including 5 area or neighborhood managers, a few office staff members, and over 40 line-level street workers. Currently, they are in a process of transition and the directors now lead a team of more than 25 employees, including 3 area managers, 1 office staff member, and about 25 street workers. Since the focus of this study is specifically on current and former street workers, a brief description of these individuals and their roles in the OVOL organization is described below.

A street worker is essentially the person in the field, or in the targeted neighborhood on the streets attempting to accomplish the goals of OVOL directly. More specifically, the core of this program is based on its line-level street workers and their willingness to take part in problem-solving with a case load of 10 to 15 clients, homicide incident reviews, as well as public and behind-the-scenes responses to gun, gang or clique, and retaliatory violence. These street workers are long-time residents native to their high crime neighborhoods. Many of these men and women have been incarcerated or are currently on probation or parole for their involvement in the drug trade and other lucrative activities that include various forms of hustling and even

money laundering or fraud. All however have been at one time former gang, clique, or crew members, and are now supposed to be committed to changing and living a positive way of life by helping themselves and others in the communities in which they live.

The OVOL street workers work to do so through OVOL employment. On average, the starting salary for a street worker is typically $500 dollars bi-weekly, or a $1,000 dollars per month for their service. These street workers then, upon employment, work generally in their local neighborhood schools and out in their communities with a case load of at least 10 to 15 at-risk clients.

Study Design

For the present research study, I employed an ethnographic research design and utilized multiple methodologies to explore the OVOL street workers pre- and post-violence prevention employment and criminal desistance experiences, and I compared these with a purposive sample of former OVOL street workers who were released from or quit the violence prevention program. Interviews with current street workers in the process of desistance and former street workers allow for an examination of the similarities and differences in personal and criminal life experiences that account for why some desist from crime and others do not. And along with an ethnography of the OVOL organization and its street workers, these methods and comparisons also account for and contextualize the role that violence prevention work plays in the successful or unsuccessful process of desisting from crime. Similarly, Miller (2005: 4) notes that such qualitative research strategies are purposeful, and particularly for strengthening "internal validity by allowing for more refined analysis and greater contextual specification."

Sampling

The present study originates from a previous National Institute of Justice (NIJ) evaluation of the OVOL violence prevention program (see Wilson, Chermak, and McGarrell, 2010). A collaboration between Michigan State University and Rand Corporation, the purpose of this evaluation study was to better understand the OVOL organizational processes and, in brief, the effects of these processes on violence in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region. My role in the evaluation of OVOL was to conduct the first, chronologically speaking, segment of this evaluation study; that is the ethnographic component of this assessment. Utilizing an ethnographic research design, as the participant-observer I spent four months (May through August 2007), or more than 500 hours, getting to know the programs organizational processes.[13] While there I was able to interact, share experiences, and develop relationships with the OVOL program directors, area managers, their street workers, and many other at-risk youth, young adults, etc. By arriving at the OVOL office each and every weekday in the early morning, I engaged in informal conversations with staff and accepted opportunities to take part in internal and external organizational meetings, the OVOL B-ball (basketball) Academy, violence responses and, in short, night outreach efforts that included spending time with street workers in the evenings out on the streets of their communities, in bars, clubs and other OVOL related risk areas.

During the ethnography gaining access to the OVOL organization and, specifically, to their street workers was a process. Gaining trust and rapport was not easy, and it took time and consistency on my part. In fact, in some of our very first meetings many of the street workers were skeptical of the connection between race (me being Caucasian and they primarily African American) and their reputations or how they would be perceived by the community with me by their side. Some street workers just simply then avoided taking me into their neighborhoods

altogether. However, after our initial meeting with the street workers, one street worker

volunteered to take me on a walk-through of the North Side neighborhood. Thereafter, gaining

access, trust, and some level of rapport was based generally on engaging the street workers in

conversations in the OVOL office or at violence responses. After a month of constantly showing

up at the OVOL office and violence responses, I was offered by others to join them in

community events, etc (please see the above paragraph).

Because of this unique opportunity to take part in the OVOL evaluation process I was

able to develop relationships and a special knowledge of those street workers who are currently

and/or were formerly working for the program. Reimer (1977: 471) claims, "(p)erhaps (then) the

easiest variety of opportunistic research involves taking advantage of familiar social situations."

As such, we, as in me and my fellow Michigan State University and Rand Corporation

colleagues (Wilson et al., 2010), have continued to keep in contact with many of the programs

directors, their management, and the OVOL street workers themselves since the completion of

the ethnography in August of 2007. Here, continuing to build relations through informal

conversations over the phone and/or by email, I was, from 2007 and 2009, personally able to

maintain some basic level of trust and rapport with the OVOL organization and its employees.

The purpose of the present study was again to explore and, thus, better understand the

OVOL street workers criminal desistance processes from their perspectives, and especially how

these processes play out in-terms of violence prevention employment and work experiences.

Berg (2004: 34) suggests that when an investigator is attempting to access highly sensitive or

difficult-to-research study populations that a non-probability sampling technique may prove to

be quite appropriate. Therefore, because of the exploratory nature of this research and the fact

that I utilize a theoretical framework (Laub and Sampson, 2003) to guide the research questions

proposed for this study, I have employed a non-probability sampling technique where I have sampled according to the dictates of the OVOL organization and, specifically, its employment of former gang or clique members as street workers to solve violence related issues in their own communities. In total, I identified a sample of 25 currently employed street workers and 15 ex- or formerly employed street workers living in the Pittsburgh metropolitan region (N = 40).

For the present study, with the special help of Mr. Richard Garland, Director of the OVOL organization, and his management staff (N =5), I began with a purposive sampling strategy to explore street workers past personal and criminal experiences, their work experiences and the potential impact of OVOL on their lives. Upon the completion of the human subjects' forms, and after taking in the review boards' suggestions and gaining final approval of the dissertation study, I thus began sampling street workers by developing a roster from OVOL's employment files. I then asked Mr. Garland and his management staff to assist me in my efforts to get into contact with all current street workers working for the OVOL organization. We identified, contacted, and I met with 25 currently employed OVOL street workers with relatively no problems or issues. If the street worker was willing to participate in the study, I either interviewed him or her the same day or scheduled a date for the interview at the street worker's earliest convenience. The interviews took place in several places around the city of Pittsburgh. Upon talking with or even meeting a street worker in person, I wanted to ensure them of their confidentiality and privacy, and I thus allowed them to pick a location where they felt comfortable and confident that we would remain in private and be undisturbed. The interviews with currently employed street workers took place in a private room at the OVOL office, in a school, restaurant, the Pittsburgh inclines, a local bar, and even out in the targeted community. Prior to the interview I briefed respondents about my study, discussed their rights, and had them

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sign the informed consent form that confirmed their voluntary participation in the study. I was able to gain access to and interview all 25 street workers working for OVOL at the time.

After the completion of the survey instrument and interview, I would ask these currently employed street workers for their assistance with obtaining other interviews with the street workers that either currently or even formerly worked in their North Side, Hill District, or South Pittsburgh communities. I therefore basically utilized a snowball sampling type of technique, or what is known as chain referral types of principles, to ask them (the interviewed street workers) for the location, phone number(s), ways of getting into contact, and even an introduction/re-introduction to any additional street workers on the roster obtained from the OVOL organizations files (Berg, 2007). With the help of these interviewees, as well as OVOL management, I was able to get into contact with and interview 15 formerly employed street workers. This however was a time consuming task that took not just time but also patience on my part.

In terms of former street workers, finding and interviewing and even shadowing these individuals took an unexpected amount of time and effort. The effort was not just all mine; even the OVOL Director, managers, and the current street workers were assisting me in this project by making phone calls and trying to set me up with appointments to meet with some of the former street workers. On occasion when an appointment was actually made, the former street worker would sometimes not show up, and thus another phone call had to be made by the current street workers or OVOL management team to try and set up another meeting time and place. And on top of other reasons (see below), some former street workers, while 15 would eventually meet with me, were just simply skeptical of me, the project and the OVOL organization.

As with the currently employed street workers, I wanted to ensure the formerly employed street workers who participated in this study of their confidentiality and privacy, and I thus allowed them to also pick a location where they felt comfortable and confident that we would remain in private and be undisturbed. The interviews with formerly employed street workers took place in a private room at the University of Pittsburgh, the OVOL office, in their homes, the community, a local bar, a backroom pool hall, and even in the hospital. Again, similar to currently employed street workers, prior to the interview I briefed respondents about my study, discussed their rights, and had them sign the informed consent form that confirmed their voluntary participation in the study. Again, I was unable to interview many former street workers for a number of reasons: some were in jail or prison, others had moved out of the city or even state, and yet others were either deceased, again skeptical of the research study, or could not be contacted or found. I was able to gain access to and interview 15 formerly employed street workers who once worked for the OVOL organization.

Before moving on, it is important to mention here that while briefing the current and former street workers on the overall purpose of this study, interestingly many were sympathetic to the idea of a project that sought a better understanding of their past personal and criminal experiences, along with their OVOL work experiences and what it means/meant to them and their desistance processes. For some street workers they expressed that this experience was a chance for them to tell their side of the story and sort of set the record straight. Others described experiences of a harsh reality of life that they live or lived and this was a chance to have a voice with someone with a sympathetic ear. And yet others even mentioned that the interview process was therapeutic and personally meaningful/helpful. Some street workers even asked if they

could receive their transcribed interview so that they could add it to their own presentations, which they hoped would ultimately help to bolster their resumes in the field of social work.

On top of interviewing the street workers, and to better understand the OVOL organizations beginnings, changes, and challenges from their perspectives, I also surveyed and interviewed the executive director and his two associate directors and area managers upon completing nearly all interviews with the 40 street workers. I approached and treated these interviews the same as I did the street workers interviews, as these directors and area managers are for the most part themselves each, respectfully, former gang, clique, or crew members, drug dealers, and/or hustlers. And they also have special knowledge of the OVOL violence prevention program and the street workers they employ(ed).

Interviews for this study began in July 2009 and were completed in February 2010. The ethnographic portion of this study lasted 13 months. The ethnography began in May 2007 and ended for a brief time with the completion of the ethnographic portion of the OVOL evaluation in August 2007. And upon approval of the present study, I spent 9 more months in the field, or from June 2009 to February 2010. The participants in this study were promised strict confidentiality.[14]

Operationalizing Desistance

According to Laub and Sampson (2003: 21-22) desistance from crime is defined as "the causal process that supports the termination of offending…(d)esistance evolves over time in a process and is best viewed as a process rather than a discrete event." Desistance scholars have used a number of operational approaches, each of which has its own strengths and weaknesses. For example, some scholars look to official criminal records in order to measure desistance through changes in arrest, conviction, and incarceration over time (Le Blanc and Loeber, 1998;

Visher et al., 1991). Although these scholars rely on official records, these records may not be an accurate measure of crime as official data is often a reflection of policies and practices of law enforcement agencies, police biases, and even fraught with potential reporting errors. Other scholars look to a survey type of methodology as a measurement approach to examine self-reported crime (Warr, 1998). Similar to official criminal records, while self-report surveys contain large sample populations and are thus somewhat generalizable and considered reliable, survey methodology is, however, somewhat artificial. This type of methodology then limits the validity of a study's findings. Yet other scholars have used narratives and in-depth interviews to measure desistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001). This methodology offers us a rich, contextual examination of the processes of desistance that is experienced by the participants, and it is done through their own understanding and their own words; however, given that qualitative research studies contain small sample sizes, this approach lacks generalizability and the findings may not go beyond the interview sample.

Taking into consideration the limitations of each operational approach, for the purposes of this study, desistance was examined by using both official and subjective measures. Desistance was first measured as not being arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated from the point of employment with the OVOL organization until the completion of the present study. This definition was operationalized through month-by-month criminal background checks by both the Director of the OVOL organization and through Pennsylvania's Unified Judicial System Web Portal (www.Pacourts.com).

The second criterion for desisting was more subjective. That is, respondents were asked whether they had committed any crimes since their employment with the organization. The

operationalization of desistance then is self-reported in that they had not committed any crimes since their employment with OVOL.

There are both strengths and weaknesses to my sampling approach. First, this study is fundamentally designed to be a comparative approach between currently employed violence prevention street workers and formerly employed street workers. Along with interviewing "desisting" OVOL street worker employees, I also attempted to interview former OVOL street workers who were either released from this type of work because of funding issues, their continued involvement in various illegal activities, or they simply quit for personal reasons. This sampling strategy provides us with a unique view of the successful and sometimes unsuccessful desistance processes that street workers go through while not only employed in this type of work (violence prevention), but also in the course of their lives. Second, I also utilized an ethnographic research design to employ multiple methodologies. Through an ethnography I was able to explore the OVOL organization, its processes, and better understand street workers experiences. Coupled with interviews and official records, it provided a means to triangulate the qualitative data and further increase confidence in both the validity and reliability of the analyses (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

There are also some obvious limitations to my sampling. For this study I used a targeted purposive sampling technique in an effort to identify street workers in the process of desistance and comparing these with former street workers released from violence prevention work for various reasons. The two samples then that were identified for this project are not representative of all violence prevention street workers and, generally speaking, even ex-offenders and/or recidivists. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, and the reliance on convenience or snowball sampling techniques, I was also unable to develop a matched sample for more rigorous

comparisons of the two groups. Therefore, because of the nature of my purposive sampling

strategies, I was unable to make broad generalizations about desistance to some or other

populations.

A final sort of limitation, or rather more of a difficulty in this study, was defining who

exactly was truly a "desister" from crime versus a "persister." According to Laub and Sampson

(2003), desistance is an ongoing process, and one that is for the individual realized overtime.

Therefore while currently employed street workers were initially thought of as "desisters" from

crime, as I immersed myself back into the OVOL organization and began analyzing the data

collected, I found that this initial assumption was too basic or simplistic. Rather, I found that

defining all OVOL employed street workers as "desisters" from crime was, in reality, more

complicated as some street workers began to "zig-zag" back into crime—even while working for

the OVOL organization; and, likewise, some former street workers began to "zig-zag" out of

crime. Thus, they're labels then changed from "desisters" to "persisters" back into crime, or

even "persisters" to "desisters" from crime. Again, desistance is an ongoing process, and

because of the constant overlap and change in street workers desistance processes while in the

field there became a point where once reoccurring themes began to emerge and the data and

themes were nearly saturated that I had to cease collecting new information on the street workers

themselves. At this point in the data collection and analysis phase, the street workers who were

then "desisters" or "persisters" in crime remained within these categories for the purpose of

finishing the present project. However, this was primarily done with the intention of going back

to the OVOL organization and the street workers at a later time period to examine the validity of

these findings and potentially keep up-to-date with the data on those 45 street workers who

participated in this study.

Despite these limitations and difficulties, the advantage of this study is in the in-depth, contextual comparisons between currently employed, "desisting" street workers and former street workers. Overall, the in-depth focus of this study provides some insight into the lives, experiences, challenges, and struggles of street work and street workers own reform processes.

Data Collection and Methods

This study is again based on an ethnographic research design, where I use multiple methodologies to understand street workers pathways in and out of crime and the potential impact OVOL has on their desistance processes. Below, I provide descriptions of these methods, and they include an ethnography of OVOL and its street workers, informal interviews, surveys, formal in-depth, audio-taped interviews, and the collection of official employee and criminal records.

Ethnography

Data collection began in the summer of 2007 with an ethnography of the OVOL violence prevention program. Three years ago, in 2007, I was given the opportunity to take part in an evaluation study of this (One Vision One Life) community-driven violence prevention program, a sort of modified version of Chicago's Operation CeaseFire. The purpose of this initial study was again to better understand the extent to which and how this program has been implemented in three targeted high-crime communities: the North Side, Hill District, and South Pittsburgh. As the ethnographer in this evaluation, I spent nearly 500 hours with the program's two main directors, five area managers, and over forty line-level street workers at the time, where I was invited to attend staff meetings and to participate in community events, violence responses, and, in short, a variety of night outreach efforts including responses to homicides, shooting incidents, and behind-the-scenes mediation efforts to gun, gang or clique, and retaliatory types of issues.

This initial portion of the ethnography lasted from May 2007 to August 2007, or for four months. For my dissertation, and with the permission of my fellow Michigan State University and Rand Corporation colleagues, I was able to continue with the ethnographic design introduced in the evaluation study in order to attempt to take another, more unconventional route to studying and evaluating this community-driven violence prevention program. As such, in June 2009 I would return to Pittsburgh to pick-up where I left off from 2007. I moved into an apartment on Centre Avenue in the Oakland area of Pittsburgh, which bordered one of OVOL's targeted communities, the Hill District. I would later move again to border another of OVOL's targeted communities in South Pittsburgh, Bellshoover and St. Claire Village. This time however, after the original OVOL evaluation study, I would spend 9 months, or from June 2009 to February 2010, living in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area; and, in all, I would spend more than a year (13 months) in Pittsburgh conducting the ethnographic portion of this study.

The 2009 to 2010 portion of the ethnography allowed me some time to get re-acquainted with the OVOL organization and its structure, as well as re-develop, or in some cases develop, some rapport with the directors, managers, and both new and old street workers. I would arrive at the OVOL organizations office or an OVOL related activity nearly each-and-every weekday, and some weekend days. In essence, I would interweave looking, listening, watching and asking (Loftland and Loftland, 1995). While immersing myself within OVOL, I informally interviewed the directors and managers about their experiences with the street workers, and the street workers about their experiences with the OVOL organization and with other street workers. I would also shadow several currently employed street workers and a few ex- or former street workers. In addition to my previous ethnographic work, I spent well over 1,000 more hours, or as much as 1,300 more hours, with the OVOL organization; and, in total, nearly 1,800 hours or more

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immersed in the OVOL violence prevention program. My data involved type-written field notes

of my observations and conversations with the directors, managers, street workers and some of

their caseload clients and community partners (school officials, police, etc.).

Survey and In-Depth Interviews

The survey and in-depth interview began for this study as separate entities in the second,

2009 to 2010, opportunity with the OVOL organization. Initially upon contact with a street

worker I would schedule and set up a meeting for a general description and ideally a first survey

interview. After this interview, which pertained mainly to demographic and basic neighborhood,

family, criminal history, and OVOL experiences, I would go to the local library or my rented

apartment in Pittsburgh to write out a sort of narrative of our discussion that day. During the

interview discussion I would jot short notes alongside the questions asked in the survey. Once

the initial survey interview was over, I would ask the participant to schedule another meeting for

a more in-depth audio-taped interview.

As I got more acquainted with the research questions and the survey and in-depth

interview techniques I was able to effectively conduct these two, originally separate interviews in

one scheduled time frame. These adjusted interviews, depending on the person and the rapport,

would last anywhere from 1 ½ hours to as much as 4 and even 5 hours; and sometimes the

interviews rolled over into a shadowing experience, extending the original 2007 ethnographic

experience. In addition, while working with survey and audio-taped interviews, I was also able

to come back many times to street workers for further clarification and elaboration of the gaps in

my research.

The survey and interview guide used for this study were a modified version of

Leverentz's (2006) study, *People, Places, and Things: The Social Process of Reentry for Female*

Ex-Offenders, Maidment's (2006) study, *Doing Time on the Outside: Deconstructing the Benevolent Community*, O'Brien's (2001) study, *Making it in the Free World: Women in Transition from Prison*, Maruna's (2001) *Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives*, and Cobbina's (2008) proposed study, *From Prison to Home: Women's Pathways In and Out of Crime*. However, I also altered and added some questions to get at and better understand the OVOL street worker's past personal, criminal, and OVOL experiences. More specifically, these questions included a description of their neighborhood of origin, family background in the neighborhood and more personally what it meant for them to live there. I would also probe the respondent for some of the potential norms and issues, socially or otherwise, he or she encountered living in that primary neighborhood. I also ventured into their process of interest into violence prevention work, their duties in this type of work, and their successes and challenges. I also asked them to consider what, if any, impact OVOL has had on their lives and potential criminal desistance process. And, whether or if criminal desistance was the case or even a goal of the street worker's. Finally, I asked about the larger picture or life experiences and potential guidance that extended beyond, and maybe even before, OVOL that aided or inhibited the potential desistance processes that either the present street workers themselves encounter and, more broadly, those others falling under the past cohorts of street workers.

The survey and interview guide was therefore semi-structured and contained many open-ended questions in order to explore street workers life experiences, their various pathways, and, ultimately, their successful and/or unsuccessful desistance processes (see Appendix A). My data involved jotted notes and audio-taped or recorded interviews that were transcribed verbatim. I would also record other observations, conversations, and my own personal reflections as the

study progressed. This overall ethnographic research design and the techniques involved thus far in this multi-methodological approach provided me with a unique opportunity to not only examine the street worker's life experiences, the contexts in which they took place and the circumstances of these events, but it was also an opportunity to learn from and begin to understand the meanings of these events for the street worker (Anderson, 1990).

Official Records

Included in the ethnographic research design proposed for this study, I was also able to obtain access to individual OVOL employee files as well as their official criminal records. Only with the consent of the participants (both street workers and OVOL managers) in the present study did Mr. Richard Garland grant me access to currently employed street worker and manager files, as well as former street worker and manager files, in which I used more as a reliability check on the information provided during the individual interviews. In these files I was provided with demographic information that included age, race, gender, education, marital status, etc. I was also able to obtain general OVOL application and start dates, some previous employment experience, and, at times, departure or release dates from OVOL employment.

Included in these files was information regarding street workers and managers criminal histories. State, as well as some Federal, background checks were conducted by the OVOL organization prior to violence prevention employment. I would also utilize the Pennsylvania Unified Judicial System Web Portal, a source provided to me by an OVOL manager, to gather and check information pertaining to the date of arrest, crime(s) committed or charged for, severity of offense, and, at times, the disposition of the offense. Much similar to the official employment records, I utilized these initial background checks as a reliability check on the information provided during the interview(s).

Data Analysis

The data for this study were analyzed inductively for emerging patterns as to how both currently employed and ex- or former street workers interpreted and defined their lives. To achieve this, I employed Strauss' (1987) modified grounded theory approach where I searched for deviant ideas and cases in the data. And to become more familiar with the data, I interacted with and manually coded my data. This approach allowed me to become more intimate with the data and it facilitated a process of developing key concepts and emergent themes.

To begin the analyses, I simply started by open coding. According to Strauss (1987), this is a process of reading through the data and searching for repeated ideas and emerging concepts. As these concepts became more apparent, and thus were being repeated throughout the cases, I separated my data by the research questions proposed for this study and I merged the cases that fit the specific themes I was finding for these questions accordingly. For example, under the first research question, "(w)hat individual characteristics and circumstances prior to violence prevention employment contextualize street workers employment outcomes," I included the following: neighborhood description and personal experiences (in the neighborhood growing up), family background, education, and employment. I also included military and marriage and family experiences, and the processes into and outcomes of criminal activity (theft/stealing, drugs, prison history, and experiences with probation, parole, supervised release, etc) and the successful or unsuccessful desistance patterns.

As for the verbatim transcriptions, the respondents narratives usually fit into multiple categories, and thus these narrative points were duplicated. Also, to facilitate the comparisons between current and former street workers I separated these two main categories into separate data files and worked to look for similarities and differences in their thematic patterns. I did so

by examining each type of data file separately and intensely. Thereafter, I would make the systematic comparisons between the two sample groups and look for distinct and overlapping themes.

I would finalize my data analysis by working to refine my most basic themes and probe through the respondent's descriptions and their explanations. I would then try to make theoretical sense of these relationships and my data. For validity purposes, I not only tried to ensure that the development of concepts and the illustrations that accompanied them were common patterns that were typified by the overall OVOL street workers who participated in this study, but I also tried to pay special attention to the deviant cases and alternative patterns. While the findings for this study are not generalizable, this study provides some important insight into street workers understanding of their own life events, their violence prevention work experiences, and what it means to them or how these larger events may have contributed to their onset, maintenance, and successful or unsuccessful desistance processes from offending.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXT: PITTSBURGH'S HISTORY, CULTURE, AND THE STREET WORKERS UNDERSTANDING

The main purpose of this dissertation project is to examine the role that violence prevention work plays in street workers own criminal desistance processes. However, prior to discussing violence prevention work and its role in street workers criminal desistance processes, it is essential to understand street workers initiation into crime as these past experiences can shape their transition out of crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003). In particular, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that in any study of offending patterns over time one cannot ignore the structural contexts, social history, and the individual's situation and social/personal will. Laub and Sampson (2003) therefore believe that both the social environment and the individual are influenced by the interaction of structure and choice. They also argue that as a fundamental tenant of their theory, both persistence in and desistance from crime can be understood within the same theoretical framework, or are essentially 'two sides of the same coin' (for a more detailed description, please see Chapter 2). In this chapter, I consider the social context, history, and the street workers general situation as a part of a recipe for understanding better the life experiences and processes violence prevention street workers face. In the following chapter (Chapter 5), I add on to this recipe by examining specifically the factors impacting street workers initiation into and continuation of crime.

Before doing so however, in this chapter I again provide a description of the historical and cultural background of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in order to better understand the social atmosphere of the region and times that contextualize street workers life experiences. I also contextualize this background with some of the street workers own understanding and

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experiences growing up and living in the city of Pittsburgh. Furthermore, my intention is to

begin to turn the attention over to 45 current and former street workers and, along with the

historical and cultural background of Pittsburgh, to describe them in terms of their past personal

circumstances and criminal experiences. As you will see after a summary description of

Pittsburgh's historical and cultural background in this chapter, in analyzing the data, I discovered

(detailed in Chapter 5) distinct patterns as they relate to street workers pathways to drug

involvement and non-drug related crimes.

Pittsburgh: The "End" of the Village

Pittsburgh has a long and great history, as it has been a flourishing city since even before

the beginning of its industrial era (around the 1890's). A relatively small city compared to a

New York City, Chicago, or even a Detroit at the time, Pittsburgh's industrialists actually were

urging immigrants and Blacks from the South during the years leading up to and after World

War I to come to work for them in their factories and mills. For Blacks specifically, they were

promised great relief from the earlier threats of violence, including hangings, castrations, and the

murders that followed the initiation of the Jim Crow Laws, and later segregation laws (Evans,

1943). Historically then, many Black Americans were attempting to escape the South in search

of freedom and prosperity; many of which included the One Vision One Life (OVOL) street

workers own great-grandparents and grandparents, as well as some mothers, fathers, and other

family members who migrated over time to the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

Table 2 provides a breakdown of both current and former OVOL street worker's and their

management's basic demographic characteristics. In particular, in Table 2, we see that there is a

noticeably diverse range between the ages of all of the OVOL street workers and their upper-

managers. In fact, over one third (N = 18) of the total sample grew up in Pittsburgh

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neighborhoods during the 1950's, 1960's, and into the 1970's (elder street workers,

respectively). And on the other hand the other two-thirds (N = 27) of the street workers grew up

throughout the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's (youngest of street workers, respectively).[15] The

majority of the street workers who participated in this study were primarily Black (88%) males

(88%) with an education equivalent to a high school degree or higher (94%). In this and in the

following sections I highlight the social fiber of the era(s) in which these individual street

workers grew up in and I also contextualize this with their own accounts and experiences

growing up and living in Pittsburgh. Following this, in Chapter 5, I provide the reader with a

look at the street workers specific pathways into drug involvement and non-drug related crime.

Accordingly, by the 1950's Pittsburgh had reached its population peak of 676,806

residents (Census, 2006). Of the sample of 45 street workers, 18 (currently employed = 10,

formerly employed = 5, upper management = 3) experienced growing up within and throughout

this post-World War II era. Some were nearly teenagers by the early 1960's, but had learned

and/or remembered a little bit about the history of Pittsburgh's migration into local

neighborhoods. For example, Frederick, a 61 year-old current street worker, explains:

> African American families, they migrated up North where they felt as though there was
> an opportunity for a better way of life…During the great migration a majority of African
> American families settled in the Hill District. And, you know, their families had children,
> and their children moved to the North Side, to Homewood, to Wilkinsburg, to the South
> Side and the West End...They spread out.

> A lot of these root families migrated through Manchester on the North Side, where I'm
> from. Ok, they married into other families and they relocated like to the different areas,
> like North View, Central North Side, to East Ohio Street, to Spring Hill, to a lot of
> different areas on the North Side. They moved to these areas, had babies, and their babies
> had an allegiance to the neighborhood that they were in. So, like, that's how the
> migration (for African American families) began.

Indeed, this sort of great migration into the Hill District had been going on even before the turn

of the Century with Jewish immigrants first, followed by Italians, Syrians, the Greeks, the Poles,

and then by the 1940's African Americans (80%) were the heavy majority on the Hill (Miles, 1984).[16]

The larger immigration to Pittsburgh and the specific migration patterns in and out of the Hill District and North Side, of which Frederick alludes to above, resembles Shaw and McKay's (1942) conception of the patterns of neighborhood movement, or otherwise known more formally as their concentric zone theory. In fact, as Pittsburgh and the earliest of the immigrants (Jewish, Italians, etc.) prospered in the decades leading up to World War II, many ended up slowly uprooting themselves, moving out of their old neighborhoods and leaving behind houses and their storefronts (Haynes, 2008). The reasons of which do vary, but in the early-to-mid 1900's one ever-apparent issue was not only to escape the inner-city's industrial pollution, but also to head for new and more prosperous jobs and settings that were largely based and centered around the economic boom of the steel industry in Pittsburgh at the time. Accompanying this continuous flight and abandonment that took place over the next few decades (again since the early-quarter of the 20th Century mark), many of the lower-income African Americans by the mid-1940's were for the most part confronted with decaying housing and living conditions. Portions of the Hill District were by this time period already labeled "the slums" or "ghetto" (Hayes, 2008).

In 1943 a city council member by the name of George Evans wrote that "…approximately 90 percent of the buildings in the area are sub-standard and have long out lived their usefulness, and so there would be no social loss if they were all destroyed" (Evans, 1943). And, in fact around 1955 a new project was born. The idea was based around "slum clearance;" and thus along with a new Renaissance period already underway to clear Pittsburgh's heavy pollution problem, a redevelopment plan was hatched to clear the slums of the lower Hill

District (Hayes, 2008). This however was a politically conscious decision to essentially extend

the downtown area of Pittsburgh Eastward; the city's government desired more room for parking

and a chance to expand their potential cultural and entertainment industry (Lawrence, 1956).

Ramone, a current street worker in his 60's, explains in his own words what he felt happened to

his neighborhood:

> I lived in the middle of the Hill. Back then there was a lower Hill that was eventually taken by the developers of the Civic Arena and that sort of thing that displaced us. And when they displaced all of those people, which was about 8,200 or more individuals, 200 to 300 businesses, black businesses, ethnic businesses, and a few companies, and they didn't give them any governmental assistance; they just displaced them. They imminent domained their businesses, homes, everything; and they gave them what they thought was the value and told them to get out. They tore all of that up, all the way down to Fulton Street to Center and Crawford, which now we call Freedom Corner.[17]

In fact, it was speculated that at an approximated cost of more than $100,000,000 dollars, the

City (paid for by mostly private funders) bulldozed and built on over 80 blocks, or 105 acres of

land, and displaced over 8,000 (White = 2,000, Black = 6,000) local residents (Lawrence, 1956).

Looking back, Arial, a 62 year-old former street worker, speaks briefly of her

neighborhood before this project:

> …our community flourished (Hill District). Our community doesn't flourish now, but right at Center and Belmont, there used to be "Leroy's Fish Market;" all Center Avenue was flourishing; shoe stores, "Five and Dimes," bars, pool rooms, the meat market, the grocery store, the barber shop, everything. People would come from all over to hear famous jazz bands; it was crackin' until they started tearing everything down and putting people wherever the hell they wanted to; and without any "real" government assistance mind you.

Arial and Ramone's disappointment with the reconstruction of the Hill District is shared by

most, if not all, of the elder street workers who could remember growing up in that era. But

some explained that this incident was a part of a larger process that they and their families were

going through and experiencing with the sort of social atmosphere of the times.

Jonathan, a 51 year-old current street worker, who works in the Hill District to this day, explains this era:

> I am not sure whether you're aware of the social fiber in the 1960's, the Civil Rights, a lot of violence, a lot of marches for equalities, and so forth. So I grew up in a low income area during that era. My father was unemployed; not so much by choice, but back in that era it became difficult for a Black male to find employment. A Black female could get a job quicker. My mother did some house-keeping, along with my grandmother…She (his mother) was the primary financial person in the house.

In terms of the inequalities and some violence that Jonathan witnessed as a youth specifically, he continues to explain:

> …coming from an era and an area where I came from, you know, I would see my mother told to get to the back of the bus; I would see a cop spray my mother down with a hose; you know, a cop cut a dog loose on my dad. And, you know they came into our communities calling us niggers and so forth.

As a city, Pittsburgh was generally segregated. By the 1960's, the political and social atmosphere for Blacks were based around securing educational and employment opportunities, as well as better living conditions (Hayes, 2008). Civil Rights activists began pushing for the desegregation of the city's schools and the need for more Black teachers in these schools. The expectations were raised by the Voting Rights Act (1964) and the Civil Rights Act (1965); however, Blacks were still frustrated because some labor and trade unions continued to shut them out (Hayes, 2008). And while there had been some political efforts to develop economic opportunity programs, these jobs did not pay the good union wages of which one could live on and raise a family with. On top of this, without decent or well-paying jobs, many African Americans were not fortunate enough to be as prosperous as others and they were essentially stuck in their deteriorating neighborhoods. Not only then could many not afford to leave, but also Federal welfare and housing programs specifically, which were developed to help those in low-income, "slum" areas, were unable to keep up with the demands.

Pittsburgh by the mid-1960's was again clearly a segregated city; but still, with the passage of the Voting Rights Act and Civil Rights Act, respectively, it seems as if there was at least some promise and an expectation for change. Moreover, for these elder street workers, their community and family life, despite some of the structural, political, and economic constraints, were generally cherished at this time in Pittsburgh's history. In fact many of the elder street workers reminisce about the old days where families and communities mattered, and morals, values, and respect for elders were cherished. Even while the family may have been at some political, social, economic, or even personal disadvantage at the time, in the eyes of the elder street workers there was still some concern for the structure of the home life and family and thus they had something to cherish and fight for. Shaun is a current street worker in his mid-fifties, and he explains:

> Well, you know, in our neighborhood we had family, friends, you know, theater, things that we knew, that were taught as a part of our lifestyle or culture. You know, there was never anything that was any different than any place else. It may have been on a lower scale socially and economically, but personally it was our own private kingdom. We were like, "Hey, this is life to us and we're having fun," and we maintained it as we knew it to be, even if we had to protest or whatever.

> I'm talking about it from the day I remember until now. We didn't…or never considered ourselves poor because we didn't know what rich was or what poor was. It was like, ok, this is like how we lived. And we didn't look at ourselves as being poor and disenfranchised; this was just our lifestyle.

> So it was a lower class area that I lived in; no gangs back then. I mean compared to a Fox Chapel up there in St. Claire where they have big lavish homes, you know, our home to us was our castle. I mean it kept us together, it gave us great structure, moral values, it taught us the purpose of life. For us, you know, back in the late 50's and 60's when I was born, we had what's called a coal furnace; that's how we heated our house. What happened was a guy would come with a truck full of coal, and he would dump it in front of our house and we would, five sons, shovel the coal to the basement; we would go out and get wood and paper and we would come back to make a fire to keep the house warm.

> That's how life was, and it was so adorable because we was just having fun. We was making a fire and making the house warm, you know, we did things together.

Leon, a 48 year old former Hill District street worker similarly explains:

> I grew up in the Hill District. I lived with my mom, my grandmother, and I lived with three uncles all in one house. Basically, I have fond memories of it. My mom, she worked all of her life, and my uncles were older and they worked. And, my grandmother, she was like the matriarch of the family and everything like that. So, I have high reverence for her, and also my mom because she showed me a good work ethic; and so did my uncles.
>
> So, I basically had everything. Basically, Christmas's I had good experiences. They taught me to basically believe in yourself and work hard; you know you can accomplish things if you put your mind into it. And, my mom, she was working for an insurance company; at that time she worked her way up; she was there for like 30 years. And one of my uncles worked for the State, for the public assistance office; and my other uncle was a carpenter. Then, I had another uncle, the same age as me growing up; so, we were like twins. So, everybody thought we were brothers, and I was younger than him, and he was my uncle.
>
> The neighborhood back then was actually..everybody knew..I lived on Ronald Street, and at that time it was a close Street. I remember knowing everybody on the Street. I remember everybody knew everybody. If I got in trouble or something, everybody would know and tell my grandmother, my uncles, and my mom and everything like that. So, actually it was close.

This was then (1950's to mid-1960's) considered by some street workers as an era where the "village" concept may have still existed for them and many other African American families who found themselves in Pittsburgh's inner-city neighborhoods. Based around a more polite level of respect, Vernon, a 59 year-old former North Side street worker, points out that, "when I was growing up we would have to do the little things like take off your hat when you went into someone's house or even into a business building, a place of work; it was disrespectful to wear your hat indoors, and it's just not like that no more."

Frederick, a 61 year old current street worker, explains this village concept and his understanding of its slow demise.

> You know, the years that I spent on the North Side were the last remnants of the village. The village concept where you still had parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles you know what I'm saying; they were close nit and they would give you good orderly direction. Or they would discipline you to the point where you knew exactly what they were talking about. It was nothing for an elder in the community who saw you do something, or heard

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you say something that was disrespectful and out of line… it was nothing for them to chastise you, call your parents, and let your parents know what you did. And when you got home you got chastised again.

So, those were the last..from the late 1950's to the mid-1960's, all the times up to the riots, them were the last years of the village concept.

I then asked Frederick to continue, and to try to explain a bit more about what happened to this village concept.

What happened? The riots happened. You know what I'm saying, social outrage came into play where Civil Rights was an issue, the Vietnam War was an issue, and you know, rebellion was the soup of the day.

That is to say that while these elder street workers were young, or by now generally in their early-to-mid teenage years, the Vietnam War was beginning. Thus, the war began eating into the broader promises and expectations found in the Voting Rights and Civil Rights movements, slowing the sort of processes of change for Pittsburgh specifically, despite the aforementioned optimism. And not long after the war began, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a center figure of the Civil Rights movement and a representative of African Americans and their frustrations, was shot dead on April 4th, 1968. For Pittsburgh, like other cities (Detroit, Los Angeles, Oakland, etc.), the people's patience wore thin and the "Pittsburgh riots" erupted on April 5th, 1968, and would last for seven days, or until April 12th, 1968 (Miles, 1984). For the elder street workers growing up at the time, White flight and the death of Dr. King, coupled with the rioting, accumulated into a key turning point for them and their communities.

After Dr. King's assassination and the rioting slowed to a halt, and when all was said and done so-to-speak, it was estimated that there was over $620,000 dollars in property damage that accompanied 926 arrests and one death (Miles, 1984). But none of this damage could begin to account for what was already well under way in Pittsburgh. That is, in accordance with what was going on in the mid-1960's (macro-social patterns of residential inequality and mobility),

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coupled with the death of Dr. King and the rioting, Pittsburgh was generally generating what

appeared to be its own sort of ecological concentration of the truly disadvantaged as some of the

Black community may have began experiencing on some level a form of what street workers

alluded to as social isolation (Sampson and Wilson, 1995).

Pittsburgh: Relative Social Disorder and Decline

Throughout the 1940's Pittsburgh's population grew steadily, and it peaked in the 1950's.

Since the 1960's, after the riots, Pittsburgh's population rate has been on a steady, backward

decline. According to the Census (2006), from 1960 (604,332) to 1970 (520,117) Pittsburgh's

population declined more than thirteen percent. With this, businesses continued to close-up and

people continued to move out of the city, only adding to the community dynamics and even to

the potential symbols or signs of disorder (Skogan, 1990).

More specifically, after the riots, the neighborhood dynamics again began evolving and

changing on the Hill and the North Side according to Nicholas, a current street worker in his

60's.

> The businesses were gone, burned up; the people that could moved out. I mean there
> were still some bars and clubs still up there, but the homes and houses were boarded up
> and all of that. And the drugs, like, the serious drugs, like heroin, were starting to get big
> in the 70's. It was like we were confronted with the social ills that society had to offer.

The social ills of which Nicholas speaks of, or at least some of the apparent signs of them, were

also experienced by other elder street workers. For example, Leon, a 47 year-old former street

worker, explains some of the disorder that he witnessed or was confronted with.

> At that particular time, when I was young and growing up there (Hill District), well, I
> seen a lot of violence; not through my family, but just growing up on the Hill, I seen a lot
> of just despair in a lot of different ways. What I mean about that was there were a lot of
> dysfunctional people, which I didn't realize until later on in my life. Lots of drugs,
> alcohol, people dysfunctional in the aspect of not wanting anything out of life at that
> particular time but to utilize the system in a lot of different ways.

But I have seen a lot of dysfunctional people growing up in the 1960's and 1970's especially. Alcohol, it was rampant. Crime was rampant, and drugs… everybody knew that this is gonna be…this is what your life is gonna be. So, I really seen that at an early age. I've seen a lot of violence. You know, I mean I seen women get beat up by their husbands and boyfriends and it was no problem. The police didn't even do nothing at that time. They would just throw them in the drunk tank and say "they'll cool off, or they deserved it," or something like that. That was the attitude back then because domestic violence wasn't even a thing or a big issue at that particular time.

Vernon, a former street worker in his late 50's, points out similar sights while growing up on the North Side during the same era.

One thing that was significant for me Joe was that I grew up across the street from a bar down here (North Side). It used to be called the Blue Ball, and then it was changed to the Hickory Wind. And as a child I saw some real horrific stuff happen. I mean I didn't watch this but a cousin stabbed another cousin to death in the bar. I saw a guy challenge his stepdad out, and he was in front of our house, and he shot the stepdad. I saw people scurrying, fighting, knocking women out and all of that.

Both Vernon's and Leon's accounts, as well as Nicholas', are in-line with a number of the other eighteen elder street workers observations of aspects and occurrences of what Skogan (1990) describes as social incivility and disorder (deteriorating housing, numerous bars, fighting, public drunkenness, panhandlers, visible drug use, uncollected trash, rowdy teens, etc.). Compared to prior decades (1950's and 1960's), by the 1970's, aggravated assault rates and homicide rates (approximately 63 homicides) in Pittsburgh had increased by as much as 15 to 20 percent (Pittsburgh Police Bureau, 2006).

What was happening, according to Arial, again a former street worker, was that there was not only White flight however during this era after the riots, but that there were also a population of African Americans who themselves took the opportunity to move out of their inner-city community's.

But now, you see, integration was the worst thing that happened to Black people; it was the worst because it destroyed our communities. It now allowed us to assimilate into other communities, which depleted our community of the role models, of the people who made it. The people who made it lived two doors down from a young man who wanted to

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be a lawyer and his mother was on welfare. But, your role model lived right up the street, and you probably cut his grass. And then you probably just started talking to Judge Payne.

"Judge Payne, how did you get to be a Judge? I want to go to law school." And the Judge would say, "Well, you need to come over, I've got some books that I think you need to look at." But now our kids don't have that. That was a viable human resource that we don't have no more.

Before, ok, the Steelers for example; the Steelers lived all around our neighborhood. I'm serious; I lived right around the corner from Roberto Clemente. But now, they are way out in gated communities. When you run from your community you deplete it of its natural resources and human people who have made it. So, I don't run from my community… But our community flourished when we were one. But after the riots when we really splintered off, our community fell apart. And now you look at our communities and they are desolate; there's nothing there but the projects, and now project minded people…

Arial's own account of Pittsburgh and specifically what she now looks back upon and thus sees herself witnessing in her community (Hill District) is generally in-line with some of Sampson and his colleagues work on the reasons for a community's incapacity to exercise informal social control (Sampson, 1986; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson et al., 1997).

First, what the street workers may have been personally witnessing in Pittsburgh and their communities over the last couple of decades (1950's and 1960's) resembles in some general sense the presence of Sampson (1986) and Sampson and Groves (1989) revival of the community-level explanation for social disorganization. That is, extending Shaw and McKay's (1942) concentric zone theory, they capture this fundamental idea in their social disorganization theory that crime in inner-cities is higher because of poverty, urbanism, heterogeneity, mobility, as well as a continuing decline in resident's active involvement in community organizations and the lack of supervision of teenage peer groups (Sampson and Groves, 1989). Therefore, the ability to exercise informal social controls is made more difficult when community mentors, or

the local Judge, or those others "who have made it" according to Arial, are no longer readily available to the local community and its up-and-coming youthful onlookers.

In terms of the elder street workers themselves by the 1970's, they were reaching adulthood. Throughout the 1970's, most elder street workers were in their early-to-mid 20's, and some even nearing their 30's. On top of this, the other two-thirds (N = 27), or the youngest of street workers, were by now also beginning to grow up as youth throughout the mid-1970's and into the 1980's and 1990's as third, and sometimes even fourth, generation Pittsburghers. But as far as the elder street workers specifically, these individuals were however to become a part of the next generation of role models in their communities now.

Therefore, while Arial points out that there has been some sort of depletion in human capital that she see's now happened within her community as she looks back during our interview, more personally, the larger group of elder street workers were then beginning to confront new responsibilities that included having their own children, families, and/or jobs. And subsequently, along with these increasing responsibilities, the way to go about raising a family and/or of acquiring work was for the elder street workers to generally follow in the footsteps of the past generation(s). Thus, in terms of a family for example, this meant finding or retaining steady work in order to feed and clothe the family and to pay the bills on time.

The culture however of Pittsburgh, and of the lower-income communities specifically here at this time during the elder street workers lives in the 1970's seemed to have helped to shape their future circumstances. And that is to say that, first, in the 1970's the steel mills started closing down all along the Monongahela River valley surrounding Pittsburgh. More than 30,000 plus jobs were lost, further devastating the local economy and even some elder street workers that relied on such mill work and even other jobs for steady wages (Tiffany, 1988). Secondly,

harder drugs like cocaine and especially heroin started hitting the streets. Heroin was specifically introduced in cities across the United States, including Pittsburgh in 1970. In fact, by 1970 it has been estimated that there were 706,000 heroin users in the United States (Barnes and Folsom, 2007). But, by 1974, the number of heroin users doubled (1,420,000), spawning a near drug epidemic (Barnes and Folsom, 2007). For the elder street workers then with steady employment generally waning in a now tough economy, this meant general strain and stress and many times taking the best opportunity available to them, a topic discussed in greater detail below.

The 1970's for Pittsburgh then, after the riots stopped, was a time of change. It was clear that with the population decline (more than 13%), residential stability and physical deterioration was an ongoing issue for the city. In places like the Hill District and even portions of the North Side, South Side, and other neighborhoods, of which Nicholas, Leon, Vernon, Arial, Frederick and others are native to and speak of above, poverty stifled resident's mobility (Hayes, 2008). The steel industry began imploding, causing mill closures and massive layoffs, affecting Pittsburgh and its general economy. More than 30,000 jobs were lost. On top of this, truly addictive drugs like heroin specifically were also introduced in Pittsburgh and cities across the United States. The Hill District, pockets of the North Side, South Side, and even other neighborhoods where many of the elder street workers had nearly grown up by this time were plagued with a multitude of political, economic, social, and now even personal issues. Interestingly however, what about the youngest of street workers who were just beginning their lives in these neighborhoods by the 1970's, and thus growing up throughout primarily the 1980's and 1990's? What, with the changing economy, pervasive affects that drugs and incarceration

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were having on their communities and even the elder street workers own lives by this time, were the youngest of street workers own situations and experiences?

Pittsburgh: A New Generation Confronts the Crack Cocaine Era

After the steel industry began to collapse in the 1970's, and after they fully collapsed by the 1980's, the city of Pittsburgh's focus and planning shifted to building a new economic base, one that centered on education, tourism, and services such as health care, medicine, and robotic technology. During this time of social transformation, the elder street workers (N = 18) were reaching their early-to-mid or even late 30's. And the other two-thirds of the street workers (N = 27) were now beginning to grow up again as third, and sometimes even fourth, generation Pittsburghers. The "great migration" of which Frederick spoke of earlier had by now passed, and a generation of Black or African American families had by now settled into the Hill District, North Side, South Side, and even other neighborhoods (such as Homewood, Garfield, etc.) surrounding the Pittsburgh metropolitan area.

Up to this point, many of these families, or members of the family, however had already seen and experienced racial inequalities that were linked with conscious political decisions like that of geographically isolating minorities, redeveloping land that would displace nearly 6,000 African Americans and 2,000 other residents, as well as experiences of police brutality, abuse, and a blatant disregard for minority people's and women's rights (Lawrence, 1956). These occurrences, along with the massive movement of jobs out of the inner-city and the introduction of drugs have in some aspects then not only isolated minorities in their own neighborhoods, but also helped to nurture an already developing oppositional culture (Anderson, 1999; Sampson and Wilson, 1990). Fundamentally, the Hill District and portions of the North Side and South Side neighborhoods, where again many of the elder and now youngest of street workers were/are

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growing up, have by now been marked by extreme poverty and at least some level of social isolation and disorganization (Shaw and McKay, 1942; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Wilson, 1990).

Even so, Pittsburgh continued to transition throughout the 1980's and 1990's to a new economic base. The city continued to prosper in its abilities to bring in new large multinational corporate organizations and business. Such endeavors have led to the provision of means to begin projects of beautification, and, maybe more importantly, for the city to continue prospering by clearing space for such large organizations and their employees to settle into; even going as far as creating neighborhood housing mandates by the 1990's in order to continue to redevelop segments of the local neighborhoods (see the Mexican War Streets on the North Side for an example of this degentrification process). Frederick, again an elder street worker, has seen a problem with this:

> You see, a part of the problem with our system is it's economically driven. And as far as the North Side is concerned, you have a lot of renovations that have been going on as far as the city building buildings, but you got no renovation when it comes to building people. And that's in a lot of the communities around here, like what they did with the Hill (in the 1950's and 1960's). I'm saying, you have a lot of construction, a lot of buildings going up, but none of the residents are privy to the jobs that are going on on the North Side. I find this troubling, you know. And that's the city of Pittsburgh as a whole; I mean you find a lot of contracts being given to out-of-state contractors, and minority businesses not being able to get a tow-hold or the opportunity to make some wages. We know that a job does a lot of things besides help financially, or by putting food on the table, paying the bills, it also raises self-esteem. And there is a lot of people that need their self-esteem and their worth in order to continue to rise. But they are never given an opportunity and, as an end result, they go straight to survival mode.
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> You know what I am saying? Survival mode is the code of the jungle. You know, I'm saying like, to use Malcolm's word, "by any means necessary." I'm gonna do whatever it is I need to do to survive. Which means I'm gonna do whatever I need to do to put food in my children's mouths, pay my bills or whatever. And often times, the things that are being done are illegal.

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That is, while Pittsburgh's businesses and infrastructure were, and accordingly quite still are, continuing to flourish, there remain some real structural and human-related issues.

In fact, the population growth rate in the city of Pittsburgh continued to decline dramatically from 1970 to 2000. More specifically, from 1970 to 1980 (423,938) the population growth rate in the city of Pittsburgh dropped by 18.5 percent, followed by 12.8 percent from 1980 to 1990 (369,879), and again 9.5 percent from 1990 to 2000 (334,563) (Census, 2006). On top of this, and as Pittsburgh again by the 1980's was in the beginning processes of shifting to its new economic base, there again in recent history became little opportunity for steady profitable employment. With this new economic shift, the low-wage service industry that accompanied the shift became the most popular means for providing employment then for those families and children in need of employment and/or of some form of support. Thus, like past history, these jobs were just not likely to pay the livable wages necessary to provide the most essential support. And so, from 1970 (520,117) then to 2000 (334,563), Pittsburgh's population had nearly been severed in half (Census, 2006). But also, or at the same time, there were many inner-city residents who lacked not only financial stability but employment that could promote personal self-esteem and general well-being according to Frederick, as well as scholars like William Julius Wilson (1995), Elijah Anderson (1999), John Laub and Robert Sampson (2003), and so on.

As for the youngest of street workers, many attempted to explain in our conversations with one another during our interviews what growing up in their communities during their era (1980's through 1990's) was like. For example Maurice, one of the 27 youngest of street workers who is now in his early-thirties; he explains a little bit about his family life and

neighborhood while growing up as a youth on the North Side of Pittsburgh throughout the

1980's and early 1990's.

> But, growing up, we was poor. We came from a poor-ass family up on the North Side. My grandma, you know, she was a single mother. She had a half-and-half daughter, my mom. She (his grandmother) was like one of the first ones to work on them railroad tracks; but you know they wasn't paying nothing. My mom, you see, never got a chance to ever finish school. She had five kids from some weird-ass dude. So, she was always struggling, you see what I'm saying. It was always work, and a lot of work under the table, like bar-maiding and shit like that.

> We ain't never get the opportunity to…see there was never an example for us to see or follow, for us to be in a position…for us not to be in the streets. You see what I'm saying, because she was struggling to keep the bills paid and trying to get us what she could get us. You know what I am saying, cause when we was coming up we ain't had the luxury of having the good shoes, good clothes; no, we always had the cheapest.

> So, when we moved from Hennepin to North Hennepin Heights, like, we went through a struggle. So, we ain't really had the opportunity to see a mother fucker going through high school and going to college. Like there was no examples of that around us. That just leaves you to, like, fend for yourself. That just takes you straight to the streets, you know what I mean.

> If then moving to North Hennepin was the right thing for my mom, cause it was cheap enough for her to make sure her bills was paid and there was food and the clothes that she could get us, it was wrong for us because now we are in a neighborhood where there are a whole bunch of families with single mothers and no fathers, and kids is just doing whatever, you know.

> I ain't never even seen…I ain't never stolen a car until I moved up to North Hennepin. I mean, I didn't even…I mean I knew about weed because my uncle used to teach me how to roll the weed up when I was little. But, like, when you is little your thinking like cigarettes and some shit. But, I didn't know nothing about the drug game or nothing like that until I moved to North Hennepin, until we got up there.

> So, when you start getting older, and you see dudes you know that are bum dudes and they ain't got but so much, and they end up jumpin' into the streets and start selling some shit; and those dudes then getting money to buy cars and shit, it gives you…it makes you think, "oh, ok, so this is where we get our money from."

Maurice grew up with a single mother. According to Maurice, his mother however was working

her way to do what she felt she desired she could do for her and her family to make-ends-meet

so-to-speak. Moving ultimately to a neighborhood of single mothers and nearly no fathers,

Maurice points out that for him, in the environment that he was in, there was a lack of "positive" conventional role models and thus there was little opportunity to realize or see outside of his neighborhood and experience something beyond what his family and even friends were doing at the time.

One of the most notable time periods for many of the youngest of street workers as they looked back on their lives in our conversations together regarding their adolescence and young adulthood experiences was the crack cocaine era and the affect that drugs generally had on their communities. Crack cocaine was introduced in many American cities by the mid 1980's, including Pittsburgh. The drug produces a high that last no more than a handful of minutes (Lalander, 2003). It is however cheap and potent, and it can be smoked for its full effect as opposed to being snorted or, considering heroin, injected (mainlining) for its full effect (Lalander, 2003). Fundamentally then, crack cocaine was a cheap and highly accessible drug for even those with a bare minimum of wages or income, unlike powder cocaine and even heroin by this time period (Lalander, 2003).

Frank, a 32 year-old former street worker, was about 15 years-old by the time crack cocaine hit his neighborhood:

> …there was like a lot of peer pressure with drugs and streets stuff in my neighborhood. Like, I watched the whole community get destroyed with crack cocaine. There was large families on my block. I was on a block….my block is 32nd street, and it's a big block; a lot of cars and stuff would come through it and I would watch, like, and it's like over each hundered (block) got like over thirty or forty houses on it. So, it was known for hundreds and hundreds of people, if not thousands, in the community. And I had neighbors everywhere; like, across the street, and to the left and my right. And now, there's only like about four or five neighbors on my whole 32nd hundred block. And like the block is just like…the houses and stuff are just abandoned and boarded up and they were just destroyed. I watched the whole community and families and kids just get corrupted, do drugs and die or went to jail, and other people just moved out and never came back. And then like the fiends went into the houses, you know, to steal like the copper (piping); they destroyed everything, and started living in 'em and turning 'em into crack houses.

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In an interview with Deon, a 43 year-old current street worker, he looks back and describes in more detail what happened in his community with the introduction of crack cocaine.

> … it (crack) started separating the neighborhoods in 1990, I will say. In 1990, the neighborhoods were separating because there was just too much money out there. And I believe, like the older people believe, crack started the gangs. You know, I know that for a fact. I know that crack started the gangs. All the drugs have been out here, like, heroine, powder, and everything was out here, but there was no divisions among neighborhoods. When crack hit, the money was so fast that you didn't want another neighborhood coming down here and taking your money. So, you basically banded together with your boys and kept these dudes out of your neighborhood. If you seen some dude trying to make some money here in your neighborhood, you basically whooped their butts and sent them out. Until somebody had the heart to pick up a gun and then BOW. And then it was, "we this, we Crips, or we Bloods, or we're G Town Mafia, or we're The Hoods," you know all of this stuff. That's what started the gangs out. I know that for a fact because I was one of the foundations of it.

For many of the youngest of street workers, especially in terms of these individuals as youth and young adults, the crack cocaine era of the late 1980's and 1990's generally brought them and their neighborhoods together for a time, seemingly generating a moral life and culture that, coupled with the street workers general personal experiences, may be best described by Elijah Anderson (1999) in his book *Code of the Street: Decency,* Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner City.

More specifically, Anderson (1999) provides both a structural and cultural explanation for inner-city violence that links well with Pittsburgh and the experiences of the youngest of street workers who were growing up during the crack cocaine era. In fact, Anderson (1999), whose own research stems from his ethnographic experiences in Philadelphia during the 1980's and 1990's, argues that that inner-city young people began living by a violent "code." Much similar to Pittsburgh's own past, in Philadelphia these youth for Anderson (1999) were basically a product of alienation and racism from which he argues an oppositional culture emerged and became alluring because the conventional culture was seen by many African Americans as

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unreceptive (Anderson, 1999: 287). Moreover, according to Anderson (1999), these youth had then seen that legal hard work does not pay off as some of the elderly were still working hard but living in impoverished neighborhoods struggling still to survive. These youths then also often heard stories about racism and may have themselves experienced prejudice and discrimination in some form or another. At the same time, "through street-oriented role models, a thriving underground economy beckons to them, promising enormous sums of money along with a certain thrill of getting over in a system that denies them respect" (Anderson, 1999: 288).

Therefore, what many of the street workers began witnessing and experiencing in Pittsburgh then when drugs like crack cocaine hit the streets was the formation of gangs or cliques and groups of neighborhood oriented youths and "old heads" who were ever-increasingly becoming involved with the streets and Pittsburgh's general underground economy. For the youngest of street workers, Frederick explains simply that, "like, bad behaviors from our generation (eldest of street workers) were emulated, families were fragmented, and behaviors just went unchecked. And what I am saying is that peer pressure took the place of parenthood."

According to Anderson (1999) the code is a way of survival on the inner-city streets. And in Pittsburgh, for many of the youngest of street workers especially, the social behavior of the public seems to have become in this era increasingly reorganized around the code. That is, respect for the more conventional culture, the formal criminal justice system, and even the local neighborhood elders seemingly began to wane or erode in many impoverished inner-city neighborhoods because of the lack of employment, poverty, increasing drug and crack cocaine use, lack of supervision, and ultimately this meant for the street workers that they could not be weak and that they had to somehow prove themselves or campaign for respect in order to not be hassled by other youths, neighborhood bullies, and so on.

Anderson (1999: 33) defines the code of the street specifically as:

> A set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior, particularly violence. The rules prescribe both proper comportment and the proper way to respond if challenged. They regulate the use of violence and so supply a rationale allowing those inclined to aggression in perceivable violent encounters in an approved way.

That is, the code is a sort of natural way of survival for youths looking for companionship and guidance and a feeling of some level of belonging and safety. For the street workers and their general neighborhood environments during the crack cocaine era, companionship began taking the form of, again as Deon speaks of above, youths banding together with other neighborhood youths. And the guidance that they were given came from their peers, or generally from street-oriented role models (Anderson, 1999).

Ultimately, when crack cocaine hit Pittsburgh around the mid-to-late 1980's, many of the youngest of street workers began following in the footsteps of the generation before them. In fact, when crack cocaine hit Pittsburgh, the neighborhoods focus mainly centered around drugs and protecting not only the neighborhood "set" or place of "business" or the environment, but moreover to protect those that lived in it, especially family and/or fellow gang or clique members.

> …then when crack hits, boom, it's real fast. Dudes and neighborhoods getting divided and people started shooting. Now, your shooting at my people's. I'm 25, you know then, but the average banger was like 16, 17, 18 or 19 years-old, and no real older dudes. And like in my neighborhood (North Side) there are like only four major families in the hood. Now them people that they are shooting at..like your shooting at my little cousins and my little brothers, and now my bro don't want to even walk outside because people shooting at him…So, when I am out here, especially when I was young, if you pissed me off, that wasn't the route you wanted to take. Because if you gonna shoot at me and my bros one day, and you thinking that I am gonna retaliate the next day..naaaaw, it was like we are gonna mask up, send dudes this way, and conduct a diversional sweep...

In Pittsburgh during the 1980's, the homicide rate was nearly at an all time low with 19 homicides specifically in 1988 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). Respectfully however, 80

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percent of the victims of these 19 homicides were African Americans, a trend that unfortunately continued over the next two decades (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). By 1991, the homicide rate nearly doubled with there being 36 murders in the city of Pittsburgh. By 1993, when the drug and gang movements were seemingly at their height, there were just over 80 homicides in the city of Pittsburgh, 52 of which were committed with a gun and well over a majority of the victims were Black males (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). And from 1993 to 2005 in fact, similar trends would follow, providing potentially dangerous neighborhood living conditions for both the eldest and youngest of street workers living in Pittsburgh's inner-city environments during these time periods (a fact that would play a role in some street workers desistance processes).

Up to this point, I have attempted to provide the reader with a description of the historical and cultural background of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and I have also attempted to contextualize these patterns with some of the street workers own perspectives and understanding. The purpose was to begin to better understand the social atmosphere of the region and times that ultimately contextualize this larger group of street workers life experiences. In the following chapter, the aim is to build on these historical and cultural patterns and the street workers experiences. More specifically, in analyzing the data, I discovered distinct patterns as they relate to street workers pathways into drug involvement and non-drug related crimes. Interestingly however, it should be mentioned that while the street workers in this study grew up within and throughout different era's, the same fundamental factors that influenced their initiation into and continuation with crime, for the most part, remained generally the same across the street workers.

CHAPTER 5

STREET WORKERS PATHWAYS TO CRIME

In this chapter, the aim is to build on the social context, history, and the street workers general situations that were described in Chapter 4. And, moreover, the purpose is to describe the street workers own accounts of their initiation into and general continuation with crime. Following Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, I believe that this is a necessary part of a recipe for understanding better the life experiences and processes violence prevention street workers face. In terms of the present study, in analyzing the data, I discovered distinct patterns as they relate to street workers pathways into drug involvement and non-drug related crimes. Table 3 details each current and former street worker and the types of general offenses that led to their initiation into crime, as well as the number of years in total incarcerated and working with the One Vision One Life (OVOL) organization.

Before going into further detail, it should first be mentioned that researchers have documented several pathways to crime (Moffitt, 1993; Sampson and Laub, 1993; Thornberry, 2005; Warr, 1998; 2002). Empirical evidence indicates that socio-economic marginalization, family relations, peer group associations, and substance abuse are major factors that shape and affect criminality (Anderson, 1999; Farrington, 2000; 2002b; Webster, MacDonald, and Simpson, 2006; Venkatesh, 2003).

That is, there is a wealth of research on the structural and cultural conditions that affect crime and the theoretical link to the pathway-to-crime framework (Anderson, 1999; Laub and Sampson, 1993; 2003; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Shaw and McKay, 1942; Venkatesh, 2006). At the highest level, scholars have revitalized the original Shaw and McKay (1942) theory of social disorganization that at its core is suggested that structural conditions can inhibit

community controls and thus provide the context for higher crime and delinquency rates (Sampson, 1986; Sampson and Groves, 1989; Sampson and Wilson, 1995). In their essay specifically, Sampson and Wilson (1995) argue that African Americans are more likely to reside in areas and conditions conducive to disorganization. In such areas there is severe and highly concentrated levels of poverty and family disruption that stem from macro-structural factors, of which, some are economic, some conscious political decisions, but, nonetheless, "are responsible for disproportionately consigning African Americans to inner-city neighborhoods" (Sampson and Wilson, 1995: 49). Factors like deindustrialization which led to the loss of jobs, residential mobility, as well as policies that called for urban renewal and the construction and movement of African Americans into high-rise public housing have provided a more cultural context for social disorganization theory (Sampson and Wilson, 1995). That is to say that structural conditions coupled with economic pressures drives many individuals in socio-economically deprived neighborhoods to engage in illegitimate activities in order to survive (Anderson, 1999). And not surprisingly, with the worsening of the economic situation and even conditions, such issues could be related to increased rates of criminal offending (Anderson, 1999).

One of the most widely replicated findings in the criminological literature concerning early onset or initiation into crime includes family relations and/or family dynamics. Again at the highest level, according to Bursik and Grasmick (1993) and others (Sampson, 1987a), in communities characterized by residential instability and heterogeneity and a high proportion of broken and/or single parent families, the likelihood of effective socialization and supervision is thought to be reduced and thus potentially difficult to link youths to the wider society through institutional means. Other, more personal or ground level parenting factors, such as the ability to communicate with your children and providing the proper support, plays a critical role in shaping

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patterns of behavior for children and later on as adults (Sampson, 1986a). Moreover, and along

both of these lines of reasoning, poor parenting and family settings then only add to crime

susceptibility, as these issues promote potential sources and even opportunities for deviant

activities in the environment (Sampson, 1986a, 1987a).

Similarly, peer group associations play a vital role in shaping initiation and even

persistence in crime (Webster et al., 2006). Empirical evidence suggests that early on, or from

around the ages of eight to fourteen, parents are the most important figures in the lives of their

children (Farrington, 1986a; Flanagan and Maguire, 1990; Hirschi and Gottfredson, 1983).

However, as these youth get older and they begin to explore outside of the home, their peers

begin to provide increased emotional support; thus these peers surpass in some respects the

parents as the primary source of influence and attention. Youths and adolescents feel pressure to

conform and to be accepted rather than rejected by their peers. The key point here is that,

according to empirical research, the association between peers and the onset and continuation of

criminality may take different paths. While it has been found that deviant peers do not

necessarily cause straight kids to "go for bad," they do amplify the likelihood of a troubled kid

getting further involved in antisocial or deviant behavior (Anderson, 1999; Warr, 1998; 2002).

On the other hand, antisocial youths may seek out and join up with like-minded friends.

Troubled kids may choose delinquent youths out of necessity rather than by choice (Farrington,

1989; Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990; Sampson and Laub, 1990). Because they are impulsive, or

even due to some form of social baggage that they may carry around with them, such youths may

come together with other youths that are dangerous and get them into trouble (Gottfredson and

Hirschi, 1990). That is, deviant peers may sustain, amplify and extend delinquent careers.

Substance use is also a critical factor for understanding pathways to crime. Research

indicates that persons who use drugs are much more likely to be involved in crime. Men and

women in prison report high levels of drug use at the time of incarceration (Greenfeld and Snell,

1999), and nearly a majority of them have substance abuse problems (Center for Substance

Abuse Treatment, 1997). The use of drugs has been related to coping with the pains of neglect

and abuse, deficient levels of human capital (i.e. adequate education), and the lack of

employment opportunities (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993). Once

addicted, such individuals are less likely to engage in legitimate activities and enterprises and are

more likely to participate in illegal activities to make money in order to purchase drugs (Laub

and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 1993).

As the above evidence suggests, there are several factors that shape people's choices and

behaviors, and these factors seem to be shaped by various conditions at various levels. There are

then multiple pathways to distinct forms of criminality, which can ultimately impact the

desistance process. Following Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical framework, in this

chapter my intention is to begin to turn the attention over to the 45 current and former street

workers and their managers and to describe them in terms of their criminal initiation experiences.

As you will see, I again discovered distinct patterns as they relate to street workers pathways to

drug involvement and non-drug related crimes.

Pathways into Drug Activity

Exposure to Drugs through Family Members

Families have an extreme amount of influence on the behavior of their members.

Generally speaking, in terms of drugs, 97 percent of the current street workers and 93 percent of

the former street workers in this study reported using drugs in their lifetimes. Of those street

workers who used drugs, 79 percent of the current street workers and 86 percent of the former street workers discussed having at least one member of their family who was addicted to drugs and/or alcohol, indicating a potential likelihood that street workers themselves will use narcotic substances when members of their own family abuse drugs.

Accordingly, a number of current (27%) and former (33%) street workers in the study stated that their initiation into the drug world and/or illicit substances began as a result of their exposure to such substances through their family members. More specifically, Shaun is a 55 year-old elder current street worker and he explains that growing up in the 1960's that he would see a significant amount of alcoholism through his father and his friend's fathers.

> I grew up with an alcoholic father. I mean he was a provider and he wasn't really abusive..my dad was a construction worker, and a lot of my friend's dad's worked in the mill. And I think growing up most of our dad's were drinkers because it was the thing to do. They get off from the mill, would go out to drink, and it was just a way of life for them, you know, going to the bar and drinking.

Leon, a 47 year-old former street worker similarly explains that the neighborhood was full of bars, of which many times his family members would attend on a regular or frequent basis:

> There used to be like a hundred bars up on the Hill. And my grandmother, my mom and our family, they would drink a lot on the weekends. Everybody worked, but they all went to the bar a lot. So, it was like when you grow up in the Hill District and the areas where I grew up, drugs, alcohol are just a part of life. So, I was always around it.

While Shaun and Leon never stated that their parents were involved in illicit drug activity specifically, they do point out a heavy use of alcohol in the immediate family and in the home specifically. Leon in our conversation together did state however that he had other relatives at the time who were involved with illicit drugs. For example, Leon states: "(m)y family, and people I knew, like cousins, were into it (drugs) and I was always around it. So, I was associated with it always."

Some street workers did in fact witness their family members' involvement with illicit drugs. Kimberly, a 42 year-old former street worker points out:

> I lived with my grandmother, my mom, my aunt, my uncle, my cousins, and everybody was young and on drugs. I mean they were 16, 17, 18, 19 when I was born. So, I am born to a group of teenagers, and a grandmother who is in her 40's..I mean it was nothing for everybody sitting in the living room, not working, with a case of beer, weed and whatever just waiting on the welfare check.

The home that Kimberly grew up in was considered a sort of transition home for family members and her mother's friends. Kimberly explains in our interview together that "…family would come and go. People were always in and out. If they needed a place to sleep or stay for awhile, our house was it. My uncles, cousins, my mom's friends would be on and off of drugs… If you could find a bedroom, couch, or a spot on the floor, it was just whatever."

When asked why he started using drugs, Daryl, a 39-year-old former street worker explains:

> You know, because my dad smoked weed, all of his life; and my dad was never in trouble, he never..he never did it around me because my mom bitched about it if he was in the house, but I knew he did it. But he smoked, worked, and I just figure that if you can handle it and control it, then I don't see any problem with it.

Daryl goes on to explain that he was curious and that he started smoking marijuana at 12 or 13 years-old when he would find his father's roaches in ashtrays around the house. Tayo, a 22 year-old former street worker native to the Hill District, pointed out in our interview together that:

> My dad used to hustle..drugs, women and anything he could (for us, his family). He had drugs in the house and different..other people's house's, you know so that he couldn't get swept by the police (and lose everything)..I mean he taught me things, like, how to do it, you know, hustle and stuff. Being around it all my life, I just tried rollin' and smokin' it (marijuana), sippin' on 40's (40 oz beers) and stuff..it's what my dad did and I respected him.

Tayo was introduced to drugs, alcohol and the "code" at an early age, as he explains later that his father passed away from cancer by the time Tayo was 14 years-old.

Other street workers would discuss the fact that it was not only that they had a parent who was using drugs and/or alcohol heavily, but that their initiation into drugs or alcohol use was induced by their siblings or a close relative, like a cousin. For example, Scott, a 48 year-old current street worker, explains:

> You know, I got into it when I was 12. I mean, me and some guys we were going to, you know, little 25 cent social parties, you know. I mean, we all had big brothers that did it; like, I was the youngest of five sons, so, we would steal a little joint here and there and roll it up. And my brother was selling weed and I remember going in and stealing a little bit out of his dresser man, and we learned how to roll it up.

> Like, back then, like, it was around the Civil Rights movements, but I never got involved in that; but like when we grew up in the projects we would smoke weed and drink belly-high wine, just partying. I remember this one shit that we had; it was some of that Vietnam stuff man, and I smoked it and I'm telling you I couldn't move. I stayed in my room, on my bed for a weekend that shit was so strong.

Scott's father, he later notes, was a heavy drinker and he started dabbling with drugs with his brothers "because they seemed to always have it." Tommy, a 36 year-old current street worker grew up with two brothers and a sister.

> Man, I grew up in a family full of alcoholics. I mean I vowed not to drink that shit. But I mean my mom left when I was in the third grade and my dad was so fucking annoying when he drank, he was an alcoholic and I wasn't gonna be like that. My one brother and my sister were real big weed smokers though, and being young and stuff I just tried it, you know.

Similarly, Barry, a 49 year-old former street worker grew up with six brothers and three sisters.

> I grew up with six brothers and three sisters. I have nine siblings, and I pretty much grew up with a single parent. My dad got killed when I was 15. My mom was divorced though; but for some reason or another, seeing my brothers, I always wanted to be a man. I mean they would try to hide their little weed from me, but I didn't care, they couldn't hide nothing form me. I would be up in there and I'd find it, take some out of it and..there was some good times man back then.

While at this point in our interview Barry does not say openly that he smoked the marijuana he stole from his brother's dressers, later on, as the conversation progressed, he alludes once again to his triumph of obtaining marijuana from his brothers and smoking it at first with one of his

closest friends--another sort of factor influencing drug initiation that will be discussed in the next section.

Dillion, a 47 year-old current street worker, grew up with two half brothers, a sister, and he explains that his stepfather always took care of them.

> When I say my dad, I mean my stepdad. He married my mom when I was three and when my (step)brother was one (years old). And now he was the model that I got for a stepdad. He was always there for me. You know, I thought it was corny but, you know, he would get his paycheck, come home, take $40 dollars and hand the rest to my mom. I was like, what are you crazy?

Dillon however got introduced to drugs mainly through his cousins.

> I was fifteen when I first used drugs..it started with me and my cousins, smoking weed, drinking wine, but back in that era, in the 70's, I used mescaline, acid, the whole thing..coke. I'm tellin' you too, when I got older, like 17 or 18, my cousin was then selling drugs and he was a big drug dealer and at the end of every day we would go up to his house and count money and snort cocaine. He was pretty big…

Dillion grew up near the end of an era in Pittsburgh where many of the eldest of street workers spent most of their youth and teenage years. However, looking back at his past and his experimentation with drugs specifically, Dillion hits on a very common theme surrounding many of the eldest of street workers who participated in this study.

> Accordingly, Dillon goes on during our conversation to explain:
>
> …He (his cousin) used to call us the cocaine boys because of what we did. So, I snorted cocaine and then in the penitentiary, like, I smoked weed almost everyday in the penn..it kind of kept me sane, but I didn't know nothing about crack cocaine until I came out of the penitentiary. By then I got clean and been clean for like five years. I was going to narcotics anonymous but not really buying into the program. And then I got exposed to crack cocaine, and from there it was just a struggle. Getting clean for a few months, sometimes years, use, getting clean, use, and it was a cycle of struggle.

For the eldest of street workers this "cycle of struggle" with drug addiction later on then transcends just simply experimenting with drugs with family members and any of the other reasons that are considered and discussed in more detail below. Interestingly, and respectfully so

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here, the process in which Dillon only basically speaks of here was then not uncommon among the generation of elder street workers. In fact, 17 of 18 elder street workers experimented with drugs at some point in their lives, and 13 of the 18 elder street workers expressed very similar experiences with this cycle of experimenting with drugs, even selling drugs (described in more detail below), partying or "celebrating victories," acquiring an addiction, and incarceration throughout young adulthood and adulthood only to go back to drugs and addiction—or, according to Dillion and others, the "cycle of struggle" and decay. For one current street worker, Frederick, he explains that this cycle would last more than 18 years, or nearly one-third of his lifetime.

For many of the street workers then with whom I spoke, the presence of drugs in the home led to pathways to substance use during adolescence. And for some, the use of alcohol and illegal drugs among family members initiated their pathways into substance use and even abuse later on as an adult. Clearly, family drug involvement can shape the participation in drug activity for other members (Owens and Strauss, 1975). Further, as we will now see, peer group networks have also had an impact on the street workers decision to use drugs.

Seeking Approval from Peers and Significant Others

During adolescence, the risk for offending is high, particularly because of the stress of peer pressure, the search for independence, and puberty. The majority of current street workers (57 percent) and former street workers (53 percent) discussed that their association with deviant peers influenced their entry into drug and alcohol activity primarily as youths. This was particularly the case during the early stages of adolescence (11 to 14 or 15 years-old) and that the motivating factor was the desire to fit in with friends. Maurice, a current street worker now in his thirties, explains that, "I started hitting weed when I was 12 with the other young dudes in my

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neighborhood." And KC, a 58 year-old former street worker, expressed that, "I started marijuana when I was like 12 years old, in 1965, during the Vietnam War. Like a lot of my friends had it, and back then you could buy a bag for like two-dollars-and-fifty cents and roll like eight to ten joints out of it. You know, you just wanted to be cool, you know, be cool with everybody."

Frank, again a former street worker in his thirties, explains why he smoked marijuana:

…there was like a lot of peer pressure with drugs and streets stuff in my neighborhood...Like, I was always an outcast. So, for me, my friends would be using it (marijuana) and stuff like that, and man, I wanted to just feel like I was one of them. Like, I wanted to be down with people, you know.

While Frank points out that he was "always an outcast" and that he "wanted to just feel down," he does not express any true, direct force by his friends to smoke marijuana. In fact, no street worker interviewed in the present study express being forced to use drugs or drink alcohol by their friends. For Frank and many of the other street workers they experimented with drugs and alcohol just to fit in or to be "down." For example, Jeremy, a 33 year-old current street worker, replied, "I'll tell you exactly when I started diving into things. I was 13 (years-old) and all my friends were gang members. And they were smoking weed, and I wanted to try it. I wanted to represent to the fullest." Similarly, Dan, a current street worker in his late thirties, said that he experimented with marijuana and heroin as a teenager because he was "…at a party and everyone was trying it." Likewise, Shaun, again a 55 year-old current street worker expresses going to twenty-five cent parties as a teenager and smoking marijuana "because it was just what everybody was doing back then."

For other street workers, this urge to fit in would also occur for them in their late adolescence, young adulthood, and into their twenties. David, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, explains that, "I was in the 11th grade when I started drinking alcohol, and in the 12th grade when I started smoking weed. It's just..I'm with my friends, we're at prom and I guess I

just wanted to try it that night." Lucas, a 39 year-old current street worker was also in high

school when he started drinking alcohol and smoking marijuana. "…around 17 or 18, I made up

my mind. One weekend I was just out with my friends and we got some alcohol, some weed,

(and we) smoked, drank and it was just our thing to do; your young you know, there wasn't no

harm to it." And Ramone, again a 60 year-old current street worker, also affirmed, "I started

experimenting at 17 or 18 (years-old) with weed, wine and things of that nature with my

friends." Leon, a 48 year-old former street worker explained, "I was older when I started

dabbling with drugs. I didn't like wine and beer..I saw what it did to my mom. But I started

smoking weed when I was in my twenties with friends who always had it. So I was always

around it, but I was late when I started smoking that stuff with my friends."

During adolescence, youths typically move from having close attachment to their family

to having personal attachment to peers. At this stage of the life-course, peer networks have the

ability to greatly influence the behavior of one another and are central to our understanding of

offending (Warr, 1998). For most street workers in this study, peer relationships were strongly

implicated in their initiation into drug use (Matsueda and Heimer, 1987). A substantial body of

literature reveals that the more delinquent peers one has the more likely one is to become

delinquent (Agnew, 1991; Warr and Stanford, 1991).

All of these accounts up to this point demonstrate the significant influence peers then had

on current and former street workers, particularly during their adolescence. Seeking acceptance

among peers prompted many street workers to dabble with drugs and alcohol. The mere fact that

their friends were drug-connected drove many street workers to try it themselves so that they

could fit in or be "down," as opposed to being the odd one out. But while nearly all of the street

workers did not report being forced by their friends, or even family, to actually engage in illegal

drug activity, Arial, a 62 year-old former street worker, had a different experience.

> You see, I wanted to become a part of what my husband was doing because I thought I could keep him. And that's how most women get involved with drugs because the man brings it to them. So, like he used to say that it (crack) would make it so much more intense, you know, sex. And I was like, "you ain't puttin' that glass stick in my mouth." And he was like, "here, try it like this." But I'm thinking like, "but if you love me, why would you put me on that shit."

> As strong as I am, I had one (marijuana and crack cocaine rolled together in cigarette form). I mean after that I had a nervous breakdown, and that's no bullshit. It's a bad mother fucker. Rolling crack and marijuana is bad thing, and I got hooked. I ended up being off and on it for five years.

Arial explains that in some sense she was coerced by her husband to try crack cocaine. And

interestingly, while none of the other four female street workers (current = 3, former = 1), or any

of the male street workers in fact, mentioned being directly coerced into drug or alcohol activity

by their boyfriends or spouses, Carmen, a current street worker in her early 20's, expresses that,

"I was a ride-hard or die chick. My boyfriend got me introduced to smokin' weed and drinkin'

when I was like 15." Tracy, a 30 year-old former street worker, similarly explains, "I started

dating my dude and he was workin', dealin' drugs and stuff, and I moved in with him..I just did

what he did. I started hittin' the weed and did some stuff but I never got into that crack shit. I

told myself that I would never be a zombie addict."

Arial's experience of being coerced into smoking crack cocaine seemed to be unique in

the sample. Some of the other women in the study sample however mentioned that they did try

drugs, but they never explained that they were ever explicitly coerced by their boyfriends or

significant others. It was more that the women report having tried drugs because of their general

association with drug-involved males, significant others, or, in the case of Arial, spouses. While

such findings are not the most common pattern in the current study, they are consistent with prior

research establishing that women are pulled into criminal activity by men in their lives (Mullins and Wright, 2003; Gilfus, 1992).

There is yet another small group of street workers who explained that they started using heroin specifically because they were told that it was a sexual stimulant. Take for example Damon, a 38 year-old former street worker,

> I remember that I started blowing dope in, I remember, it was in December of 1993; and we used to blow dope because the old guys would say that they blow dope, and it's like an aphrodisiac, it's like Viagra; so, that's how we started doing it--when we were gonna go fuck with some girls.

Similarly, Chris, a current street worker in his early 50's, explains, "I was never interested in using it (heroin), but somebody had told me that it enhanced your sex life. And that interested me in using." Although not a frequent occurrence, approximately 8 percent of the total sample (current = 2; former = 2) reported having tried drugs because of learning from 'others' that they were potentially a sexual stimulant.

While experimenting and socially using drugs is common among youths, and even as adults in the current sample, the increasing engulfment of drugs propelled many street workers to become drug addicts (Baskin and Sommers, 1998). Again, Damon explains his experience:

> …we'd blow some dope, and after awhile we were going to get it and we weren't going to fuck with no girls. And all of sudden it was just everyday, and we didn't think about it (the girls) because we just like the high. And one day, I didn't go and get any and I got sick; I mean I just had the chills. I am in the house and I'm talking to my girlfriend, and I'm like, "I don't know why I'm getting these chills."
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> And I sat in the bathtub, still getting these chills. And I called my old head and told him that I don't know why I keep getting these chills, and he's like, "oh, you sick little homie." I was like, "what do you mean?" "Oh, you dope sick."
> And don't you know that as soon as I made a call to my dealer to tell him that I'm on my way, it was like two in the morning, and on my way up there as soon as I knew I was going to go and get it (dope) I felt alright. I was like, "man that was crazy."

I just remember a crackhead would say, "you know, once you know your getting it, you alright, you know your good and you feel better knowing that it's there; you get happy and shit and you feel better," and I was like, "damn, he ain't lying, I feel better."

Chris similarly points out that, "…and I used it and developed a habit, a vicious cycle of using..it did enhance your sex life, but you also developed a vicious cycle of a habit. Using for the sex life, then developing a habit, and then using to maintain the habit, maintain the habit, and becoming a dealer, and then I'm catching one case after another, another, another." Shaun also explains that, "I mean to me I wasn't ever thinking that I was addicted, it was just my lifestyle. You know, that was my way of accomplishing things; I would use that (drugs, including heroin). That was my tool."

Overall, whether through familial, peer, or boyfriend/girlfriend and spousal interactions, many of the street workers alluded to experimenting with drugs and even alcohol. By using these substances it was a way for the street workers to mainly feel like they were "down" or a part of the group, and in some cases to feel pleasure or even happy.

Drugs as a Coping Mechanism

For some street workers their initial drug use was attributed to their desire for acceptance; however, a number of street workers in the study turned to drugs as a way of dealing with negative life events. In particular, 24 percent of current street workers and 20 percent of former street workers came forth to report using drugs to cope with a traumatic life experience.[18] These experiences range from being abused as a child to emotions such as stress, anxiety and strain centered on life situations and choices. Consequently, many of these street workers then used drugs as a coping mechanism to ease the physical and emotional, or even psychological, pains.

Herman, a 49 year-old current street worker, explains that he was abused at a young age by his mother, prompting him to move out of the house by the time he was 16 years-old.

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I mean when I grew up my mom was the enforcer, and I ain't talking about a belt. I mean we used to get extension cords, ironing cords, metal wire, and she used to tie us up in the basement man and whoop us man, until our nose would bleed.

When I got 16, I moved out of the house. And I never went back. I never went back. You know, my mom and I never saw really eye-to-eye. And I told her, "mom I'm gone, you not gonna just keep abusing me like this." And she told me, she told me even in her nursing home when she was asked about me and how she felt for me as I was always there for her. She said, "I couldn't stand that fucker."

Mentally though man, I think she messed me up; messed me up mentally, I really believe that. And after that I was usin'..smokin' weed and usin' coke to, you know,..I was in the streets.

And Jeremy, a current street worker in his thirties, declared that he started smoking marijuana and then snorting cocaine when he was 15 years-old because, "I was goin' through a lot with my childhood." When asked what it was about his childhood that prompted him to turn to drugs, he declared, "(m)y mom used to sell me for drugs when I was growing up. She was a crack addict and she would send me different places, with people." He went on later in our conversation to explain that he continued using drugs until about the age of twenty-eight as a sort of coping mechanism. The membranes in his nose apparently erupted or broke from snorting cocaine for several years, leaving him with a nearly permanent runny nose.

Research indicates that children coming from violent homes are more likely to be charged with offenses like substance abuse and running away (Widom, 1995). And because children have few available options for some form of escape from physical and even sexual violence, running away provides an opportunity to garner a form of control over their lives (DeHart, 2005; Gilfus, 1992). Because of the issues that he experienced with his mother in his childhood, Herman declared,

I wasn't even about girls, it was about my friends, my boys; we were doing what boys do. So, I wouldn't participate in things like school, I said F-it. I didn't get my high school diploma, I then just had the F-it attitude. Like I said, my thought process was distorted, and I just didn't care..I got my diploma in the streets.

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A number of studies have demonstrated that childhood victimization is an important factor that facilitates involvement in delinquency and adult criminality (Belknap, 2001; Arnold, 1990). Just as Herman and Jeremy experience, the chain of events leading to criminalization often begins with "child physical and sexual abuse, which produces a vicious cycle that include running away, institutionalization, return to the dysfunctional family unit, running away, and ultimately street deviance," such as drug usage, etc (Belknap, 2001: 24).

While only a couple of street workers reference being physically and even mentally abused during childhood, other street workers, like Frederick here below, discusses emotions of stress and strain on their personal lives that pushed them to cope through primarily drug usage.

> What got me into a drug habit? It was stress. Well, initially we're conditioned to celebrate victories by relaxing. And the way we relax in the neighborhoods and communities that I come from is by going to the bar, having a drink, smoking a joint, taking a sniff, or mainlining. And those are the things.

Earlier in our conversation Frederick explained:

> …well before I graduated (high school), my wife (to be) became pregnant with my oldest son. And this was before I graduated high school. It was my senior year; I was getting ready to graduate and she turned up pregnant. Ok, so upon graduation I went to the steel mills; I was up there for a couple of years. But in order to get a little bit more money, I started selling weed on the side, after work, on the weekends, and then as the steel mills starting shutting down, selling weed on the weekend turned into selling weed every day; and as long as I could sell it, and however much I could sell. So, my part time job became my full time job, you dig, and it was illegal.

Frederick also had a college basketball scholarship waiting for him in Texas. And at the age of 21, after he lost his job at the mill and was for the most part hustling full time in the streets, he decided to take a chance, and he moved away from Pittsburgh to Texas. He was in Texas for a semester-and-a-half when:

> …I started receiving letters from members of my family describing the dilemmas that they were going through. And I chose to come back. Ok, I had an older sister who was misdiagnosed (with cancer), who had two children; I had a sister who was a little older

than me that at the age of 27 died and left four kids behind. I had a brother that was always incarcerated, and I had a mom that actually already was battling with cancer.

Upon his return to Pittsburgh from Texas, Frederick once again went to the streets, where he explains:

> I developed my own crew. I developed a crew for weed; I had a crew for heroin and for cocaine. I had about nine people in my crew. And really, I graduated from just selling marijuana to selling the harder drugs--to cocaine to heroin, and to all three of the.., you know what I'm saying? It became a lifestyle.

Frederick goes on to explain this lifestyle and the stresses that led him to eventual addiction:

> And I started getting caught up in the lifestyle after that--the glitz, the glamour, the notoriety and all of those things that accompany the lifestyle; like, the women and all of that. And in the process, what happened was, you know, I felt that I could compensate my absence from doing family things with monetary gains. Like, satisfy the materialistic longings of my wife and my family by giving them money. But in the meantime, and unbeknownst to me, I had removed myself from the things that a husband and a father does with his family because I spent more time in the streets. And it created a situation where there was constant arguing between my wife and I, and I started filling in the blanks so-to-speak. I started to associate myself with the women in the lifestyle as opposed to my wife.

> And then…when you first go into that lifestyle, initially you go in and start off as the predator. You prey on the addictions of other people. But the longer you stay, the closer you get to becoming the prey. So, in other words, I started out having customers, but over time and in the end I winded up being somebody else's customer. So, in essence the hunter got captured by the game.

Asking Frederick to explain what it was that made him start using drugs, he explains:

> Stress. Like I said, I was going through changes with my wife. I was going through changes with my mom; me accepting the responsibilities of raising my sister's kids, along with my own, and bills coming in. So, it was a multitude of things. I didn't just initially, you know, one stressful situation causes the decision to use; it was a multitude of things; it was my plate turning into a platter of responsibilities to the point where I just wanted to escape from the responsibilities.

> And the euphoric state that drugs put you into makes you feel like you can do anything; sort of like, on the one side, you have the air of invincibility; and, on the other side, you have…it makes you think your on top of all of the complicated situations that are in your life. You think nobody is gonna stick you up, or nobody is gonna manipulate you, or nobody is gonna flim-flam you, or nobody is gonna tell on you, and nobody gonna bust you. So that's the illusion that your under. But the longer you stay out there, the longer

your name rings, the longer the notoriety comes, the more suspicious the police get, and eventually you get arrested. But all-the-while, you already alienated your family because of the fact that you haven't been spending any quality time with them at all. And, you started using and you acquired an addiction.

Frederick goes on to explain later on in one of our conversations with one another that by the age of thirty he was starting on a vicious cycle of drug addiction that included generally "ingesting all sorts of chemicals," "getting busted" and going to jail and even prison, sobering up on the inside and then being released, but only to begin selling drugs for money again at first; and, over time, acquiring the addiction once again.

For Frederick, this cycle stems from the stresses of losing his job at the mill in the 1970's and, among other things, the strains of supporting his family (Agnew, 2002; Uggen, 1999). Moreover, he estimates, that this cycle would last more than eighteen years; and that in his adult lifetime, that he had been arrested somewhere around fifteen times for drugs, guns, burglaries, thefts, etc., spending just over eleven years in jail or prison alone.

Other street workers express quite similar stresses and strains on their lives that led them ultimately to using and coping with their issues through drugs, which even led some of them to eventual addiction. Take Leon for example, a former street worker in his late forties:

> I started working. I always had a job all of my life you know. And I always wanted to chase the American Dream, you know, a house, car, pretty girlfriend, kids, and all of that. So, actually I tried to do all of that.

Asking Leon what happened, he goes on to say:

> Well, what happened was I got caught up, caught up in the lifestyle. What happened was American Auto went out of business in 1999, and then I went out of business. Because, you know how they say that your always one paycheck from homelessness.

> So, basically, at that time, I was working and I lived in Johnstown and I came back to Pittsburgh; so the company went out of business and I took all my 401k's, my stock options and all of that and I cashed that all in. I was working for like 7 years; I was doing good, and at that time I was like, "I am just gonna have some fun."

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At that time (while working), I wasn't drinking or anything like that, smoking any marijuana or any of that. But, I started going out to all these bars. So, I saw all these pretty women that I wanted to be with. I had a nice truck at the time and money and things of that nature, and so I started to get into the lifestyle. And it's the lifestyle that will kill you. I was into girls, money, and cocaine was my drug of choice. I was started smoking crack, smoking dope, drinking, you know, being the life of the party; at least I thought I was.

So, what happened was my money ran out, and so now I gotta make money. So, instead of looking for a job, I knew that I could sell drugs or get a package from somebody; so, I started going on that, and that started working for a minute; then I was using and selling—I fell off the edge.

Jonathan, a current street worker in his early 50's, explains to me one day in a conversation together that he could not cope with the fact that one of his son's was shot in the back, and that he sort of personally "fell off the edge."

So, I have a son who was shot in the back as a result of gang violence up on the North Side. He was shot in the back and paralyzed on December 13th, 2004. He's 25 years-old today. He was shot in the back and paralyzed you know, and this is the incident that catapulted me back into drug usage. You know, I had no coping skills. You know, of all the things that I have acquired, I never acquired any coping skills. I don't like stress. So, I ended up back sniffing heroin.

Many of the street workers interviewed and shadowed for this study grew up in an environment where they felt unprotected and alone in having to cope with the aftermath of suffering several, and often times differing, traumas. Experiencing assault and abuse as a child, especially if perpetrated by a family member, can produce a great deal of trauma (Pipher, 1994). If the trauma is not dealt with adequately, the issue can continue to burden an individual, even into adulthood and result in subsequent offending (Arnold, 1990; Belknap and Holsinger, 2006; Daly, 1992; Gilfus, 1992; Richie, 1996). However, and as we can see above, not all of the street workers turned to drugs as a result of having experienced extreme forms of childhood abuse. Some street workers turned to drugs to medicate feelings of stress, depression and sadness. For some then it was easier to suppress painful feelings with the use of drugs than to directly

confront the root cause of the problems. These street workers experienced stress, anxiety, and strain from losing their jobs, having to support their large families, and even from experiencing the stresses of a near death experience of a loved one. These are the life instances that motivated some street workers then to turn to drugs.

Pathways into Other Crimes

There are multiple routes that the street workers would take into drug activity. For the street workers with whom I spoke with, many resort to drug activity because of the exposure they had as a child by their own family members, including siblings and cousins. Many street workers also described instances of partaking in drug activity with their peers; some even suggesting that there was some level peer pressure. A small number of female street workers express that they were introduced to drugs, and even coerced into using drugs, through their boyfriends or their spouse. Finally, for some other street workers, drugs were used as a coping mechanism to deal with abuse and the stresses of losing jobs, having to support families, and/or the near death experience of a loved one.

The process into other crimes however, was often times tied to economic motivation. A number of street workers took pathways into crime for the sole purpose of feeding their addiction to drugs. For these street workers, drugs played a large role in intensifying their involvement in crime. Other street workers engaged in criminal activity in order to support themselves and their family. And many of the street workers in this study engaged in deviant behavior because they simply desired material possessions.

Drug-Crime Connection

Approximately 3.7 million persons aged twelve or older living in poverty are in need of some form of substance abuse treatment in the United States (National Survey on Drug Use and

Health, 2010). Moreover, historically there has also been a strong link between criminality and drug use in the United States, as research reveals that individuals who use drugs are more likely to commit other crimes (Cohen, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003). In terms of the present study, over 28 percent of the current street workers and 26 percent of the former street workers in my sample reported having engaged in criminal activity to obtain money for drugs. Of these 11 street workers, 10 were male (current = 7, former = 3) and there was 1 female (current = 0, former = 1). For these drug-involved street workers, substance abuse or addiction to drugs increased their contact with other users and sellers entrenched in the local Pittsburgh drug market. Thus, these contacts further enlarged their opportunities to both use and distribute illicit drugs.

Leon, a 47 year-old former street worker for example, explains that after losing his job, and as he was running out of money, that, "I was touting (handling/distributing) marijuana and heroin, crack..you name it. I already had a habit for the drugs, so I had to sell for other people to support myself (and the habit)." Similarly, Arial, a former street worker, explains, "I muled to support my habit; it was the easiest way for me get by." Frederick, a current street worker in his early sixties, declares that,

> I had a pretty decent run as far as abstinence (from drugs) goes. I mean, I was using because I was using to get the product to get the money. And a lot of people fail to realize that the money is the trigger. And unbeknownst to you, by using your acquiring a habit in which you need to support. So, you're selling your drugs, but your also using 'em, and your losing money because the addiction is growing. In time, your sole purpose becomes to get high—your sellin' drugs just to support your high, your habit.

On top of selling drugs to get money to support their drug addictions, a more common theme was committing other economic crimes.

Accordingly, this was the case for Chris, a current street worker in his early fifties. He

states that because of his personal medical condition that he could get hypodermic needles in

which he would trade for heroin and a place in the "shooting gallery,"

> By me being a diabetic I would get cases of needles prescribed to me. I would then take
> the needles and go to the shooting gallery and sell them for a buck or two. Just enough so
> I could by my next fix. Then I got the guy at the shooting gallery (the owner of the house)
> to take the needles that were used back downtown, and they would exchange them for
> you because they were trying to stop aids and hepatitis. So, they would give you boxes of
> them in exchange. I use to take him down there because he runs the gallery, and he could
> get the same amount (of needles) as me. And I would get mine and just give them to him,
> and he would let me come to his gallery for free because he charges people to go to the
> gallery. So, I would get in for free then, and he would just let me stay there as long as I
> wanted.

A "shooting gallery," Chris explains, is,

> …a poor dudes home who shoots dope, who don't give a shit about cleaning his house.
> All he does is, you knock on the door, you give him two dollars, he'll set you up with
> clean needles, but you got to give him a dollar for that…you got to give him a dollar if
> you don't have a cooker neither, because you have to cook your dope up. And he would
> give you those and a cotton ball and everything for two dollars. So, two dollars to get in,
> and two dollars for the stuff, and he's getting that off of every person that comes to the
> door, and he's doing this for twenty-four hours a day.

> Reese, a former street worker in his early forties, states that to support his drug habit that

he committed bank fraud.

> I was getting high everyday and so I learned to be a 'stepper' with this old blind lady and
> an older guy. It started off first that I was jitneying (driving) her around and she would go
> into the banks, and when she came out she used to hand me a big wad of cash, full of
> money. I thought I was jitneying for her, and then one day she asked if I wanted to go
> into the bank for her. She would, everyday, make out checks for no more than $800
> dollars and we'd stop at these banks and cash 'em in.

While Reese and the other street workers were either selling drugs or committing fraud in order

to support their drug habit, other street workers resorted to more violent means. Take for

example Barry, a 49 year-old former street worker:

> I started off messing with this guy..a vigilante crew out here in Homewood. I was 14 at
> the time, and I was recruited young. And we used to rob drug dealers right. We used to

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rob the dealers, throw the drugs away or whatever, you know. Until I got to a point when I started using the drugs; so, after robbing dealers I would then keep the money and the drugs, and I was using the drugs.

This one time, for example, right, I robbed this guy right; I mean I buy some coke off of this guy, and it's no good. So I had to take it back to him to get my money back. So I go back to him and tell him it's no good. He won't give my money back, so I ended up robbing him, terrifying him, and all type of stuff. So he ended up calling the police and telling them that I robbed him for his welfare check. So, he was looking for some real sympathy, you know. Then I come to find out that his uncle is a Pittsburgh police officer.

So, my son was born in October 1979 at this time, and I was coming from the hospital because I turned myself in earlier that day right; my mom told me that the police was looking for me, and they were kicking down doors, and I was like "what did I do?" I mean seriously, I never thought that you could go to jail for robbing a drug dealer; I never heard of that. So, I didn't do nothing. So, I go turn myself in. Now the Pittsburgh police know I don't have no warrants or anything. So, I visit the hospital because my son was born that day. And I come to Homewood with a pocket full of suckers saying, "it's a boy" on 'em. And they, the people, saying that, "the police and Junior is looking for you." I mean I was like, "I don't have no warrants on me man." So, I come out of the bar with a sucker, and he pulls up and he shoots me; mind you, I don't have no warrants or nothing. So this cop shoots me out of the bar, and the lady cop with him was questioning why he did that. So, I got to the hospital and I find out this dudes uncle, Junior's uncle, is the cop.

Likewise, Jonathan, a 51 year-old current street worker, started "bumping cigarette trucks" to support his drug habit:

You know, I needed money for drugs and we would steal cigarette trucks. We would bump them on the highway. I would follow them (the truck) from the distributor, get them isolated, bump them on the highway, and fake an accident. Then the guy would get out (of the cigarette truck), walk back, and I would be like acting like I'm hurting. Then the guy would be coming up right now right? And there's guys getting out of the side of the van at this point. He's almost at the back of the truck, and when he gets to the back of his rig, they would just grab him, spin him around into our van. You know, two or three of us would just overpower him. That's how I used to do it. I'd rob people to support my drug habit, you know.

There is a clear relationship between drug use and criminal behavior. For a number of street workers, their initiation into crime occurred as a part of their drug addiction. Drug use played a significant role in escalating their involvement in economic crime because it was an attractive alternative to working to obtain money for the purpose of supporting their drug addiction.

Consistent with other studies, findings reveal that street worker's involvement in crimes intensified over the course of their addiction (Cohen, 2000; Laub and Sampson, 2003).

Economic Marginalization

For the present study, the fact is that not all of the street workers engaged in drug-related crimes in order to support a drug habit or addiction. A number of street workers pointed out that their pathways to crime were at times tied to economic marginalization. Specifically, 12 percent of current street workers and 40 percent of former street workers in the sample reported economic difficulties prior to their involvement in crime. Frank for example, a 32 year-old former street worker, states, "I just got caught up in it (selling drugs), cause I figured my mom's needed money and I needed money, and I was trying to do the right thing. So, I started selling on the side cause my mom could barely afford to take care of the bills for the house and stuff. So, we needed like food, clothes and money for our bills and stuff." Stanley, a 25 year-old former street worker, explains that his older brother was killed in 2001 and his other brother was in jail, leaving him to feel as though he had to take care of his mother and his sisters and their bills:

> Like, growing up I was on some "oh, fuck school" like shit. We ain't have no money and it was just like, "we've got bills to pay." I was like, "I'm not just selling drugs out here just to be selling them." I mean I got brothers, sisters, and my mom—she got bills and all of that. My mom always took care of me, so, now it's like for me always to take care of my family. You know what I mean? I ain't the kind of dude that just wants clothes, cars, and all of that shit. I always had responsibilities. Not to say that my mom would ask me for money, but I would just either give it to her or leave it somewhere where I knew that she would find it. And I would just leave it because I don't want her to question me about it; "just take it and I'll see you when I see you." You know what I mean, I wanted to make sure my mom and my grandma and grandpa were alright with the bills and stuff.
>
> So, it's basically like that. Like, my older brother got killed in 2001. So, it's like, my one brother, he got hit on the North Side, and I can't be weak; I don't cry or nothing. My other brother at the time was in jail, and I don't have time to be weak. I have to take care of things for me and my family.

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Ryan for example, a current street worker in his thirties, said, "I didn't go to the streets until I was..well, my girlfriend became pregnant when I was in high school, and not having any family or a job or money--a way to take care of them, I needed some fast money so I started selling crack, heroin, whatever." Similarly, Maurice, a current street worker in his late thirties, explains that,

> I had kids and my lady to support. You know what I'm sayin'? Like, I had to start running around selling stones everyday, like. You could catch me on the block from morning til' night. I'll catch a few hours of sleep a day, and then I'm out in the rain, I am out in the snow, and just straight-up mashing. My kids need to eat and I need food on the table and somewhere to sleep you know..I come from a poor-ass family…

In all of these accounts, the circumstances produced by economic marginalization contributed to some street workers involvement in crime.

Similar to Ryan and Maurice above, facing economic distress, several street workers also attested that providing adequate care for their own children prompted their path to crime. Michael, a current street worker in his late thirties, explains that he got into "stuff" because he had to support his 12 year-old son and new born daughter:

> So, the majority of time my hustle would always get on was because of my employment problems, and I had a daughter who was new and a 12 year-old son too. Now when the money ran out.. I was workin' from time-to-time..but I met a guy, a white guy. And me and him, we got to talking. And he asked me if I know some people who do this and that. And I am all weary of him and all of that type of stuff. But eventually me and him got cool. And once the money ran out and I felt I needed to do some stuff, I ended up doing some things with him. I needed to generate money for us. It was always an economic thing…

Mathew, a former street worker in his thirties, similarly explains that, "I have three kids, young ones too, and I had to help take care my kids." And Mark, a 35 year-old former street worker, interestingly summed up one day in our conversation his thoughts on providing for his family and child by explaining, "I felt the pressure to provide. I mean I had no money, no job and I

figure I could hustle with my cousin—I figure I could get out of a bind. And I know that I chose them (drugs) they didn't choose me, but it was what was best for my family at the time."

Evidence shows that for some street workers, involvement in selling drugs particularly was a means of economic survival to support themselves, their families, and their children. This is consistent with previous studies showing that indicators of economic disadvantage are tied to status offenses, like selling and/or dealing drugs (Anderson, 1999; Venkatesh, 2009). It appears that for some street workers, drugs, and offending generally, are tied to their rising economic instability (Heimer, 2000). These findings suggest that poverty plays an important role in street workers path to crime.

The Desire for Money and Material Possessions

There are yet other street workers in the present study who were not necessarily as desperate to support themselves and their families. Rather, a number of street workers simply wanted money because they desired material possessions. In fact, 16 percent of current street workers and 40 percent of former street workers engaged in various forms of criminal activity to obtain money. Selling drugs, particularly as a youth, was a common occurrence among the street workers in the sample. Stanley, a former street worker in his mid-twenties, stated,

> I grew up with like..it was a back and forth thing. I grew up at my mom's house and then I would go to my dad's house. He would try to keep me for like a weekend, and then it's like it wasn't really..I mean my dad's a working guy, military and all of that, he's still working and doing his thing and all of that. But when I was younger I wasn't really trying to go on the path that he wanted me to go on; alright, you say something, but I ain't trying..like I started selling drugs when I was like thirteen right, I wanted these pair of shoes. And he wouldn't buy them for me because my grades weren't right, so I started hustling. Boom, so once I had the money for the shoes and I bought the shoes, I had some more money; and I just kept going.

Similarly, David, a current street worker in his thirties, explains his own personal initiation into dealing drugs:

But, my senior year, after..after basketball season was over..because, as long as I was under that iron fist of Burnsville's basketball program, I did what I was supposed to do. After the basketball season was over, I wanted to..we wanted to get these twin limo's for prom. And, the only other way that I could see getting it..me and my partner..at the time one of my best friends..was for us to sell crack. So, my senior year in high school is when I first started selling crack cocaine…to get our twin limo's.

After high school Mark, a former street worker in his mid-thirties, started working a summer job.

He was working, "grinding" it out for over a year when:

I mean I'm going home everyday, seeing my boys doing their thing, seeing what's going on in the neighborhood, and everyday I'm grinding, catching two buses here and two back. I might luck out and get a ride back home, but this is what I'm doing for like almost like fifteen or sixteen months after high school.

So, I had this summer job and I just weighed my options man. Now this can turn into something, or you can go ahead and just get yourself another pair of tennis shoes and an outfit. So, I chose a new outfit that might catch somebody's eye you know. It was easy for me to turn to the streets and make money fast; all my friends were in to it.

For other street workers, dealing drugs was not the only way to obtain money. For example, Barry, a 49 year-old former street worker, explains:

There's more ways to get money than drugs. There's other ways. Like gambling, I don't have to sell no drugs. Like, for one thing, I've got dice that do what I want them to do, and I hustle all of the hustlers with my dice. I got dice that I cheat with; like, those young guys don't know nothing about no 6 / 8 flats. I sent away for these dice. I got some with me (he shows them).

Yet other street workers would steal or rob from establishments or even other people. For instance, Nicholas, a 66 year-old current street worker, states, "I would go right after the money man. I'm not playin'. I would strong-arm rob someone, rob a bank, convenience store, or whatever man." And Barry, after asking him if he was afraid of what would happen if the young dealers caught him cheating in dice, he explains in our conversation that, "I mean I was eight years old when I robbed a theater—my first crime man. So, I was wild man, and to get that money I will do anything. So I'm not worried about 'em. I rob anybody or anything and will hustle any way I can." Similarly, KC, a 58 year-old former street worker, explains, "I was a

straight up bank robber. I was against the establishment and I wanted the money." Stephen, a 33

year-old current street worker, explains simply that, "…being broke, I just turned to robbing

people. That's what I did. I didn't need to hustle. I took people's shit. I didn't value money,

it's paper and I'll spend it like what it is. So when I was broke I would go back to my fucking

grind and set up another robbery."

Some street workers have an urge for even grander illicit gains. Take for example

Jonathan, a 51 year-old current street worker, who was actually in prison when:

> While I was in prison I came up with a scheme to dupe people or businesses out of their credit card information. What I was doing, was I was ordering coins and jewelry, and stuff like that from Israel, South Africa, Britain, and even from here in America over the phones in prison. I used to pay guys to stand around me and I had different women on the outside that would accept the packages at their houses right. And, when they…some of the merchants in America, when they started filing criminal complaints…and they would go to these women's houses. They went to one women's house, she had a whole cash of gold coins that came across the water. And she told on me. And, they ended up coming down to Western Penitentiary and arresting me. And, they started going to all these other female's houses, and come to find out, I was behind it all.
>
> So, they plastered me all over the news..being a multi-million dollar man and all of that. But you know, I had some money, about $70 or $80 thousand dollars, but I ain't have no couple of million dollars. You figure from me doing it from the inside (prison), having to rely on people on the outside; after I break down and give everybody their cut, there was no way that I was gonna land with the majority of the profit.

For Jonathan, greed basically drove him to commit the offense. And in his account, along with

the others described above, we see that some street workers deliberately chose to engage in acts

of crime because of the desire for money. It is possible that for some street workers, the desire

for money was tied to their poor economic conditions, and even street culture, as some simply

wanted a more secure and comfortable lifestyle. For some street workers it appears that their

economic situation prevented them from acquiring what they wanted and, thus, offending

provided these street workers with access to their "wants."

The American Dream, or the desire for monetary success is all together common in the United States. It is not surprising that crime rates are high in a nation that stresses the goal of economic success and places little emphasis on legitimate ways for achieving success (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2001). Crime is not however equally distributed, as African Americans are disproportionately involved both as victims and offenders of crime (Wilson, 1987; 1996). Wilson (1987), and yet other scholars (Anderson, 1999; Venkatesh, 2009), argue that larger patterns of racial inequality result in social isolation and ecological concentrations of the truly disadvantage, which in turn lead to structural barriers and cultural adaptations that may increase the likelihood that crime will be seen as an available mechanism for achieving material gain. Thus, because many Blacks disproportionately face blocked or limited opportunities to achieve such success, some, including a number of the street workers who participated in the present study, are willing to "pursue their monetary goals by an any means necessary" (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2001:64).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I document a series of pathways to street workers initiation into and basic continuation with drug and non-drug related crimes. We learned that for the street workers who participated in this study that there were different routes to distinct forms of offending. When investigating the path to illicit drug and alcohol related activities, the findings suggest that exposure in the home greatly influenced both current and former street workers and their decisions to use such substances as youths. Even so, drug connected family members also impacted street workers entry into drug activity as adults as well. This result is not surprising, as many of the street workers who participated in the study come from homes where family members used and even abused drugs and/or alcohol. Under such circumstances it is perhaps

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more likely to view such illegal activity as possible.

In addition to street workers exposure to drugs through their family, the findings also reveal that approval among deviant friends also influenced most street workers decision to use drugs during their adolescence and in their twenties. While most street workers did not report receiving any sort of direct pressure by their peers to use drugs, they still felt compelled to dabble and experiment with drugs in order to fit in or be "down." These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that one is more likely to be delinquent if they associate with delinquent peers (Agnew, 1991; Warr and Stafford, 1991). Approval from peers however was not the only motivating factor that induced street workers to experiment with drugs. In fact, a few of the women who participated in the study admitted that their initiation into crime stemmed from their desire to be accepted by their drug-involved male intimate partner. Although a very small number of women in the sample reported this, studies on women and crime have uncovered similar findings that women may be "coerced" into offending by males (Gilfus, 1992; Arnold, 1990).

In addition to these motivating factors, some street workers even alluded to turning to drugs as a way of dealing with life's trouble. Drugs were used to numb the experience and trauma of abuse and the stress, anxiety, and pain of losing one's job, having to support a large family, and dealing with the near loss of a loved one. Confronting a negatively valued stimuli, such as assault, and removing a positively valued stimuli, such as a job or, moreover, the near loss of a loved one, have been found to contribute to deviant behavior such as drug use (Agnew, 1992; Slocum, Simpson, and Smith, 2005). According to general strain theory, individuals may turn to drugs to cope with pain (Agnew, 1992). And the abilities of coping with such pain, especially if one has been a victim of abuse coupled with family stressors and even of violence,

may hinder or affect one's ability to desist from crime as well (Slocum et al., 2005).

Street workers entry into drug related offenses seem to be distinct from their path to other crimes. For street workers in the study, the pathway to criminal activity was also tied to economic motivation. In many cases, street workers substance abuse patterns appear to have caused the onset of their criminal behavior. That is, drug addicted street workers were more likely to have committed economic crimes for the purpose of obtaining money for drugs. For these individuals, drugs played a significant role in heightening their involvement in crime in order to support their drug habit.

While not a dominant theme in the study, some street workers path to crime developed only after experiencing economic difficulties. The inability to manage economic demands and pressures to care for themselves, their family, and especially their children resulted in their initial involvement in crime. The findings are generally consistent with previous studies that document economic hardships as a precursor to offending (Greenfeld and Snell, 1999). For some street workers, economic marginalization seemed to have shaped the onset and persistence of offending.

Finally, some street workers initiation into crime emerged because of their own motivation to acquire money and material possessions. The findings reveal that the triggers to crime are not just limited to victimization or economic oppression, but also the cultural emphasis on monetary success and weak emphasis on achieving this goal through legitimate means (Agnew, 1992; Anderson, 1999). This has been identified as a contributing factor to why some groups in the United States, like poor African Americans, are more likely to engage in crime (Messner and Rosenfeld, 2001; Wilson, 1987).

This chapter documented the factors that shape street workers patterns of criminal

offending. Understanding one's initiation into and continuation of crime is important to fully

understanding the criminal desistance process (Laub and Sampson, 2003). When attempting to

grasp what factors surround street workers and why they engaged in criminal activities, it

becomes easier to identify how to desist from crime. In addition, understanding street workers

pathways to crime may offer insights into the unique challenges they face when trying to desist.

This is the purpose of the following Chapter; and that is, in Chapter 6, the aim is to begin to

understand desistance through the OVOL employment opportunity and the realities of this type

of work.

CHAPTER 6

THE ONE VISION ONE LIFE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND REALITY

For this study, I again consider One Vision One Life (OVOL) violence prevention employment as a type of work for the 45 current and former street workers who participated in this study. Guided by John Laub and Robert Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, in this Chapter, I contextualize violence prevention employment by turning the attention to these current and former street workers and their experiences upon their employment with the OVOL organization and this type of work. In particular, Laub and Sampson (2003) in their book *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70* examined how 52 men in the course of their lives experienced personal transitions and change. And what they generally found, of which became the main thesis in their book and subsequently for their theory, was simply that it is institutional turning points, like a job, marriage, or the military, coupled with human agency and/or chance and choice that captures well the life-course reality of much of crime. In essence, Laub and Sampson (2003) take note of the structural processes and personal human aspects of chance, choice and decision-making that can lead one to change from criminal to conventional roles.

Accordingly, Laub and Sampson (2003) assert that informal ties to any of these social institutions (obtaining employment or a job, marriage, or the military) can aid the process of reform by fostering a stake in conformity (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 141). Moreover, they argue that with a good and stable, full-time job, or marriage and/or the military, that it is strong social bonds that increase social capital, making it possible to achieve certain ends that would not have been previously available (Coleman, 1988; Laub and Sampson, 2003). As a result, one has more

to lose from social sanctions and, therefore, they are less likely to participate in criminal behavior.

In line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) sort of recipe for desistance, the purpose of this study is to explore the role that OVOL violence prevention work plays in the process of reform for the street workers. Recall, that up-to-this-point, the city of Pittsburgh has generally been a segregated city and the street workers have themselves seen and experienced much in terms of racism and neighborhood and family violence over recent decades. With the introduction of drugs like heroin in the 1970's, crack cocaine in the 1980's, and yet other drugs and factors, these eldest and youngest of street workers understand and explain in Chapter 4 the near demise of their neighborhoods, along with increasing levels of incivility and personal isolation over time. And because of primarily these neighborhood and family dynamics, in Chapter 5, they go on to explain their susceptibility and initiation into and continuation with crime. For these individuals then, and generally speaking here, with the rise in prominence of the underground economy for them and their neighborhoods and their susceptibility to it, many street workers have little legitimate work experience and are hampered by their criminal background and/or record, while they are also continuing to see and experience much in terms of neighborhood transitions and change. That is to say that, while thinking about these past and present circumstances and in order to begin to understand desistance from the street workers perspectives, in this chapter I contextualize violence prevention employment by exploring the street workers OVOL employment sentiments, experiences, and the realities that they face(d) while employed by and working for the OVOL organization.

In short, in terms of the present Chapter results, I find that nearly all, if not all, of the street workers see OVOL employment generally as an opportunity, or as a chance or venue to

help get themselves on their own two-feet, to break from the clutches of the criminal justice system, to help their families, or even as a chance to symbolically help their fellow community members or the overall neighborhood. However then, the OVOL street workers also express their encounters with the realities of this type of work; or, that as street workers they must confront both the external and internal dynamics that are tied to this type of work (violence prevention). Below, I highlight some of these felt opportunities as well as the realities that these street workers in this study face(d) upon violence prevention employment for the OVOL organization. Figure 1details the street workers OVOL employment and work felt opportunities and realities.

The Street Workers OVOL Opportunity

Obtaining employment through the OVOL organization is considered by many of the street workers to be an opportunity or some form of chance for themselves, whether personally making legal money, and in some cases even for the first time, or as a chance to work and personally break free from the clutches of the criminal justice system. The street workers also see that the OVOL opportunity is a chance to work with and help their own families, as well as a second chance to build legitimate relationships, give back to the community, and to garner some level of personal piece-of-mind for past transgressions. According to Laub and Sampson (2003) and other scholars (Travis, 2005), overall, employment has the ability to help ex-offenders to secure income to take care of themselves and their families, to become productive and establish positive roles in the community, to develop important life skills, and to distance themselves from negative influences and opportunities.

Opportunity for a Legal Wage and/or Easing out of the Criminal Justice System

For the present sample of street workers specifically, nearly all of the street workers (current = 30, former = 14) discuss the idea that their OVOL work experiences represent some form of positive, legal work opportunity. In fact, over 40 percent of the street workers (current = 15, former = 5) express that violence prevention work through the OVOL organization is or was a chance to make money legally and for them to be able to get their feet up underneath them in order to support themselves and/or their families. For example, Nicolas, a 66 year-old current street worker native to the North Side explains,

> He (the Director) gave me a job; they gave me a job, and they gave me an opportunity to make money legitimately instead of me going out and getting it the wrong way. You know, now I get a check and I can take it to the bank. You know, I never in my life did that. I ain't never worked nowhere where I could get a check, take it to the bank and get cash money. I was always going to the bank and getting my own withdraw, you know what I am saying?

Similarly, Maurice, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, said: "I was like, if I can get paid for it (violence prevention work), and if it's an opportunity for me not to have to get the money the way I get it, then I'll take the opportunity." And Scott, a 48 year-old current street worker, explains, "One Vision, you know, helped me out by giving me a job. I mean they gave me an opportunity to make some money and do the right thing or I could continue to do the wrong thing."

While these street workers saw violence prevention employment as generally an opportunity to make legal money, in some cases even for the first time, some street workers were facing exigent circumstances like being on probation (N = 5), parole (N = 15), or in particular here some were caught up in the half-way house (N = 3). The half-way house is a sort of transitional space for prisoners nearing parole and release. And being that such individuals are still technically within the criminal justice system, employment is almost a must to show that they have a "home plan" or on some level a future ambition to desist from criminal behaviors.

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Lucas for example, a 39 year-old current street worker, points out one day in our conversation together what employment with OVOL meant for him while on a nine month stint in the half-way house.

> I'm in the half-way house now and I needed a job to get back on my feet. Well also, you need a job, a legit place to stay and all that before they will even look at your paperwork to get out (of the half-way house). And sometimes they won't even do that, they will sit on it for you for a month or two man. But I was straight up with my situation with the half-way house (to the OVOL Director), and that I needed employment. And I appreciated that and what they had done by bringing me in when I needed it (employment). It's just like a chance now for me to get back on my feet.

KC is a former street worker in his late 50's and he was finishing up a 37 year prison sentence when he was placed in a half-way house.

> When your in the half-way house and you figure that you hadn't been out on the street all of that time, then there are different things that you go through when you do come out that people don't necessarily recognize but you recognize. You know, you got to work on it. And you know, I did volunteer work for about four to six months here. I guess there was a period where they (OVOL) was trying to check me out to see if I am serious about being about something. And you know, they helped me get grounded. They gave me this chance here to work and it helped me get my feet up underneath me. And I was able to get situated so-to-speak..you know, make a little money the right way so that I could by all my little necessities and that type of thing.

For these street workers facing the criminal justice system or the half-way house in particular here, employment is basically a necessary condition for them to be released in the future. And according to these street workers, employment then with the OVOL organization provides them with not only an opportunity for some financial stability but also with some potential for personal and future stability.

Similarly, or along these lines, for many of the street workers who participated in this study their criminal record is a common concern that they continually express and explain during the interviews and our discussions. In fact, prior to violence prevention work and employment specifically into the OVOL organization, 35 of the 45 street workers (78%) who participated in

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this study served some form of jail or prison time for crimes generally committed.[19] Also

important to note is the fact that while 35 of the street workers here have then served some form

of prison or jail time, another 8 street workers express committing crimes in which they were

fortunate enough to not have been caught for—thus these street workers are without any formal

criminal record. However, those 35 street workers who participated in this study who do have a

criminal record, together they have served over 309 years of prison time, or have served more

than four lifetimes between them.

Importantly, and in terms of the OVOL opportunity, Chris, a 52 year-old current street

worker, feels as though his criminal record is a limitation; and because so, OVOL work is

helpful.

> Because I have limitations with my criminal record, you know, being in and out
> of prison for four years for forgery and bank fraud, this job allows me to work even with
> my limitations. It gives me an opportunity to do right, you know, to work and make some
> money for myself.

Similarly, Shaun, a 55 year-old current street worker, was working on the East Side of Pittsburgh

for the OVOL organization in a local grade school when I formally interviewed him. He

explains simply that,

> One Vision creates opportunities for us that you may not get on your own. Having a
> criminal record and all, do you think a lot of places are gonna hire me? Probably not.
> Once these employers see that I have a felony they're not gonna want nothin' to do with
> me.

Dillon, a 47 year-old current street worker, also explains that, "…and at least here (the OVOL

organization) I get another chance. It's like with other employers, even at like McDonalds, once

I check that felony box on the application, I'm guaranteed not to get a call back—no matter if I

have transportation, a permanent home, and that I am willing to work." While these street

workers up-to-this-point feel as though OVOL work is a venue for them to work and to support

themselves more honestly or legitimately, a few street workers also point out that working for

OVOL is an opportunity for them to help their own families, as well as a chance to build

legitimate relations, give back to the community, and OVOL work is just an opportunity for

some general piece-of-mind.

Opportunity to Help the Family and Others and for Some Piece-of-Mind

Several of the street workers by the time of their OVOL opportunity and subsequent

employment had families and/or kids to take care. For example, Maurice, again a current street

worker in his mid-thirties, has a total of seven children and he explains,

> …this One Vision thing is an opportunity for me..a chance to be out here, feed my kids, and it's why I be chilling because I don't want my kids to be stuck in the situation that I was in.

Also Lucas, again a 39 year-old current street worker, is still in the half-way house and he asserts

that,

> Like my wife and I, right now, as I am in the half way house, I have to keep my cool and observe because I haven't been around. And we've got a son who's 18, one's 15, and a daughter who is 10 and even though it's hard and I have conflicts with my wife and stuff, this (OVOL employment/work) makes it a little bit lighter you know.

For Lucas specifically here, despite being in the half-way house and having conflicts at home

with his wife for being away at prison for so long, OVOL employment generally is an

opportunity for work that helps ease some of the financial and even work-related burdens at

home, as Lucas has at least some form of employment to fall back on once he is released from

the half-way house.

Kimberly, a former street worker in her mid-thirties, is a single mother who has four

children herself. While she no longer works for the OVOL organization she explains further

that:

I have a twelve year-old son, and he has mentorship now. He has people like Maurice and Bobby, and they are at school with him. And if he gets suspended, I have this big wide group of people here (at OVOL) who can help me. My kid isn't limited to one neighborhood. My son can go play with all of the other street workers and their kids. You see, when I had problems with people in my neighborhood, being that I was a community coordinator (street worker), being that I was a participating mom, and whenever I have an issue I have friends. I don't have to pick up a knife, I don't have to shoot nobody, I don't have to stand out there with my hands on my hips going crazy; I have people. When there is kayaking, baseball games and stuff, I am connected. They reach me. So, I know what is going on in the city and I'm not a statistic no more.

Beyond what work can or has provided monetarily for some street workers, Kimberly feels as though the OVOL organization has been a venue to develop contacts and some level of efficacy for her and her family, especially for her son. She goes on to explain that,

Maurice was a stick-up guy. But that was the Maurice when it came to money. Stick-up kids don't shoot babies. A stick-up guy ain't gonna molest my kid unless he's a molester. I want to know, "what can you teach him?" A stick-up man is gonna tell him to not stick nobody up. And if he's out there and he see's my son getting a little bit rambunctious with that testosterone, with fighting, that stick-up dude is gonna step in there and tell all them dudes to put your guns down and stop fighting, and that's what I need him to do. And that's what I need him to do for me.

Here's another thing. It's 12 o'clock at night and I don't' know where my son is at. Oh, I am going to trust Maurice to go up to Perrysville (on the North Side) and go look for my son on the streets; yeah, that's what we need right now because I have someone I can call. And Maurice or whomever will go up into that shady area and get my son for me because no woman should be walking alone up there by herself.

Kimberly goes on to explain that despite her current absence from the OVOL organization that she still has contacts to help her and her son if a situation ever arises. And in the meantime, because of her work with the OVOL organization, and the street workers, her son may be benefitting from the overall OVOL organization and specifically some of the work that the street workers are doing in and around her area.

While nearly all of the street workers see the violence prevention work experience as an opportunity to make money honestly and legally and to generally be able to help themselves and their families, 54 percent of the street workers (current = 15, former = 9) express sentiments

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similar to Kimberly above. That is, for them the violence prevention work experience is an opportunity to not only work but is also a sort-of second chance to build legitimate relationships and to give back to the neighborhood that they may have once been a part of destroying. For some then, violence prevention work represents an opportunity for some piece-of-mind.

> Jonathan is a 51 year-old current street worker, and he explains that,

> One Vision has given me an opportunity to go out and try to, through my experiences through life, which for the most part have been negative..it has given me the opportunity to go out and try to stop other younger guys from coming down or going down the same path that I have.

More specifically, or to give some context here, Jonathan lost both of his parents by the time he was 15 years-old to alcoholism and drug addiction. He too, like his parents, is a former drug addict who has served nearly 28 years in prison, or more than half of his lifetime. Through the OVOL organization now, he explains that he has a venue to work with younger individuals in order to teach them about drugs and its affects.

> Similar to Jonathan, Arial, a 62 year-old former street worker, similarly explains that through the OVOL work opportunity that she was able to work within her means to help others around her in the community.

> Like, I go up in crack houses. My neighbor, her daughter is an addict, just like I was. And my neighbor has asked me before you know, "(y)ou know I haven't seen Christy in like four days." Ok cool, I know what that means, "so let's go look for her." I rolled up into a couple of places, you know, that I know, and ask, "yo, what's crackin'? You seen Christy?" And they will give you a run around if you don't tell them that's horseshit and that her mother wants her.

> Now, her mother can't do it (go into crack houses) because they don't know her and they don't respect folks that they don't know. But I can for numerous reasons, you know. And well that's just it. One vision, in terms of our community, is a viable organization; and for who I am and what I have done, and how I see my life, this was the perfect job for me. It's a means to an end sometimes. I can help people in my community now you know.

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When I first interviewed Arial here she was still working for the OVOL organization, however a month later she left the organization and took a position elsewhere. Nevertheless, Jonathan and Arial make the point that employment into a community-based organization like that of OVOL that seeks to help others in similar situations is beneficial to them personally, as it allows them to work, but also that it allows them to do meaningful work then while employed.

More than this sense of opportunity (above), when I interviewed Frederick, a 61 year-old current street worker, in the OVOL office in downtown Pittsburgh, I asked him generally what he liked about OVOL and his experience of being employed in this type of community-based program for work. His response was,

> What I like? It's the intrinsic rewards that one receives after working with a kid and knowing that the light or energy focus has been reconfigured into something positive; where before you start working with this kid and he was totally in the negative.

Other street workers provide similar responses. For example Kerri, a 22 year-old female street worker currently working with some of the young women in the targeted communities, expresses that, "I do just like working with the young ladies, the one's we do work with. I like talking to them; I want them to feel like they can trust me. I tell them some of my life experiences and that they can get through it like I have, and that feels good; I mean I feel like I get them and like they get me." Similarly, Daniel, a 48 year-old street worker, explains,

> Like, when I work with a kid, I feel like I've known him all of his life man just by his story. Like, I think you have to have led that life; this is the solution that I see. I think if we start from within and work out, instead of them coming down and in..no that won't work. Right now, like, a man like me, a guy who comes out of the penitentiary and tries to reach back, pull your people up and get the family together, and work with these kids is what feels right. And so what I am saying is that from my experiences here with the kids I have a lot of passion for this.

Stanley, a 25 year-old former street worker, also explains that,

> In the summer I worked a camp with a bunch of kids, and now that was a positive thing for me; getting the younger kids when they were at that younger age before everything, I

like that. So, you know, getting in their head before the other people get into their head, before the negativity gets to them, I liked that. And then I went up to the school, and in plain clothes, and things like that just felt good. You know, I still don't want these kids to get involved in the craziness like I did.

Finally, Barry, a 49 year-old former street worker, also expresses,

I mean, if it weren't for One Vision One Life, there is no telling what the hell I would be doing. It's the truth, cause you know my situation now Joe; I mean being able to help somebody I get a lot of pleasure out of that. I mean to help a young cat or a young dude with school or with a coat or a meal or a pair of shoes, that's the kind of satisfaction that you can't put no price on. I mean that's a true feeling inside of you. It's not an illusion feeling, or a material thing like money; it's priceless to be helping someone.

As Barry and some of the other street workers express above, violence prevention employment and work with the OVOL organization is personally and/or intrinsically rewarding. Also, Barry himself alludes to a larger set of points that some other street workers point out in our conversations.

That is, take for example Lucas again, a 39 year-old current street worker who I interviewed in the OVOL conference room in downtown Pittsburgh one morning.

To be honest, I liked the direction they was going at those initial meetings (in 2002 and 2003). I'm not gonna say that they had the concept a hundred percent down then, but I liked the direction of, like, targeting the young guys who was using the guns, or those who were at least playing with them. I mean using them, using them. I mean not the one's that was holding them and getting caught but the dude's who was putting them to work. And I liked that direction because we was the one's trying to get our community back, and we had a say, you know, instead of the wrong dudes getting sent up (put in jail/prison). Do you know what I am saying? That's the direction that I liked about it.

Similar to Lucas here, but more specific, other street workers explain that through the OVOL employment opportunity and with the overall goal of the organization that they feel as though they have a voice in their communities. Frank, a 32 year-old former street worker, for example said, "I felt like I was participating. I felt like I was helping, and that's better than just working for money." Leon, a 47 year-old former street worker, explains,

Well, when I came to One Vision One Life, I got a lot of opportunity working with a lot of different people. And I got to experience a lot of things in the social work aspect. You know, it wasn't just a job, it was a passion. And so, it opened up a lot of doors, a lot of people, and through One Vision I felt I had a voice and respect. People had a lot of respect for that, you trying to help people.

Michael, a 36 year-old current street worker who I interviewed on the South Side of Pittsburgh near the incline overlooking the city, expresses that OVOL employment is an opportunity but "it's not about the money because the money ain't enough to live off of. It's not about the prestige because at any given time we could get shot just like anybody else could. So, it's the feeling that you have a say, and it's the personal chance to keep changing yours and people's other than yours lives."

While some street workers then felt as though OVOL employment provided them with a voice in their communities and a chance to generally participate in society, intrinsic rewards that go beyond just collecting a paycheck for their work, there are yet a couple of other street workers who see OVOL violence prevention employment as an opportunity for personal piece-of-mind. For example, Tommy, a 36 year-old current street worker, explains simply that,

This opportunity? It's like piece-of-mind with this job. These guys are making $500 dollars every two weeks to start. I could be like, "what the fuck is that?" But I'm not worried about the money issue. It's, right now, piece-of-mind. What this means or I can get from this right now is, well..cause there's a lot of shit going on in the streets and the way it is, I can't get away from it regardless; unless I could move, you know what I mean? So, it's piece-of-mind for everything, you know, the things I've done been a part of.

Deon, a 43 year-old current street worker, puts his violence prevention work experience this way,

I mean, I'm working for you but, for the most part, I'm working for you and I'm really getting nothing out of it besides piece-of-mind. I've done a lot of dirt, and if you look at it, you all is doing this and that; you is the police, you is snitching but for real, for real, you all is helping me help other neighborhoods. And, I am actually helping you all through street cred (credit). Because when they see a powerhouse on the real side, all that negativity is gonna stop a little bit. Because you can say snitches and all of that, but

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because now you calling "Big Bear" (Deon's nickname) a snitch, you sure don't want to be on that side of the road, like. Like, whose gonna be the first one to call that out. Like, "Big Bear, Lo-Lo called you a snitch." Like, that's gonna make even regular dudes not like you. Somebody might get you for that shit. So, I look at it like this, let me help out as much as I can because I think this is the real route to go, real shit.

Deon goes on in our conversation to discuss how even past "mortal enemies" that he now see's working for the OVOL violence prevention program have changed, and that working for this organization himself gives him some form of piece-of-mind knowing that like people or individuals, such as even himself, communities can change with some help.

Like, Jeremy (a 33 year-old current street worker), like, he was my mortal enemy back when. He was a young dude; but back then, he was totally different from now. Like, back then, Jeremy, he was a wildcat, he was a wild child, you know what I mean? He was one of the G's bigger dudes, but he wasn't on my level or nothing, but he was up there. Now, I come up here (to work for the OVOL organization) and I see what Jeremy's doing and his demeanor is; I see that the boy really did change, and that's cool.

I see dudes on the team, and I don't know everybody now, but it seems like it's cool; so I'm gonna try to help out some. It's like piece-of-mind for me because now you all on the same side. For real, the youth need..I'm one person, you know what I mean, and you all a whole organization. So, if the whole organization is really out there to stop the shit, that's more than one person. And I want the streets back to where kids were having good summers. So, for me it ain't about the money, it's that I try and get piece-of-mind.

In terms of the overall OVOL employment opportunities that the street workers up-to-this-point discuss or express during our conversations, Vernon, a 59 year-old former street worker, sums it up best by explaining to me one dreary Saturday morning on the steps of an old church that,

One Vision One Life has given some of these guys an opportunity that they ordinarily would not have gotten. The young guys, and even for some of the older guys, One Vision One Life has gave these men an opportunity coming out of the (criminal justice) system that they probably would not have gotten elsewhere. One Vision has kept them on the street, out of the way. It has been a godsend to some of them; it's a blessing that speaks for itself. They are a godsend because there was no other angle for them (street workers). There was no other way out (and away from the streets or street life). So (otherwise), they may have resorted to some of the ways that got them into the system, or got them in trouble in the first place. You know, selling drugs, carrying weapons, and, as you know,

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possibly pulling the trigger. So, they have a program here, and it shows its face and it speaks volumes.

For many street workers then violence prevention work generally represents some form of an opportunity. Through OVOL employment, the potential opportunities and benefits to this type of work that street workers express in our conversations range from financial, monetary rewards to personal fulfillment or intrinsic returns. And while violence prevention employment is then seen by these street workers as a chance to help themselves, their families, the neighborhood youth and general community, the question remains: what are the realities of OVOL violence prevention employment and work?

The Street Workers OVOL Reality

The street workers violence prevention work experiences up-to-this-point have been centered primarily around the street workers expressed ideals, or social constructions, and/or mainly the opportunities and benefits that they see in this type of work generally. The realities that street workers face while participating in violence prevention work with the OVOL organization in the present section is based on the formal and informal conversations with the 45 street workers.[20] And what these conversations and the findings reveal are that there are various, yet complicated circumstances that surround street workers OVOL work environment and reality. Bobby, a 23 year-old current street worker, puts it the most simply by pointing out in an informal conversation together one morning in the OVOL office that: "I feel like I am in a fight all the way around. I've gotta watch my own back and sides, you know. It's not just in the streets, it's in here too. The office politics are tough." That is to say that the OVOL violence prevention street workers work realities are tied to, and at the same time constrained by, not only the communities that street workers are working within and for but also by the OVOL organization. Thus, beyond the ideals of helping one's self, the family in some way, and the

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community and its residents, there are certain realities that are internal to the OVOL organization that make this type of work difficult for the street workers and there are also external to the OVOL organizational realities that make this type of work generally dangerous—to the point where Bobby, and yet other street workers, feel as though they are then confronting their own "fight all the way around."

The OVOL Internal Reality

There are several street workers (current = 16, former = 7) who express that while they desire the general opportunity to help themselves and their communities, the OVOL organizational work reality is that the overall program lacks some form of programming structure and resources. More specifically, for these street workers, and in terms of the OVOL structure and resources, they feel as though they are not receiving the proper programmatic access and availability and training that they feel is necessary to be as engaged in a more positive manner with their community as they would like, or at least had previously perceived. Moreover, the OVOL organization for these individuals lacks a clear definition of its focus, and thus, for these street workers, the OVOL organizational experience is centered around three main sort of definitions of work: (1) finding and case managing a caseload of 10 to 15 clients, (2) attending violence responses and gathering information behind-the-scenes on shooting incidents and homicides, and (3) documenting these activities through a formal paperwork process. And finally, because of the nature and state of the OVOL organizational structure and resources, and generally this type of work in action, many feel that by working for the OVOL organization that they are putting their own personal and family level reputations on-the-line. According to the street workers then, the external to OVOL reality is then basically dangerous at times for them.

To begin here, let us consider first the OVOL internal structure and the street workers views on the latter point concerning OVOL's definition for work for them. In fact, Bobby, again a current street worker in his mid-twenties, explains one morning in the OVOL office that,

> To be honest, I am not always clear about exactly what we're trying to do because it sometimes switches here at One Vision. Like, sometimes we are focusing on adults and getting them the jobs that they need after prison. Or, are we focusing on at-risk teens that's carrying the guns? Or are we focusing on giving the street workers a job and turning the street workers lives around? Are we more focused on that than what we are doing in the neighborhoods? I mean we don't define it; we really don't define it.

Similarly, or along this line of reasoning, Lucas, a current street worker in his late 30's, explains simply that, "sometimes, you know, I just don't understand the methods of what we're doing here for, like, the job." Damon, a former street worker in his late 30's felt,

> …that there wasn't much to it. Really, I thought a lot is not gonna get accomplished the way it's going because it was just something would happen and we would have a little vigil and at the end of the week we just had to do this paperwork. We just have to keep kids on our caseload, our 10 kids, and do some little paperwork. And I was like, "what? I can't see a big change for them."

Other street workers have similar sentiments. For example, Jeremiah, a 31 year-old current street worker, explains that, "I think that there is little structure with them. I mean there's not much to the program. They go to a violence response, have a vigil and do some paperwork—and I don't see a big change for them."

Before proceeding, it should be mentioned and clarified here that since 2003, or the inception of the OVOL violence prevention organization, there has been a process of transition and change and moreover of trial-and-error, as the City of Pittsburgh and its overall dynamics have understandably been constantly evolving—of which the OVOL organization has worked to adjust to. The main objective of the OVOL program and its Director was and still is to attempt to slow or curb the violence in more than 34 neighborhoods in and around Pittsburgh. According to the Director, in the beginning (2003; the first sort of wave of OVOL plans and activities), the

focus was "to find the guys who had the juice," or those individuals who could approach the

known shooters and at-risk individuals to essentially talk them down and out of using their

weapons to solve their problems. However, finding that it was difficult to find the "right one's,"

or the men and women with enough 'juice' and respect to be able to implement this plan, over

time the Director moved in the direction of getting into the community by utilizing street

workers as lead individuals in providing youth with programming (running recreational centers,

basketball camps and leagues, community events, etc.) and finding at-risk persons employment

(the second sort of wave of OVOL plans and activities). Upon an evaluation of the OVOL

violence prevention program that began in 2007, it was found by Wilson et al. (2010) that they

(the OVOL organization) were having little effect on the ensuing violence in the region. Thus,

for reasons that include receiving the results of this evaluation study and the development and

continuation of our present economic crisis and still changing neighborhood dynamics, once

again the organization began retooling its focus. As far as OVOL programming and an overall

structure for street workers to work within or follow (in this second wave), Bobby, again a

current street worker in his 20's, explains:

> Working with these communities we need a constant presence at all times, and he (the Director) recognized that; he put me and a few other guys in this recreational center, up in Mount Pleasant. We were there Monday through Friday in the evenings and Sundays. Things was going good, real good. The kids came everyday, and, like you know already, we got in-front of some things.
>
> This all ended though one day when I came into the office and the Director yelled at me to come talk for a second. And he just said that we were out of Mount Pleasant; we were out as of now, today. And that was that; it just ended there. The kids were upset and they even took time to write letters and everything. I still think we should be up there. I am trying to work on funds to get that piece back because these kids need somewhere to go, and we need to be up there around them--and that's not happening. I'm sitting in here, doing really as you see, not much; not what I think I should be doing. I mean that (Mount Pleasant) was a place to go where it creates structure.

For Bobby, the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center was a place that "creates structure," or a

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structure was in place for him and his fellow street workers to work under. KC, a former street

worker in his 50's, was working for several months with youths inside of a local school for the

OVOL organization.[21] He explains that, "(w)e should have never lost programs like the B-Ball

(basketball) Academy or Mount Pleasant, and now I am worried about what's next to go." As

KC only begins to allude to here, other street workers were similarly asked at some point in this

organizational transition process to drop their more structured programming efforts. Such efforts

included not only the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center then, but over time also the OVOL B-

Ball Academy, the Midnight Basketball League, varying in school and out-of-school post-ups, as

well as visits to the local juvenile detention center, and other community-based events. That is to

say that OVOL yet again began transitioning around 2008 and 2009 towards a third wave of

OVOL plans and activities. In yet another move to affect violence more directly, as this is the

main objective of the organization, the Director began moving OVOL and his street workers in

the direction of assisting those in transition from prison to the streets, or with the re-entry process

by helping these individuals to look for and find stable employment. The Director also began

working with David Kennedy and his violence prevention model in order to again attempt to

work to successfully affect violence around Pittsburgh.

As a result of the street workers generally experiencing such organizational and work

transitions and seemingly constant transformations, it is a little more understandable as to why

and how, for them, they are "not always clear about what it is exactly that (they are) trying to

do." Importantly however, for the street workers, three main sort of definitions of work have

become basically a constant throughout the OVOL organizational change processes, or are basic

staples to the OVOL organization. Internal to the OVOL organization specifically here, one of

the main sort of definitions of work for street workers has become that of finding and working

with a caseload of about 10 clients. Stephen, a current street worker in his 30's, explains his caseload experience and general thoughts.

> I mean I got a kid right now who is 16. His birthday is on July 23rd. This dude is getting money and he's 16 years-old making probably about $15,000 to $20,000 thousand dollars; or that's at least what he's got. If he don't do what he do, he won't eat. Mom don't care—let him do what he do, so he comes to me for other than the norm. You know what I am saying? They (caseload clients) want to work, but they're stuck in their environment. And we don't do anything, you see what I am saying? And I get mad. I'm frustrated because I can't get them (caseload)..pull them out of their square, and I don't have nothing for them but conversation. There's no jobs out there and they (the OVOL organization) don't help me with this dude who wants out.

While trying to work with the caseload clients, several street workers, like Stephen, are not only feeling the pinch of the dwindling programs but also access to some form of resources in order to help them help their clients. Along these lines, and in terms of street workers OVOL work experiences, training for this change toward caseload management has accordingly also been minimal. For example, Kerri, a 22 year-old current street worker, explains one afternoon in our conversation together in the OVOL office that,

> I have seen so much. And to be honest, I didn't really learn what I was supposed to learn because I watched so much of the bull-crap and the gossiping (in the OVOL office and organization). You know, people not liking this person or that person. I mean me and Amy, we're confused about a lot of things (that have to do with the job). I haven't even gotten proper training on how I am supposed to do this caseload and paperwork stuff. I mean one minute it was I need to submit this (paperwork) once a week, then two times a month, but then it was turned to one time (a month) by someone. And now it's two times. And we're supposed to call them (their caseload clients) every week now too.

Along this line of reasoning, Tracy, a 30 year-old former street worker, states that, "(y)ou know for this caseload stuff all I was given was a three year-old job list. They would say, "call this number and see if it's still in service."

More than this (above), Vernon, a former street worker in his late 50's, explains that the implementation of caseload management has been generally a challenge for the street workers to even begin to handle.

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One of the things that the Director has attempted to do, and it's been somewhat of a failing was..or that is the street workers have a case of young folks that they work with, interact with, encourage and convince that "you don't wanna go down this path because your not capable of dealing with that at this point." And most who go down this path don't want to go down this path; but once your placed in the system all bets are off; you have to do what you got to do. But you have some street workers that weren't capable of carrying a caseload. Some of them looked at it as a joke. Some of them it takes some training. I mean you have folks out here that have undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees, and it's a challenge for them to carry a case and maintain a case properly. So it was a failing in some sense; perhaps to a large extent because of no training and the inability to provide these guys (street workers) with the proper stability. But, on the flip side, it was not a fail. It was a success.

As a result, Bobby, a current street worker in his 20's, expresses that,

I don't have a system, and not always a process to how I do things. I don't have, or never had, any training about how to deal with these kids and this situation in the community; it's all been on the fly. It's all this (pointing at a piece of paper)..it's just me making it up and thinking it up as I go.

The OVOL street workers "realities" with this type or definition of work up-to-this-point has been one of experiencing the lack of access and availability of programming and to resources, as well as caseload management training and experience generally.

Under these circumstances above, the OVOL Director continues to push forward by specifically charging his street workers with documenting their caseload process and progress so as to properly assess street workers successes and potential failures with their caseload clients. For street workers, the documentation or paperwork process is another main sort of feature or definition of work for them. In terms of street workers sentiments and experiences however with this documentation/paperwork process, Michael, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, blatantly expresses that, "…the paperwork ain't doing shit. You have to report weekly or whatever and people now are just reporting stuff..making stuff up." Vernon also explains that, "(t)he problem now was the guys not documenting; they guys were not really interested—that's the problem." Herman, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, he points out that,

In this job there's basically two things, the work and the actual paperwork demonstrating that things have been done. And a lot of times the focus has been here on whether the paperwork has been on point, and whether the paperwork is demonstrating..rather than if the job is actually getting done. So there have been certain cases when the people are good at writing out the paperwork but they don't actually have the commitment to actually do the job and get the job done. You know what I am saying? So here (at OVOL), the way it is now, anyone can write good paperwork out and spend little or zero time in the community or with what's left of our programming.

Basically, what it comes down to is we're really not looking at the problems and looking at are we really affecting the kids on our caseload? Are we really getting the work done? And not just are we getting the paperwork done effectively, but what are they (the street workers) doing with their caseload?

Jack, a current street worker in his 40's, also explains: "I mean as far as my experience here, they (the OVOL organization) is too worried about creating a paper trail than working on the human aspect of things. They are requiring us to get SSI (Social Security) numbers from the kids, and sometimes the documentation that is put down didn't even happen. They just focus too much on the paper trail." And Barry, a former street worker in his late-forties, explains one major dimension of the reasoning for street workers inattentiveness to the paperwork process.

Well some of these guys are illiterate you know. They can't really write. But that's just saying. For real though these higher-ups at One Vision got our paperwork and we don't know where it's going or whose looking at..reading it. Do you see what I am saying? I mean that's information; it could be snitching if it goes to the investigators or police..you know, the wrong people for our purpose.

For Barry and even other street workers there is an overemphasis on the paperwork process and seemingly a lack of transparency and/or trust as to who, beyond the OVOL organization and management, is actually receiving and/or reading this paperwork. According to these street workers, this sort of concern is especially important when attending and documenting incidents revolving around violence responses or shooting incidents and homicides.

Accordingly, violence responses and gathering information behind-the-scenes on shooting incidents and homicides has been a constant activity for the OVOL organization, and it

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is the final sort of main definition of work for street workers. That is, while working for the

OVOL organization, a core aspect for OVOL and its street workers is the violence response. The

OVOL organization works on the premise that some violence is inevitable, but as a program they

will respond to neighborhood shooting incidents as a group. Essentially the purpose is for the

organization and thus its street workers to protest violence and send a message of "no shooting"

to the community. At the same time, the street workers are to utilize their neighborhood

contacts, experiences, and general pull or "juice" to constantly gather information and

knowledge of any potentially dangerous situations and feuds that may be brewing in the

community and document these activities. Importantly, from there, it is their job to participate in

the intervention, suppression, and even mediation of these potentially dangerous situations. In

terms of street workers experiences with these organizational and violence related activities, take

for example Damon, a former street worker in his 30's. He discusses here his experiences with

the violence response.

> There wasn't no camaraderie between the street workers; you know, no cohesion between us. There was nobody..it was like your on your side. It wasn't no cohesion between us. I mean when we did get together, you know..if there was a (violence) response on our side (South Side of Pittsburgh), the people from that side would come; but it was just us. And if there was a response over there (in another neighborhood) then those people (from that neighborhood) wouldn't come. And we would talk about it at the (organizational) meetings all of the time, but nothing would change. We would talk about it all of the time, but it was the same thing—people would not come to the responses. And that's one thing that I can say about the South Side street workers, we went to all responses (in all neighborhoods). And that's the one thing we did, we would go no matter where it was at. Me and Stephen, no matter what we would go. We was the one's like, "how come we're in Manchester now? How come we're the only one's here? Where are the Manchester people?" And if we were on the Hill, "where's all of the Hill people?" We're up here and people (neighborhood residents) are looking at us crazy and saying, "who are them?" And we don't even have the people from the Hill to let them know that we're alright, "they're with us; they're not just strangers." And that's the thing that I don't like. Nobody was there for us man, and Stephen is always freaking out. Like, "how are we the only one's here, and we're first and ain't nobody from the Hill even here."

Internal to the OVOL organization, Damon, Stephen and yet other street workers experiences

with OVOL's violence responses seem to revolve around the idea that there is a lack of participation amongst the street workers and a lack of ability or willingness on the part of the OVOL management to change this sort of attitude. Thus lacking some level of reliability and cohesion on the part of their fellow street workers, Damon feels that externally he is putting himself in harm's way by arriving in another, unfamiliar neighborhood without other local street workers present to essentially vouch for him and his presence.

Similarly, Frank, a former street worker in his 30's, explains the sort of OVOL internal, and external (expanded below), dynamics that he had to confront while working behind-the-scenes on shooting and homicide incidents.

> So, the past years I've been having problems with doin' shootin' reviews because all the main players in the game and the guys and the families they just know me from working with kids. The game has changed you know; it's more dangerous and there's different players than from before when I was really in it, you know. I haven't put in any work or sold any drugs or did anything much in these streets out here lately. And so they (OVOL) would send me in places to just get information from families or to investigate shootin's. So, I came to the Director personally and I said, "we need to sit and talk. I don't want to lose my job or anything like that but I have some things to do with my, like, security, and I feel like I'm in harms way; and I feel like I really need to talk to you."

> And listen, I came to him over the phone because I can never really get a chance to really meet with him because he's always busy. So, I'm talking to him and I said, "I can't do the shootin' reviews or maybe you could get some of the other guys from the Hill who know the guys or the people and maybe they can start letting me go out there with them and then maybe I can start writing out the paperwork." But as far as doing interviews and talking to mom's, the victims and all of that..Black people have this code system, and they (OVOL management) know this because they Black they own self..that the snitchin' thing is so far gone in America that nobody wants to tell on nobody because they afraid something is gonna happen.

> So, when they (the community members) see me (for shooting reviews) they immediately think that I am snitchin' or that I am reporting to the cops because the major players don't know me. It's like, I go to a shootin' scene and I'm standing around up there with my (OVOL) badge and stuff on, like my ID, and there's like people there looking at me like I'm an investigator. So, they're not going to even give me the information.

> And I told him, like, "I can't do no shootin' reviews cause they thinkin' I'm an undercover cop or an undercover snitch. We need to do something better.." because I

know he (the Director) kept saying that we was having problems with the shootin'
reviews and that he was gonna fire dudes if we don't tighten that up. And I told him that,
"maybe we can like work at something." And he said, "aww man, I don't wanna here
that, those excuses. You knew this when you took the job. I ain't trying to hear that shit."

So he started talking to me bad. And I'm like now thinking, "what do you want?" I mean
you all sittin' there and make all this money, you buy all these fine cars, and put rims on
'em, and your sittin' up here out of danger talking about you wanna change the game but
you don't wanna even come out to the shootin' reviews. You all only come out there
when there's a camera out, or the news, or the Mayor gonna be there. Otherwise you send
us to all these places by ourselves. You put me in harms way, danger, and I'm not the
only one your putting in danger. Then you put us out here to write up all of these
reports..we don't know where this documentation is going. You keep screaming for
documentation, but then I don't even know what your doin' with my documentation or
whose reading it. You see what I am sayin'? It's, like, dangerous for us.

Frank's point here is not only that violence prevention work in the community is potentially

dangerous but also that internally the OVOL organization's managers and Director may be unfair

in their approach toward street workers generally, as Frank feels that the organization is willing

to sacrifice his and the other street workers safety in order to succeed and to keep the

organization functioning. In terms of Frank's experience here, this means that along with the

potential dangers, that he feels he is again treated unfairly, "talked bad" too, and his overall

livelihood or OVOL employment is constantly in jeopardy. Likewise, and because of the

potential threats and dangers of the community and the existence of this "code," Frank is

concerned about the OVOL documentation process and being considered a "snitch" in the streets

or in his neighborhood; thus, Frank is unsure here of who is given access to these materials and

what repercussions may come from him and the other street workers developing these files.

Overall, for street workers, a central point made about their experiences with violence

prevention work revolves around the idea of 'professionalism.' Internally for example, Amy, a

current street worker in her 30's, explains that,

I think just the way like the employers run this..like, we're not a team. Like, everyone
wants to have their titles. And I think that's what I hate. Because in order for us to work,

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we have to work together as a team; there is no 'I' in any of this to try to help these communities. And I think that's the biggest barrier that we have. Everybody wants to be known..their titles are what's important and that's not what I like.

More than this, Frank feels that the OVOL organizational managers,

> …they get around funders and stuff and they talk good to us (while with funders). But when the funders and ain't know one else around, and we having our own personal meeting's up at the (OVOL) office..we just talk like, "motherfucker, bitches..dah, dah, dah." You know what I'm saying, cussing, like, "what the hell," and all of that. And those funders, you don't sit there and say, "you motherfuckers this is what I'm doin' with my grant money." No, when all of those people come up there all it is is, "yes ma'am, yes sir." What I am saying is that they always came to us on some gangster shit, like, that makes you, like, you can't trust 'em. If one person is always trying to slide you five and "oohhh nigga this and nigga that." You don't wanna hear all of that jib and jabby..all that jitterbug shit. You wanna here professional. The way they look is the way they should come (at you/treat you). There is no professionalism when it came between workers and the administration of One Vision One Life. We was talked to like we were still in the game.

At the same time, and as Damon alludes to above and David, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, expresses here, "some of these guys (street workers) that were hired wasn't what they said they was..or what they represented. They were ghost employees you know." Vernon, a former street worker in his 50's, further explains that, "(t)he reality is that some of these young guys would come up here (the OVOL office) looking and acting gangster. They were still peddling drugs and carrying weapons..they used it (the OVOL organization) as a smoke screen if you will; they were a bunch of bullshitters." And Bobby, a current street worker in his 20's, adds that,

> Some of them (street workers) are ghost employees, you know. And what this means is that the paperwork is basically required once a week..so the lack of supervision in this type of field where you got people out in different neighborhoods and who is not under direct supervision of the One Vision managers, it allows them a certain freedom. And so, if it's the type of person without that type of commitment, then they'll take that freedom in a negative direction and they will just do enough to evade the prying eyes in the office..and they'll fill out the paperwork so it will look like you are dealing with your clients, and it will look like you are doing what you need to do, but you really aren't.

In brief, for street workers, their internal to OVOL experiences revolve around a number of

complicated internal work structures and relationships, some professional and some not. Recall, in the beginning of this section, Bobby, again a current street worker in his 20's, mentions that he feels as though he is "in a fight all the way around" while working for the OVOL violence prevention organization. While the latter portion of this section points to some external to OVOL issues, there are yet others that combine the street workers sort of internal and external to OVOL experiences.

The External to OVOL Reality

Recall, once again, from Chapter 4 that the city of Pittsburgh and specifically the 45 street workers who grew up in the city over the past decades had, by the new millennium, seen and experienced much in terms of the city's social atmosphere, including changes in their own neighborhood and family dynamics. And while the street workers who participated in this study convey that the OVOL organization is an opportunity for them, and one that they are thankful for, they also feel that there are issues or nuances that they experience and must confront with this type of work that is heavily based on the social atmosphere of their inner-city environments. As such, during our conversations together over time about their OVOL work experiences, at the heart of the external to OVOL reality, several street workers (over 30%, or, current = 7, former = 8) feel that by working for the OVOL organization that they are putting their own personal and family level reputations on-the-line in their communities. Frank, a 32 year-old former street worker, states simply that, "it's dangerous work. It puts you in danger out there." He elaborates that, "(t)here's a code of ethics in the streets that you don't..that you just don't cross. And the thing about it is is that they (the OVOL organization) want us to generate information on shootin' reviews."

Similarly, Dan, a former street worker in his mid-thirties, more explicitly states: "(y)our reputation is on-the-line here. Your playin' a game with people in the streets who don't wanna talk anyhow; and they see us coming with our (OVOL) badge and they think we're gonna snitch or something on 'em." Tommy, a 36 year-old current street worker, also points out that, "(i)f your not careful you become the target; it's just wild out here right now." And Tracy, a former street worker in her thirties, sums these latter points up best:

> I don't care what anyone says now, but you are staking your reputation..you are really putting yourself out there by putting your name with One Vision, and everybody feels that way. And so, if your still signing the champions of what's going down up there, and your really saying something to your community, some people (neighborhood residents) are gonna look at you crooked (and think your crooked or "snitching"). And so, your really putting yourself out there on-the-line in your neighborhood. That's a big thing for these guys and women to do because that is what they are connected to; that is their neighborhood; that is their life.

According to these street workers, by working for the OVOL organization generally, and specifically when working to learn about and potentially intervene in and mediate violence and homicides, they feel that they are putting their own personal safety at risk.

> Nicolas, a current street worker in his mid-sixties, explains in more detail that,

> When I first started with One Vision One Life I heard that there was a lot of guys telling in One Vision. And word on the street was that the dudes in One Vision were snitches. I inquired about that with different guys, and I met a lot of the guys that was here before me. It wasn't for me to judge them or what not because I didn't know them. But that's something that I heard on the street.

Shaun, a 55 year-old current street worker, elaborates:

> It's dangerous here because of the mentality of the people that we're working with. I never thought it (the OVOL organization) was a bunch of snitches; I just think that there is a whole lot of talk on the streets because when this (OVOL organization) started dudes couldn't get the jobs, so they started saying negative things about the organization. And that's what dudes do in our communities. You know, they can't get in, so they go out and they start saying negative stuff about other guys that's in the group.

While many of the street workers use this sort of "crabs-in-a-barrel" metaphor to describe the

neighborhood 'mentality' and how gossip spreads and reputations are generally tarnished, some

street workers have actually experienced physical threats and danger.

Let us take for example David. David is a current street worker in his mid-thirties and

he describes in an interview one morning an actual incident that he and some of the other street

workers believe was somehow related to working for the OVOL organization.

> So I'm working (for OVOL), doing good, or at least better, you know…I mean
> everything is cool and I'm head down East Ohio Street. I'm riding on Bonneville Street,
> and a car comes off of the highway.. a truck, and (they) just starts shooting at me. I mean
> just shooting at me; I'm ducking down, windows shot out the back, bullet holes in the car
> door and-the-whole-nine. I shoot up a one way for the truck to not be able to keep
> following me; and when you come down Bonneville Street you come to a "Y" in the
> road. But when you come to the "Y," it runs right into North Avenue. I go this way
> (pointing his finger down at the table), and my cousin lives right here. And so, you know,
> I go down that one-way and I'm chilling at my cousins' house on the curb. The cops
> come, and they looking at the car and asking me if I want to file a report or whatever.
> And they take the report, and I didn't know anything except that it was a white truck.
> They filed a report and they leave.
>
> And now I'm standing there like, "fuck!" And, I just get in the car and go home. Like,
> "fuck it!" I went home; just like that, "fuck it!" I get in the car, shot-out windows and-
> the-whole-nine and I just go home. I went into work the next day like nothing happened. I
> came in, got composed and just told Rich and Frederick what happened.
>
> …(i)t got to the point where dudes out in the hood were like, "I'm gonna keep the word
> out man." "Hold up man, like, we've got to handle this D." And I was like, "naaw man,
> wasn't nobody shooting at me." And like who else got a fucking purple car? Cause it's
> my girls' car, with a car seat in the back. So, they were like, "those mother fuckers knew
> it was you."

Deon, a current street worker in his forties, explains David's situation:

> It was like David went through the shit. Like, for David to work for One Vision and to be
> where he was..David was listed as a snitch. Like, he was a snitch, snake, he's working
> with the police. Shit, people was shooting at his car and all types of shit. Like, he went
> through the hail storms for it (working for the OVOL organization).

While David was fortunate in this particular situation, at least four other current and former street

workers were not, as each had been shot at at one time while working for the OVOL

organization.

Also important, or beyond one's personal reputation and the actual physical threats and dangers that David and even other street workers have experienced, is the fact that the street workers working for the OVOL organization also express being confronted with the sort of proximate causes of crime on a day-to-day basis.

Accordingly, Samuel, a current street worker in his late fifties, explains that,

As I know you know Joe, it can just be dangerous at any given moment in the streets. You know, these guys are shooting, and they don't go to the range like the police do; they just be throwing bullets indiscriminately, and that's why kids is getting shot and even people that don't have nothing to do with it—because they don't even know how to shoot. And honestly that's the risks of working in the streets, and not to mention living in the inner-city; it's all part of it.

Jack, a current street worker in his late forties, explains an actual situation where he himself could have been or even was in danger.

There's a lot of death in the streets man. And I mean I've honestly had a kid die as I was holding him after he got shot. This was last March down on Washington Street on the North Side. They called him Dollar Bill, and I just happened to be riding (driving) by and Mrs. McLaren yelled to me that a guy got shot. So, I backed into the alley way..and I don't know if the shooter is still there or what but my instinct told me that I had to get out of the car and go back there. And there was a young kid there bleeding. Now I was holding him and his legs up and he was trying to take some breadths, you know, and he died right there.

I mean I don't like putting my life on the line for $400 dollars a week. I mean I am out here and I don't know if the shooter is still in the area or if he's gonna come back and make sure that he's (the kid/victim) done or what; or even do me. But like you don't really even think about those things; it's really a reactionary thing. But even by saying that, it doesn't matter, it's just dangerous sometimes being out here.

In short, some street workers (over 30%) working for the OVOL organization to prevent violence then appear to be, or at least have been, facing and personally experiencing potential dangers as it relates to this type of work (OVOL violence prevention). According to Frank (above), in fact, there is a "code of ethics" in the streets of Pittsburgh. When working for the

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OVOL organization, and trying to carry out its sort of main definitions of work, the street workers express that they are putting their personal and even family reputations on-the-line and thus may even potentially be labeled or considered a 'snitch.'[22]

Conclusion

For the street workers who participated in this study, OVOL represents an opportunity and a potential response and alternative to their past personal and criminal experiences. That is, for some street workers OVOL is simply an opportunity and a way for employment and a legitimate wage. Importantly, for these street workers then they generally see that OVOL is an opportunity to potentially distance themselves from the streets as well as from the criminal justice system. At the same time, OVOL represents something larger than just an opportunity for themselves. Essentially, following the emerging field of community justice, OVOL represents a sort of engine or a conduit of personal, family, and neighborhood change. With OVOL, the street workers express benefits from the intrinsic rewards of working with youth, while also feeling as though they are involved with the community and that they have a personal voice. As Deon basically alludes to above, OVOL is an organization that is bigger than any one person who desires a change. Ideally then, with an organization like that of OVOL backing a group of like minded street workers, OVOL may potentially provide them again with, on the most basic level, an opportunity as well as with a general sense of empowerment.

However, the sort of 'realities' of participating in OVOL violence prevention work is also an eye-opening experience for the street workers. Many of the street workers describe their experiences with this type of work as dangerous, coupled with the fact that there is a lack of structure, resources, training, and, as the OVOL organization continues to transition and transform over these past years to tackle violence generally, they (street workers) ultimately

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express that there is an overemphasis on the paperwork process that follows the lack of a clear definition of work. Thus, working with caseload clients and community members to gather information on shooting incidents and homicides, street workers feel as though they are "in a fight all the way around" as they must manage to negotiate their way through the community, its "code of ethics," and the OVOL organizational work structure.

The street workers who either currently work or have worked for the OVOL violence prevention organization make up the foundation of a larger movement in Pittsburgh that resembles a community justice type of approach to preventing violence. As a field, community justice emphasizes citizen and residential involvement and empowerment, and thus accordingly such individuals are to be given a voice or say in their communities. However the question remains here: what does violence prevention work and the experiences within this type of work mean for a group of former gang or clique members, drug dealers, hustlers, known shooters, and probationers and parolees in terms of their own personal change processes?

CHAPTER 7

VIOLENCE PREVENTION WORK, DESISTANCE, AND OTHER EXPERIENCES

The purpose of this study is again to address the matter of what do the One Vision One Life (OVOL) street workers violence prevention work experiences mean to them and their desistance processes? In particular, in an environment where street workers work to intervene in and work to change the lives of others who are similarly situated, it seems reasonable to seek an understanding of street workers own transitions from criminal to conventional roles. As street workers already have a level of street intelligence and knowledge of their neighborhood and its activities (please see Chapter 4 for more details), this could enhance the effectiveness of the street workers using that information to prevent crimes and violence. However, the effects of OVOL's subsequent violence prevention work model on its street workers own reform has not yet been explored. In order to improve street work practices, there is a need to better understand the street workers desistance processes, and to examine how it is being affected by OVOL and any other factors.

As a theoretical guide toward answering these questions Laub and Sampson (2003) examine the mechanisms that underlie the desistance processes for 52 men over the course of their lives. For these scholars, work, generally, is a potentially potent aspect in this process. That is, in their age-graded informal social control theory, providing former criminals or convicted felons with work may help to trigger a transitional type of process for them that ultimately may lead to personal change from criminal to conventional roles and lifestyle. In fact, Laub and Sampson (2003) in their analysis of the 52 Glueck men specifically, find that there are fundamentally four mechanisms that they know of in terms of work that may potentially lead to a process of desistance (detailed below). However, seeking a theory that links structure and

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human choice and chance, Laub and Sampson (2003) contend that desistance is not a single event but a process realized over time. In other words, human agency is a process that is reciprocally linked to situations and larger structures (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

The preceding Chapter, Chapter 6, describes the 45 street workers general sentiments on the opportunities that they feel they are receiving by working for the OVOL organization, as well as contextualizes some of the 'realities' that they face with this type of work. In accordance with Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical framework, the findings up-to-this-point reveal that a number of street workers (71%) brought a shared understanding of their experiences with the role that violence prevention work may play in the initial shift from a criminal lifestyle to a crime-free life. That is, through OVOL employment, the potential desistance initiating opportunities street workers express in our conversations range from receiving financial, monetary rewards to personal fulfillment or intrinsic returns. Violence prevention employment is then seen by these street workers as a chance that they are grateful for; or, accordingly, that the OVOL work opportunity gives them the chance to generally help themselves, their families, the neighborhood youth and general community. However, according to desistance and change literature, these experiences may lead only to the initial reasoning for avoiding crime and the first step towards change (Earls, Cairnes, and Mercey, 1993; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Uggen, 1999). The second step thus involves actually desisting and sustaining such change. As Earls et al. (1993: 291) points out, "the skills required for initiation behavior change are usually different from those required for maintaining it."

Accordingly, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that it is "situated choice" that best describes this entire process. In the context of work, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that there are again four fundamental mechanisms, coupled with human agency, that they find that may

initiate and continue to facilitate the desistance process. First off, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that upon employment there are mutual ties that may bind workers and employers and thus in affect may increase informal social control and lead to a cessation in criminal behavior. Laub and Sampson (2003) therefore believe and emphasize the reciprocal nature of the investment in social capital between the workers and employer. Therefore, employers often times take chances in hiring workers in hopes that their investment in the employee will pay off. Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical point here is that interdependency is reciprocal and embedded in the social ties between individuals and social institutions. Moreover, what Laub and Sampson (2003) attempt to explain here is how change in delinquent or criminal behavior is initiated. As such and theoretically speaking then, when an employer takes a chance on a former delinquent or criminal, this may foster a return investment from the employee in the job itself, which in turn inhibits the deviant or criminal behavior of the employee (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 46).

Laub and Sampson (2003) go even further into the role that work plays in the general desistance process by also arguing that work, especially full-time work, can additionally lead to a meaningful change in the routine activities of the employee. Work then has the ability to help to restrict criminal opportunities and thus is likely to reduce the probability that criminal propensities will be translated into actions (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 47). That is to say, for example, that men and women in stable employment situations are typically subjected to more structured activities and thus have less free time than those others not employed or even employed intermittently. Work then, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), is central to structured routines; and the fact is that people who work are kept busy and are less likely to get into trouble.

Third, for Laub and Sampson (2003), desistance also depends on the nature of the work. Depending on the nature of work, employers can provide direct social control for their employees. That is, employers can essentially keep their employees in line. And finally, work can give a person a sense of identity and can provide meaning to their lives (Laub and Sampson, 2003). Thus meaning that having a good job then means that a person can keep one's honor and dignity, and it can, for that person, reflect competence, social utility, and self-esteem (Goodman, 1956; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Vaillant and Vaillant, 1981). Having a good job, according to Laub and Sampson (2003) and their age-graded informal social control theory, is one of the principle mechanisms that enables people to be taken seriously, to be seen as useful, and work is a place where one can grow-up.

On top of work or employment as one of the four core mechanisms in the desistance process, Laub and Sampson (2003) also consider the role that human agency or choice and chance plays in the within-individual criminal desistance process. In addition to structural transitions, like finding work or employment, Laub and Sampson (2003), as well as other scholars, argue that the personal decision to desist itself, or human agency, produces behavioral change (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996). Research on these sort of cognitive and behavior shifts emerges from symbolic interactionist theory, which suggests that the impact of "turning points" (such as employment and job stability) on an individual's life may depend on the actors' level of awareness about their problems, motivation and openness to change, or interpretation of events (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001). For Laub and Sampson (2003), turning points are a key to their age-graded informal social control theory and to people's lives generally as they may represent "hooks for change" (Giordano et al., 2002; 1000). Again, seeking a theory then that links structure and human choice and chance, Laub and Sampson

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(2003) therefore contend that desistance is not a single event but a process realized over time. And that is to say that in terms of their general middle-range theory, human agency is a process that is reciprocally linked to situations and larger structures, or is a part of the theoretical concept of "situated choice."

For Laub and Sampson (2003) and their study of the 52 Glueck men up to age 70 however, their work-crime connection is based largely on these 52 men and their general employment. That is, conducting follow-up interviews of the life experiences that these 52 men have had as they look back on their lives and describe and tell their own personal stories, for Laub and Sampson, these men in their empirical analysis have each been employed into some type of work.[23] While the type of work or type of specific employment obtained and worked seems to vary across the 52 Glueck men, as Laub and Sampson (2003) were respectfully very general here, Laub and Sampson (2003) found that some of these men felt that work, generally speaking, aided in their criminal desistance process or, at the very least, served as a sort of 'hook for change.' The problem here however is that Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory of crime has then essentially never been meaningfully put into a contemporary context like that of OVOL as the institutional turning point for its street workers. And, at the same time, there has been surprisingly little scientific inquiry into the area of street workers specifically and their own personal experiences and criminal desistance processes. Therefore, up-to-this-point, little is known about the processes that account for whatever success or lack of success that street workers have in refraining from crime; and, much of what is known of the desistance processes, is largely found in or based primarily on Laub and Sampson's (2003) research on 52 of the original 500 Glueck men.

In terms of the present study, and while the OVOL employed street workers are receiving these sort of initial desistance related type of opportunities (described above), in Chapter 6 we also learn and contextualize the fact that these street workers are also facing OVOL work related internal and external 'realities.' In particular, organizationally, the OVOL violence prevention program has undergone much in terms of transitions and transformations and change in order to learn about and keep up with the evolving nature of its targeted neighborhoods and violence generally. Importantly, for the street workers, internal to the organization, more than a majority of them (51%) point out that they are, or at least were, experiencing strains with the OVOL programming structure, resources, training, and thus amongst other things that there is an overemphasis on the paperwork process. The three main sort of definitions of work that emerges for the street workers then revolve around: (1) building and maintaining a caseload, (2) ongoing formal documentation and paperwork for their activities, and, (3) attending violence responses and investigating shootings and homicides. It is here, internal to the OVOL organization, where street workers generally feel that the OVOL organization lacks "clear definitions" of work, sense a lack of community-wide effectiveness, and they themselves are experiencing organizational-related strains. And, on top of the OVOL related internal structure and strains, external to the OVOL organization, the 'realities' are that some street workers (30%) feel as though they are facing potential threats and dangers while on the job.

The question then remains here: what do these OVOL-related experiences mean for the street workers desistance processes? More specifically, the focus of this chapter is to answer the questions: (1) what impact do current and former street workers violence prevention work experiences have on the strategies they adopt to successfully or unsuccessfully desist from crime? And, (2), what potentially other long term experiences do current and former street

workers have that may lead them to successfully or unsuccessfully reform?

Therefore, in continuing to explore the street workers desistance processes, and particularly the role that the street workers see OVOL violence prevention work playing in this process, I begin by introducing the reader to the few (13%) street workers (current = 4, former = 2) who mention that OVOL violence prevention work specifically was, or even currently is, a means for them to avoid illicit or deviant behavior. In particular, David, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, has been working for the OVOL organization since its inception in 2003. In order to make more sense of the street workers desistance processes, particularly in light of OVOL work experiences and guided by Laub and Sampson's (2003) theory, David's story will be detailed below, followed by the remaining OVOL work related desisters (N = 5). Interestingly however, when asked how they manage to refrain from criminal activities over the long-term, the majority of current (N = 21), and even a few former (N = 2), street workers claim that beyond OVOL employment that they are confronting, or have confronted, other circumstances that motivated a more personal commitment to change (question number two above). Following David and those street workers who assert OVOL violence prevention work as a means to refrain from crime, I then leave it to these other street workers to describe their circumstances and how they made their own personal commitment to change.

In order to examine the circumstances and processes involved in desistance from offending, I investigate 29 current (N = 25) and former (N = 4) street workers.[24] In the present sub-sample, these street workers have described a number of methods and/or pathways out of crime. When asked how they managed to refrain from criminal activities a few street workers (21%) in this sub-sample mention OVOL violence prevention work as a means to avoid illicit or deviant behavior (N = 6). The majority (79%) of this sub-set of street workers however assert

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that there are or were other circumstances beyond OVOL work that facilitate(d) their process of change, and, that is, that some made a more personal commitment to change (N = 15), family dynamics were involved for a few (N = 2), and the proximate causes of crime and eliminating peer relationships were described by yet other street workers (N = 6). In the following sections the purpose is to explore and contextualize the street workers own methods for desistance.

OVOL Violence Prevention Work and Criminal Desistance

In order to abstain from crime, the structural and personal transition of obtaining a job with the OVOL violence prevention program was mentioned as a resource by a small sub-set of the current and former street workers who participated in this study. More specifically, of the 45 current and former street workers who participated in the present study, 13 percent of these street workers (current = 4, former = 2, or 21% of the sub-sample) claim that securing violence prevention employment and working for the OVOL organization actually facilitates their pathway out of crime. Figure 2 details this general process for these few street workers. And that is, these street workers express that OVOL violence prevention work started off as a chance, or that they were provided with an initial opportunity, in which they felt personally indebted to the organizations' Director for this chance or opportunity. Thus, in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical framework, the data reveal that these street workers claim that they feel somehow obligated, and that they have decided to make a personal commitment to the OVOL Director and a personal attempt toward change; going as far as giving up the selling of illicit drugs, the handling of weapons, and even drug and/or alcohol usage so as not to be seen as a 'hypocrite' by the OVOL Director, neighborhood youth, other neighborhood residents, fellow street workers, and even by criminal justice officials.

Beyond the obligation that these street workers feel toward the OVOL Director and the organization, and moreover how these street workers manage to continue to refrain from committing crime, is, as Laub and Sampson (2003) suggest, tied also to the OVOL organization restructuring their routine activities through employment and work-time activities, thus adding the possibility for these street workers to begin to distance themselves from the sort of proximate causes of crime. For example, and as will be discussed below, through the OVOL organization these street workers explain that they have participated in and sometimes even managed day-long basketball camps, recreational centers, and in-school programming activities, etc., where they have worked to build bonds with youths, other at-risk individuals, and their fellow street workers—of whom they in-turn also became personally accountable to given their awareness of their situation as well as the general community's situation that they work for. The desisting street workers here also express simply that along with being busy with OVOL work activities then, and because of their obligation and personal commitment to the OVOL Director and these others, that they usually will go home at night to be with their family members or children as opposed to going out at night to the bar or club in order to unwind and relax. Overtime, and again along these lines, these street workers then feel a sense of obligation towards those youth and neighborhood residents and even fellow street workers that they work with through the OVOL organizations' structured work-time activities, thus increasing the meaning of and identity with this type of work and ultimately their sort of commitment with conventional culture. These street workers who claim desistance from crime through OVOL employment then share a daily routine that provides them both with structure and meaningful activity. In short, and generally as mentioned above, Laub and Sampson (2003: 281) label this desistance process as a part of "situated choice."

In order to contextualize and to help explain these street workers desistance processes, in the following sub-section I introduce you to David. David is a street worker that has been with the OVOL organization since its inception in 2003. The following is David's own story of his desistance process.

David

David is a 36 year-old North Side native, and he is one of the first OVOL street workers to be hired by the OVOL Director to 'do' violence prevention work (beginning in 2003). David grew up in a single parent home with a total of seven people living in his household. He has a total of six brothers and sisters, none of whom are from the same father. By the time David was in high school, for himself and Pittsburgh generally it was at the height of the crack cocaine era (please see Chapter 4 for more detail). He explains to me in one of our conversations that his North Side neighborhood where he grew up was "a community, man, that was affected by the social ills of society as far as the drugs, violence, a crap game around every corner." And he goes on to explain that, "(a)nd for years I rebelled against it, I spoke against it. So, I was considered a good kid all through high school." In fact, by his senior year, David had won a Martha Luther King award for his academic successes; he was also the President of the student counsel, Vice President of the school, and he and his high school basketball team won the State basketball championship--all in his senior year.

However, and even so, with the sort of social atmosphere of Pittsburgh and the abundance of drugs and a functioning underground economy, David also points out that by the end of his senior year he started hustling drugs for the first time as prom was fast approaching.

> So, my senior year in high school is also when I first started selling crack cocaine. Basically what it was was we (David and his close friend at the time) was going to the prom and we wanted twin Limousines. And our parents didn't have the money to get it. And there was dudes, guys younger than us, that was already on the streets selling crack.

You know, it was easy; you can go get two (rocks) for $20 (dollars). You can go off of a dude that got weight, or a dude who is a so-called mid-level drug dealer, and you can give him $20 dollars and he'll give you two (pieces of crack). Then you can sell those two at regular price to the fiends. So, I can get $20 dollars off of one, and $20 dollars off of the other, so I can get $40 dollars. And then you just keep doubling up. So, we sold crack my senior year to get our twin Limousines.

After high school, or in 1992, David had at least two colleges that invited him to play Division II and III basketball. He ended up going to Concord College, where, because his schooling was generally funded through his academic achievements, he opted to not play basketball for the school and, as he explains, "it was my first mistake because I probably enjoyed a little too much of my freedom."

Along these lines, David goes on to explain in more detail that,

Because of certain financial assistance and what not, I was gonna be in school regardless. So, I said, "fuck basketball," you know. You know what I mean, I said "fuck basketball." And, I shouldn't have done that. What I realize..what I didn't realize was the fact that sports was the thing that kept me disciplined, to stay engaged, to engage in my classes. You know, it gave me something to strive for. It would have kept me on line; that would have kept me up with my grades; it would have kept me with some form of discipline, which is what I needed; which is what kids like myself we need. You know, because we tend to over think ourselves. And, then when you finally get to the point where you can break out as an adult, you make some bad decisions.

And then, for some reason, when I get to Concord College, I'm hanging with these older guys from Philly. One, I hadn't known had came from a rehab for using crack cocaine, and he had got out of rehab and went to Concord. So, he was like 25, I'm 19. The other one had gotten out of jail, where he had done time for drugs..for selling drugs, and he came to Concord. And, it was myself and a guy who was from Bellview High School that was a good friend of mine. Me and him was the same age, we were both 19.

These two guys we was kicking it with from Philly was 25 and 26; we was known as the Phantom Four, and we was always together. And, we got..we started smoking weed. Somehow, someway..you see, that environment up at Concord is more like a ghetto; it was more like a projects. And, that wasn't good; that wasn't the environment that we needed to be in--me and this young guy at least.

Halfway through the semester..through the school year, next thing you know we is shooting guns in the back of the dorm room. I'm carrying a knife; we selling..I'm running a speak-easy out my dorm-room, the freshman dorm, where I'm selling drinks,

blunts..eventually we..the older guy who had come up to Concord (one of the Phantom Four), eventually he pops up and he's cookin' up crack in our microwave. It was a safe haven, you know what I mean?

You get up to Concord, and away from doing it in your community, you know what I'm saying. This is the cool spot, the chill spot. So, all of these things..in my freshman year..my freshman year these are the things that happened: we shot off guns in the back of the girls dorm, we was carrying knives, cooking up crack in the microwave, and we ran a speak-easy. All of this happened in one year, my freshman year at Concord College. And it so just went from that (basketball/discipline) to that (friends/drugs, guns and dealing or hustling).

And, ummmm, none of us got our degrees, none of us. One of the Phantom Four just got knocked (sent to prison) maybe three months ago, the other stays in and out of rehab. And the last one, he's cool; he's working in like a Coke or a Pepsi factory up in the middle of Pennsylvania; he indulged himself to the family atmosphere. He had to actually get away from Pittsburgh; he had to take his family up there. But, none of us got our degree.

Throughout the next nine or so years, or from the age of 19 until about the age of 29, David explains to me that he was "in this criminal mindset," and that he was about "making some money." He managed to go to college for that one year after high school in 1992, but in-between friends that he had met in college and the atmosphere in his old neighborhood when he would come home on school breaks, David continued to carry a weapon/gun and move and sell drugs like marijuana, heroine, and crack cocaine on the side. David did this until the summer of his freshman year came, and then he made the crucial decision to quit school altogether to hustle full time with a sort of older mentor he had been running with off-and-on for the past year from his original North Side neighborhood.

David began making runs with his mentor to New York City almost full-time, or more like when the drugs would nearly run out. He and his mentor would go to New York City to purchase, pickup, and transport kilos of cocaine and other drugs back to Pittsburgh. He began by just trying to learn more about the "drug game" and "who the major distributors were" in order to become "an asset" for his community. On one of these runs, in fact maybe no more than a

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year after dropping out of college, David got pulled over and arrested by the police for the first time. Later released and waiting for his sentence, a number of events occurred leading David to go on the run from authorities for nearly two years until he was eventually caught for yet another drug related case. Now in his mid-twenties, David was sentenced and incarcerated for three years for trafficking, distribution, and for generally fleeing from the authorities.

After being released after the three years in prison in 1999, David would continue to move and sell marijuana, heroine, and crack cocaine until 2003. In between this nearly four year time frame, he would catch at least one other drug and weapons case. However, by 2003, as he was waiting for his court and sentencing date, he was approached by Mr. Garland, the Director of the OVOL violence prevention organization, or "the guy with the dreads you seen driving around your neighborhood when we was kids." At first David did not mention to Mr. Garland that he had a case pending. Offered a legitimate paying job however to work in and with his neighborhood, David liked the overall message of the OVOL organization and accepted the potential position with the OVOL violence prevention program, or at that time the Allegheny County Violence Prevention Initiative.

As time would pass, in fact a week before David was to begin work at the OVOL organization, David would come to tell Mr. Garland about his felony case and potential up-coming conviction.

> So, I caught a case between 1999 and 2003. They caught me on the street with dope and a gun man. And, you know, Rich was starting his thing and I had a job. But now when I do finally get to the point of telling Rich, like, "look, I can't work with you because I just caught this case." And here's where he just made a commitment to me man; he said, "don't worry about it, come on board." I was like, "come on board?" And you know what, he gave me a thousand dollars for my lawyer, he said that he needed me, and he gave me a job.

For David, Mr. Garland and work with the OVOL violence prevention program was to become a potential turning point in his life.

> So then, he (the OVOL Director) put me in front of the Chief of police, and the Chief and them guys in the meeting decided to give me a chance man. The Chief got the cop that busted me to throw the charges out, or drop them. Then Rich gets the DA (District Attorney) to withdraw their charges. And I'm like, "this dude made a commitment to me man, here." And I kept saying in my head after that man that, "I'm not gonna have these white folks up in his face," and you know, "we done this for you and look what he done." Like, "look, he's still out there selling dope or whatever."

From 2003 until 2010, and even to this day in 2011, and with the help of Mr. Garland, David continues to work for the OVOL violence prevention organization. The question then is: what is it about OVOL work that has helped David to uphold his end of this opportunity and moreover the chance provided by Mr. Garland and the other criminal justice officials?

While David has been working with the Director in the OVOL organization for nearly seven years now, he goes on to explain that for him this opportunity and sort of turning point was only the beginning of his transitional process and own personal transformation. He goes on to explain that while over the years he has managed to stay away from selling drugs, that working part-time, making about $1,000 dollars a month working out in the community that he grew up in was, at first, very difficult to bear.

> You become so accustomed to having product to deal with, to deal with whatever financial pressures you have to deal with in your life. Like, if I like know that Christmas is coming up and I get to the point where I've got like four or five pounds of weed somewhere, I'm at ease. I'm at ease because I know that any financial thing that comes up, I can take care of. It could be rent, this or that; if I have four or five pounds of weed, I also got bail money if anything happens.

> Like, anything that can come up. And like, if you're a certain figure in your family, there's gonna be certain things that's gonna come up. Like, somebody might get a shut-off notice and need a hundred (dollars) from you here or need this or that. And you become accustomed to taking care of that feeling by having drugs stockpiled somewhere.

> If your hustling dope at the time..like having a brick of dope, that's fifty bags and that's a brick of dope. If you got like 10 to 15 bricks somewhere, your good, your alright; you can

go out and spend a couple of dollars. You know that you got product and you got clientele to move the product. And I always had the clientele to move it; heroin, I had clientele; and dope, and all of that I had clientele for.

So, once you have the dope, your comfortable. Now, when you leave the game alone, something can happen, and how are you gonna take care of yourself or anything? Like, just anything..like if your taking out a chick and she want to go eat. You ain't got product, you ain't got nothing, no money. Like, it makes you nervous like. Like, you have to really feel at ease with feeling comfortable with being broke. And, that ain't no good feeling. That's one of the feelings that made me drive toward that anyway. And the nervous feeling was there when I left the game alone and was committed to One Vision One Life.

So, it was like, it would be a nervous feeling in my stomach to where like this: "what the fuck am I doing; when will it go away? When will this feeling go away?" Like, something bad could happen tomorrow and I'm ass-out. I can't help myself. My niece is calling me because they need money for birthdays and shit like that; I ain't got it. A gas or light bill comes in; I ain't got it. By the time I committed to Rich I had my own place, and then one of my cousins moved in. He ended up falling out with his girl; but by the time I caught the case, me and him was living in the house together.

But, the thing was was that being committed to the organization, there wasn't gonna be any flipping pounds so as to just get a few extra bucks. It was like, "seriously, the money you get from them is it, that's it." And that's being busted and broke. So, I made a decision that Rich stuck his neck out there for me, and I am committed to him and this organization, even if it is part-time, and that was it. I didn't want to go back to jail; so, it made me feel comfortable after some time, it was crazy.

David's commitment then to Mr. Garland and the OVOL organization was meaningful to the point that he was thankful for the sort of second chance opportunity. And as David continued working for the OVOL organization, he had to find other things to do or other pleasures besides going out, as he was, in his own words, "broke" and feeling "busted."

So, it was the commitment and the stuff that Rich was doing behind the commitment, and me not wanting to be a hypocrite to the point where I couldn't even smoke weed. Cause to me then I would still be a hypocrite. So, to me that's what it was. To the point where I was catching buses over to, you know, the (OVOL) office to do paperwork and I pretty much just felt busted. Being busted is a fucked up feeling, especially when you're used to having money. Being broke and busted man, it's disgusting.

For me, at that time, there was no feel good moment too, other than going home and playing with my son. You know, he was two at the time and I was broke as hell. You know, that was the feel good moment; going home and playing with him. There wasn't

no, I'm getting sharp and gonna go to this club or I got the fresh Michael Jordan's on; I didn't have the money to do that. So, I had to actually be able to feel good with going home, lying on the ground, and playing with my son. That..it felt good. Like, I was like I could really mold this little dude.

I was sitting him in front of Sportscenter and shit while he was drinking his bottle. And my mom was getting mad at me, "back that boy up from the TV," and I was like, "this is my son and I'm gonna do whatever I want." And it worked; it was working and they thought it was crazy. Like, he can now see sports and will emulate stuff; imitate them; like, doing the triple stance in football.

It felt good because I knew that I did that. I know that I did that. My son watched football with me, and I would make him watch everything from the Super Bowl to Steelers games and all of that. He was my good luck charm man; I had him with me the whole time.

On top of his commitment to Mr. Garland and the OVOL organization, David found some real enjoyment spending some newfound time with his son now, despite being "out of the game," "broke," and feeling "busted."

While David seems to attribute much of his initial transition out of the criminal atmosphere and lifestyle to Mr. Garland and his commitment to himself, it became more clear in our conversations together that David made a decision that he too would in return make the commitment to Mr. Garland and the OVOL organization for even taking a chance on him. On top of this decision, David, because of his initial choice and decision not to "flip bricks" of dope, or any other drug for that matter, for extra money on the side, he had little or no money. While this being so, David's sort of routine activities began then changing as he would go home after work to spend more time with his young son. He also made the personal choice to give up smoking marijuana or "weed"; not only did he do this because he had no money, but he also felt as though he would be a hypocrite considering the type of field that he was now working in.

In terms of the violence prevention field and work for the OVOL organization, essentially, much of David's OVOL work-time was spent with youths in a recreational type of environment, in-and-around schools, the local juvenile detention center, attending violence

responses, and developing a caseload of clients and completing the necessary paperwork that followed these activities. In particular, the Director and the OVOL organization began sponsoring the "One Vision One Life B-Ball Academy," in which David helped to not only develop but he also began directing this basketball camp with the help of other street workers and at-risk youths from his own personal caseload. In terms of the OVOL B-Ball Academy, in the summer months youths of nearly all ages are welcome to come to one set location each-and-every weekday at around 9:30 a.m. until around 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon to work with David and one another on their basketball skills. As David explains, "(t)his is a summertime camp, and these kids were taught the game of basketball from the ground-up. I take them through numerous warm-ups and drills and plays through the morning hours. And after lunch we scrimmage." Many times, after the camp was well developed, David and the youths would even compete against other teams around the city in leagues during the evening hours. David considered this work "good work" but "exhausting" during the two-and-a-half months in the summertime. Moreover he states that, "(r)unning the B-Ball Academy played to my strengths. I liked working with the neighborhood kids on their (basketball) skills, but I realize too it kept me honest. I had to be out there on the court early each morning getting the equipment set up and make sure the lunches were ready for the kids..cause we served them lunches you know. It was on me basically to keep it going; and as exhausting as it was it was good for me and the kids. It gave our organization some exposure."

While the OVOL B-Ball Academy was a summertime day camp, in the Fall and Spring time, during the school year, David, through the OVOL organization, began "posting-up" around the local grade school campus in the early mornings before school and afternoons after school to try to ensure safe passage for the local youths. Building a relationship and trust with Mr.

Garland, David was eventually also given the responsibility of running the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center during the weekday evening hours (5:00 pm to 9:00 pm) and Sunday afternoons (12:00 pm to 5:00 pm)—the recreational center eventually became a year-round program for David and some of the other street workers. On top of these activities, on a weekly basis, David, and other street workers, would also be granted access to the local juvenile detention facility in order to talk with and listen to the youths in order to see what it is that he and the OVOL organization could do to best assist them in a positive way. And overall, David explains that,

> Like I said, even though I was committed to Rich and the organization, I was still making somewhere around $1,000 dollars (a month) and it was only really part-time work. I mean I was only getting paid for twenty-five hours of work each week, even though sometimes it was like I worked longer than them hours—in fact, I did most of the time. And as you know though, I'm busted, you know, broke, but I made the commitment. And I start to realize that with my son at home and me working with these kids, it just wasn't about me no more. The commitment I made to Rich, like, became the commitment I was making to the kids in the community you know. And being a part of this organization it was like I'm feeling like I am doing what I am supposed to be doing, and that's what it is..I'm trying to help my community.

Therefore, as David continued to follow through with his commitment to the OVOL organization and the Director specifically, other sort of meaningful opportunities began developing for David.[25] For example, the OVOL B-Ball Academy and the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center not only provided David with venues to work with youths, but it played to his "strengths," made him feel accountable to something, and, for David, this type of work gave him a sort of sense of identity.

Up-to-this-point what we have learned through David is that, in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, OVOL violence prevention employment can potentially contribute to desistance in a number of ways. However, in terms of the latter point on 'identity' above, Laub and Sampson (2003), as well as other scholars

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(Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001), argue that meaningful employment can lead to a

redefinition of an offender's self conception and thus lead to cognitive transformation.

Accordingly, David during one of our conversations one morning in the OVOL office explains to

me a situation that occurred where he ultimately realized his commitment to non-violence.

> So I'm working, doing good, or at least better, you know. The nervousness is going away and I'm making it. I mean everything is cool and I'm head down East Ohio Street. I'm riding on Bonneville Street, and a car comes off of the highway.. a truck, and (they) just starts shooting at me. I mean just shooting at me; I'm ducking down, windows shot out the back, bullet holes in the car door and-the-whole-nine. I shoot up a one way for the truck to not be able to keep following me; and when you come down Bonneville Street you come to a "Y" in the road. But when you come to the "Y," it runs right into North Avenue. I go this way (pointing his finger down at the table), and my cousin lives right here. And so, you know, I go down that one-way and I'm chilling at my cousins' house on the curb. The cops come, and they looking at the car and asking me if I want to file a report or whatever. And they take the report, and I didn't know anything except that it was a white truck. They filed a report and they leave.

> And now I'm standing there like, "fuck!" And, I just get in the car and go home. Like, "fuck it!" I went home; just like that, "fuck it!" I get in the car, shot-out windows and-the-whole-nine and I just go home. I went into work the next day like nothing happened. I came in, got composed and just told Rich and Frederick what happened.

> But you know at least the natural reaction is to be able to get a pistol to defend yourself, even if you don't know what happened; the natural reaction. And so, you know why I go down that one way and I'm chilling at my cousins' house on the curb? It's near my old house and I've got the key and an old gun on the roof. My thinking was that I should just drive up to my house, my old house, and get the gun off of the roof, just so you feel comfortable. Cause now, whatever, someone took shots at me. And then I was like, "damn, I would be a hypocrite" because for these last years I've been telling these kids, "retaliation, that's not the way to go." And these are the dudes where their cousins have been killed, they'd been shot at, and I'm telling them how to deal with these things.

> And I think right then and there showed..whatever exists out there that I was committed to nonviolence. I was committed to it. Because, not to say that I was gonna get the gun and create any violence, but just to feel comfortable I was gonna get a gun just to have it. I mean the gun is already there on the roof; I got the keys and it's no big deal to grab the gun, catch a jitney back to the house, and now I could say I am packing just in case the shooting was intentional. I am now in the position to defend myself if it happens again.

> But as I sat there, I told myself that it was a random act. The strip that I was on was one of those strips where the cats from Manchester can really play that strip because you can catch dudes from North View coming out the back of North View because there is only

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two ways into North View. So, I convinced myself that this was a random act that happened, and if I did (get the gun) I would be a hypocrite.

Like I said, I went home, and I went to business as usual. I came to the office and told Rich, you know, "my car got shot up, there's bullet holes in it, and it's cool." They were like "what?" I still don't think people realize what really happened. Like, I was driving and these mother fuckers were shooting at me. But I was so nonchalant about it; I continued to be at my post at the job and continued to go about my business.

It got to the point where dudes out in the hood were like, "I'm gonna keep the word out man. Hold up man, like, we've got to handle this D." And I was like, "naaw man, wasn't nobody shooting at me." And like who else got a fucking purple car? Cause it's my girls car, with a car seat in the back. So, they were like, "those mother fuckers knew it was you." And I convinced myself otherwise, and I went about my business.

And, like I'm trying to say, this is what strengthened my belief in Karma, spirit, blessings, or however you want to say it because I was at that point right there where I was tested. You talk about all of this nonviolence shit and telling these kids what not to do, and the minute you get into the fire, you resort to some shit that you telling them not to do, even picking up the gun. And I'm like, "I'm committed to my son, my organization, and Richard Garland. I don't know how, but this changed me."

And also, this is what I'm saying. What if I'm on the jitney ride home and we get pulled over (with the gun). They (the police) don't know and they can't put everything together; like, that I got shot at and they can't excuse the fact that I got a weapon, and an automatic on top of that.

And two weeks later I got bumped up to another position here (at the OVOL organization). And doors just kept on opening. I got bumped up to a managers salary, and I was in charge of Mount Pleasant (recreational center) and the school that we were doing, and I got bumped up to the managers salary of like $30,000 dollars.

David is now a full-time employee for the OVOL violence prevention organization. Through his commitment and show of responsibility and increased accountability, somewhere along the line David redefined himself despite the incident described above and even others David and I would come to discuss during our many conversations together. While he was "tested," David explains that, "I am with it..I'm wholly committed to this organization, my son, and to non-violence. This is me..who I am. I have a full-time job, I'm a father, and a college student again." With the OVOL opportunity David now has his own office with a view in the organizations' downtown

high-rise building. As he mentions, David is also back in college. He recently received his

Associates Degree and is currently working on his Bachelor Degree. He works somewhere

around 40 hours a week, or from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, goes to the local university, and expresses

that he is "finished flipping-bricks and going back-and-forth to prison." For David then, OVOL

work has meaning, and he explains now that he has the personal means (time, finances, and

will/willingness) to look forward toward the future.

OVOL Work and the Desisting Street Workers

Including David, there are again a total of six street workers (current = 4, former = 2)

who account for and/or describe OVOL employment as specifically their 'hook for change' and

thus claim desistance through the OVOL organization overtime (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

Generally speaking, for these individuals securing violence prevention employment facilitates on

some level some structure, meaning, and, moreover, overtime helps to guide their personal

transitions and transformations out of the criminal lifestyle. More specifically, like David, and in

line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, these street

workers again express or recognize that OVOL violence prevention work started off as a chance

for them, or as an initial opportunity in which they felt personally indebted to Mr. Garland and

the OVOL organization for this chance or personal opportunity. For example, Shaun, a 55 year-

old current street worker, asserts that, "One Vision creates opportunities for us that you may not

get on your own." He explains further that,

> As I said, having a criminal record, do you think a lot of places are gonna hire me?
> Probably not…They (the OVOL organization) stuck their neck out for the x-factor (ex-
> convict or felon) and I got a job out of it. This is a job that I feel obligated to because of
> what they have done for me.

Similarly, Michael, a 36 year-old current street worker, generally states that: "Mr. Garland, he

has been a good guy to me; he's helped me out and I don't want to bring shame to the

organization for that." Lucas, a current street worker in his late thirties, also adds that, "I got a

chance here..to work here, you know. I mean he (the Director of the OVOL organization) didn't

have to do that; and I just think that he's looking out for some of our best interests."

Much like David's experiences then, for Shaun and these other street workers, OVOL

violence prevention employment is an opportunity for them, and they realize that the OVOL

Director and the organization as a whole "stuck their neck out" there for them in hopes of a sort

of return investment. A noteworthy and important point here is that, like David, most of these

street workers at the time of their OVOL employment and even their interviews for this study

were involved with or caught up in the criminal justice system in some way. That is, all but one

of these street workers, Michael, at the time of employment who claim that OVOL work was

their sort of 'hook for change' were either on probation, parole, in the half-way house, or, in

David's case, he was arrested for a crime even before being offered and beginning OVOL work.

For example, KC, a former street worker in his late-fifties was in the half-way house

when he was hired by the Director of the OVOL organization, and he explains that, "(h)e (the

OVOL Director) helped to get me out of the renewal center (or half-way house) by giving me the

job, and there's no doubt about it that it helped me. It wasn't easy; but for me, a guy coming out

of the penitentiary that really helped me out at a time that I needed it. I appreciated that, you

know, what he has done for me; always will cause he helped me get back on my feet." To give

the reader some more context here, KC, before the OVOL opportunity for employment, had just

finished-up serving a 37-year prison sentence for multiple armed robberies, attempted escape,

and so on. After prison, KC was released and put into the halfway house where he explains that

it took him some time to adjust to the outside of prison world. But he did so with the help of

OVOL employment and working alongside others who were nearly similarly situated.

In addition to the half-way house, Maurice, a current street worker in his mid-thirties was on federal probation at the time of OVOL employment.

> Having a criminal record it's hard not to go out there, back in the neighborhood, and mash to make that money; do what you know how to do best; it's a struggle, and when Rich came to me about the job, it was a chance he was giving me..for me not to have to get money the way I had too. And now I'm not struggling as much anymore, or as badly you know. There are still some things that we need to take a step forward, but I'm seeing progress and that he (the Director) is trying for us.

Maurice would go on to explain that one slip up with the law in the next few years while on probation could cost him ten to fifteen years in federal prison for past criminal ventures.

And as far as Michael, again a current street worker in his thirties who has never been caught or arrested for his part in the "drug game," before OVOL employment his closest friend and brother were being investigated by a federal agency for drug trafficking and distribution. Being closely aligned to these individuals, and with the possibility of being implicated, Michael was given the opportunity to work for the OVOL organization. And Michael explains that the Director of the OVOL organization, "…he hit me up at the right time in my life. It was getting more dangerous and I wasn't doing nothin' positive, just getting deeper into it..the game at the time. And I just knew this was my way out…I just didn't want to go to prison…I ain't fit for a cage."

In short, this is to say that for such street workers the Director and the organization as a work opportunity may have become, like David, a sort of intervention for them and their struggles between the criminal justice system, the communities they come from, and their personal situations and circumstances. Maurice puts it best when he mentions during the interview that, "Rich came at me when I needed it most."

With this opportunity for work and general intervention and second chance, these street workers believe then that the Director of the organization is looking out for them and their "best

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interests," and for doing so these desisting street workers would go on to claim that they did not want to "bring shame" to the organization. In turn, and again like David, these street workers specifically feel obligated to the Director and the OVOL organization and thus have generally begun to make a personal commitment for the chance or opportunity provided.

For these few street workers, their initial OVOL employment experiences are in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) first fundamental work related social control mechanism. That is, following the employment opportunity and, specifically here, the initial investment by the Director in these individual street workers, and despite their past experiences and/or criminal endeavors, personal commitments were formed by the street workers around the general belief in the OVOL violence prevention organizations' mission, and specifically in the Director himself here. On top of this, or compounded by this initial investment, is the fact that these street workers would also receive some pay, even if, as David explains above, it is a meager amount of pay; thus, providing some means to ease the sort of "struggle" that these street workers describe.

Importantly, a key to the way that work influences desistance, according Laub and Sampson (2003) and other work-related scholars (Uggen, 2000), is in the quality of the employment or work, or in the ability to provide both structure and meaningful work activity. These scholars therefore argue that good quality work must be full-time work that has the ability to change one's sort of routine activities, as well as provide some level of direct or indirect social control, and is, importantly, personally meaningful to the individual; or, coupled with human agency, the second, third, and fourth fundamental work related social control mechanisms discussed above (Laub and Sampson, 2003).

Accordingly, OVOL violence prevention employment is again technically not full-time work. However, what we have learned through David is that while at first David struggled with

feeling "busted" and "broke" he goes on to explain that his personal commitment led to other

meaningful and sometimes time altering opportunities and activities as the OVOL organization

expanded or grew with him over time—thus affecting the proximate causes of crime and a

central element in the desistence process; "knifing off" of individual offenders from their

immediate environment and offering them a new script for the future (Caspi and Moffit, 1995;

Laub and Sampson, 2003). For these five other desisting street workers, their involvement and

mutual investment in the OVOL organization began for the most part during this expansion

phase of the organizations' life-cycle (see Chapter 6 for more detail). And moreover the fact is

that each of these desisting street workers were then placed directly into OVOL-based

programming structures that took a considerable amount of time, commitment, obligation, and

required some level of personal responsibility and accountability on the part of the individual

street worker. Take KC for example. KC is again a 58 year-old former street worker who began

working for the organization in 2008—the sort of latter end of the expansion phase of the OVOL

organization. In an interview in a private meeting room inside of the local school, KC explains a

little bit about what a typical day for him was like working for the OVOL organization, and what

he saw were his objectives while working with the youths specifically from inside of the school

system.

> So, for me, I was getting up early, at 4:30 trying to get my little files and booklets and
> papers together to be to work (at the local school). I used to leave at a quarter after six
> and ride for an hour and something on the bus to get out there to try to help the children
> and youth in the schools, and try to put some structure in their community.
>
> But being out there in the school I had to deal with other people's vibes, whether they are
> White or Black. I have to get a feeling of what they are going through, other than what
> they are fronting me with. And then I try to reach out to those who need the extra stuff
> that isn't being seen and what's on paper. And that's what we're missing sometimes. And
> that is, your dealing with what the child may have done rather than what's up with his
> home life, or something else that is causing this. In other words, what's the root problem,

rather than what the problem was at that particular moment with cussing the teacher out or fighting.

So, I was getting up early at about 4:30 or 5:00 a.m., trying to get my little files and booklets together before work. You go from the bus to the school. Then it's from 8:00 to 2:30, and then some meetings sometimes that may last an hour or two hours; and then you might meet with other people that are trying to structure different things, because we have been giving some help to another (community) program because they acted like they wanted to do something positive up there in the community. We worked with some of the churches and other folks that are trying to do different things, whether its little league or the midgets (football) or just people period who are giving off positive vibes at the meetings, like at the town hall meetings or whatever.

But for the school and the kids you just can't rush out on nobody; you have to give people a chance to get to know you and get some feel for you, and try not to get too serious because they seen all type of people faking it. And this goes even to the different parts of their families and family members faking it, you know what I am saying? I mean it's sometimes they are too young to recognize genuine love or bullshit love. So, the move is to try to touch them along with helping them along the way, and then trying to make sure they are cool along the way; and then, keeping a rapport with them because it's all about establishing rapport.

So, what I liked and I tried to do is, first of all, is you try to make sure that your doing a good job in the school. And that starts just by me showing up. Second of all, you want to help the people that your dealing with. Then, you want to see how all of this is relating to the community itself, because some of the answers that your getting you may get in the school before you even come out into the community. And that's sometimes why we were in the school.

Likewise, Daniel is a 48 year-old former street worker who had been working for the local

school for over three months when I first interviewed him.

Right now, in three months, if you see all of my paperwork, I am on the move here. And I am saying that I have gained probably the trust of about 75 percent of most of the children in this school building. I did that by just being real, being me, and introducing myself to them and letting them know that I really care about you. And I tell them that I'm not here for the staff, "I'm here for you; I'm about you," and that's what I tell the student. "What's up with you, come talk to me; I'm here, so don't ever say that you don't ever have that role model or that parent to talk to, I'm here for you." And to me, you know, I think they have a story to tell. But in this job you have to be willing to listen, and that takes time and energy. You just have to be willing to put in the work. And I'm willing to put in the work because I have a passion for this man..for these kids.

Before continuing, it should be mentioned that KC and Daniel worked for the OVOL violence prevention organization in one of Pittsburgh's local schools for more than eight months, or until the end of the organizations expansion phase. Each left the organization to take another position in order to work year-round with the youths in this same or a similar community. They still do pro bono work on the side for the OVOL organization when requested.

For KC and Daniel then working in the local schools with the youth was a day long experience for them during most weekdays and even some weekend days. For KC and Daniel, it seems that being physically present and building a rapport with the youth in order to attempt to find the root cause of a problem was very important to them and something that took time and effort. And accordingly, much like David, each of these other five street workers were then provided with a structure or venue to work within that affected their sort of day-to-day routine activities. Daniel put it best when he simply states that, "(i)t (working for the OVOL organization in the school) gave me something to do, something to strive for when I needed it in my life. I feel like I am made to mentor these youth. It allows me to get into how to tie things in my life in with the past; how I was formed." That is, through the OVOL organization, and while it was at its funding and organizational height, the Director was able to start up programming venues for street workers that included working in the local schools, Mount Pleasant Recreational Center alongside of David, as well as running other sporting programs, recreational centers, and so on. For these street workers, such OVOL work-related activities generally provided them with a venue to work and provided them with what Laub and Sampson (2003: 146) describe as "structured role stability," or with a daily routine that provides both structure and meaningful activity.

Another component in the desistance process, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), is the structured role stability then that emerges across various life domains (work, family, etc.). Because of their initial commitment to the Director, these few street workers generally claim to have embraced the OVOL work structure and one result was a disassociation from deviant or delinquent peers in adulthood, a major factor in explaining their desistance from crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Warr, 1998). In fact, Bobby, a current street worker in his twenties, explains that,

> What I like about Daniel is that because of his commitment to Mr. Garland and this (the OVOL organization and violence prevention) he is willing to put in the extra time when it comes to it; he's willing to put it in. Like, if I call him..for instance, there were two meetings that we had to go to, one was a municipal meeting and a crime watch meeting, and they both were two days in a row. And he has a small baby at home, a girlfriend he lives with and he's busy; and you know, spending all that time he spends at the school it is taking time away from his baby; but, he was willing to come to those meetings. And I said, "Daniel, you don't have to come, I'm just letting you know that we're going to these meetings and some important stuff might happen at these meetings." He said, "(a)lright Bobby, I'll be there." And he was there. And that was above his hours, his 25 hours; he puts in more than his hours already and he ain't really compensated because he's only making like $400 dollars every two weeks, which isn't enough. And he was willing to take his time to come to those things; and even after the school thing, that's out of his time; he's at the school at 7:30 in the morning until late afternoon. And he says that he'll do these things because it's about the kids and getting our mission accomplished; he sees the potential in this, so he's with it.

An important point here is that OVOL work for Daniel, like David, and even these other street workers, then usually extended beyond the 25-hour work week, as they explain during their interviews that they became wholly invested in working with the youth in these various venues most weekdays and weekends. In fact, in some instances OVOL employment, and especially work with the youths, became so meaningful that some of these street workers were not even concerned about how much they got paid—or the pay was at the very least not the most important concern for them and this type of work. As Daniel further explains, "I have a lot of passion for what I do. And don't get me wrong, I appreciate the money but I appreciate the

intrinsic rewards even more. I wanna feel confident enough that when I open up the door and let my child go outside that they are going to be alright..that they are going to get that same nourishment, that same loving and care that I strive for personally." Importantly, for these street workers, OVOL work helped to change their routine activities by providing them with work-time opportunities and activities; and like we have seen in David, OVOL work generally allowed these ex-offenders to distance themselves from being in and around the streets and potential delinquent peer groups (Warr, 2002).

Another important point that should be mentioned here is that each of these desisting street workers, like David and Daniel express above, came to recognize the importance of their children and family as they worked through their personal desistance processes while employed with the OVOL organization. According to Laub and Sampson (2003: 146), and again in brief, the routine activities of work, family, and associated informal connections serve two functions. One is to provide social support (Cullen, 1994) or emotional attachment (Hirschi, 1969). The other function is one of monitoring and control through the provision of a set of activities and obligations that are often repeated each day. For Laub and Sampson (2003: 146), "many habits are mundane, but they nonetheless give structure to one's time and restrict opportunities for crime. Moreover, these activities result from shifts in role expectations..." Thus, partly because of OVOL work and work-time activities, these street workers made the commitment to be responsible for and accountable to the youth, as well as represent the OVOL organization and the Director who they specifically committed to in the first place. And similar then to David, much of the desisting street workers OVOL off-of-work time and energy and activities were spent with their children and family, as opposed to former delinquent peers.

Finally, what is especially notable in the desistance process for Laub and Sampson (2003), and specifically for these street workers here, is personal agency. A vital feature that emerges in the interviews with these few street workers is that their personal conceptions about the past and future are apparently transformed as these individuals claim that they have matured or transitioned from adolescence to adulthood. Like David, these street workers engage in what Laub and Sampson (2003: 146) call "transformative action." That is, informed by the past, these street workers agency is also oriented toward the future (Maruna, 2001). For example, Daniel himself in an interview one morning in the local school expresses that,

> As I got introduced to violence prevention (work), thinking for a change, career
> development..things like that, I started thinking ahead. I mean look, I'm working, doing
> what I truly have a passion for, and that's what it is. As I made the commitment I started
> to realize that I wanted to make a career around helping these kids so they don't have to
> go through what I have done went through when I was growing up.

In short, and as a result, the street workers here were active participants in the decision to give up crime. Accordingly, "projective actions in the transition from adolescence to adulthood advance a new sense of self and a new identity as a desister from crime…" Thus, for these street workers here, it was both objective (OVOL violence prevention work and avoiding the clutches of the criminal justice system) and subjective contingencies (commitment, obligation, and overall personal agency) that are important in the desistance process (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996).

Other Long-Term Experiences for Reform

Among the subsample of desisting street workers, 79 percent (N = 23) of them describe a number of potential methods and motives for their pathways out of crime. Most notable, and in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003: 281) theoretical concept of "situated choice," when asked how they managed to abstain from criminal activity, the street workers generally had a shared

understanding and they assert that because of emerging situations and structures in their lives that they made the personal choice and/or commitment to change. For many of these street workers (N = 15) the choice and commitment for change was generally based on self-reflection and personal re-evaluation while in prison, or even occasionally for some while living in their neighborhoods under the dangerous 'street code.' And for some of these street workers here it was specifically the personal decision and commitment to giving up drugs and/or alcohol, realizing their addiction that led them to abstain from criminal activities. Figure 3 details this major long-term experience for reform. For a few number of street workers however, they assert that other factors such as family dynamics (N = 2) or changing places or moving away from the proximate causes of crime and eliminating peer group networks (N = 6) led them to abstain from crime. But ultimately, for a majority of these street workers, and as one street worker put it, "(i)t starts with me, regardless of my job or whatever; and I'm telling you, it's a constant struggle man..but I know that it is as hard as I make it too you know."

Personal Commitment to Change

Accordingly, several of the sub-sample of street workers (N = 15) describe that their personal processes and commitment to refrain from crime began with themselves while serving time in prison or even while living under the dangerous 'street code' in their own neighborhoods.[26] Ryan, a current street worker in his 30's, spent more than thirteen years in prison and he expresses that, "(i)n prison, I searched myself; I re-evaluated myself and my situation." Similarly, Herman, a current street worker in his mid-thirties, states that in prison, "I soul searched and analyzed me as a person. I had to change myself..my own life." And Dan, a 39 year-old current street worker, explains that,

> I got a lot of stuff in jail. I did a lot of thinking. I mean truly it's like the first time I
> slowed down in twenty years. It was a time..my time for reflection. It gave me time to

reflect on things that I did since high school; so it seems like things from high school, community college, and when I went to jail, that time in there I didn't have time to sit back to think about nothing; things was just rolling. I mean in jail it was a time to reflect and I realized it (being out on the streets hustling) was just a big black memory man. Because I did a lot of stuff, and fast too; I hurt a lot of people during that time (between high school and prison), and being in jail was a time to reflect on it and learn from it. I mean the best times for me was in high school, and not those on the streets I realized. So I really think going to jail changed my life for the better; I definitely do.

For many of the desisting subset of street workers, prison and/or jail was a time for personal or "self-reflection," "soul searching," and "re-evaluation" of life or their personal pathways. With the structure of and their situations in prison, these street workers assert that they had to work on themselves and thus they appear to have been making a more conscious decision or choice to commit to a more conventional or crime-free life-style. For these street workers, their motives generally included desisting for themselves and a second chance, as well as for their children and families, and because they wanted to get out of prison, get through the half-way house, or off of parole, and that they ultimately did not want to be back under the clutches of the criminal justice system.

The majority of this subset of street workers made a personal pledge to themselves to cease from their criminal behavior. Motivated to change, the street workers describe "agentic" steps toward desistance that went beyond changing their criminal mindset and included following through with their personal commitment to themselves. For example, several of these street workers (N = 10) stated that in order to commit to and remain crime free that they had to give up drugs and/or alcohol and remain sober or conscious. In all of these accounts, and whether in prison or living and surviving on Pittsburgh's inner-city streets, these street workers explain that they did this either by personally committing to quitting drugs and/or alcohol "cold turkey" or by attending narcotics anonymous/alcoholics anonymous meetings and/or following

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through with religion and the "Christian walk." Take for example Samuel. Samuel is a current

street worker in his late 50's and while he was serving a 25-year prison sentence he explains that:

> For me, I was going back and forth to prison; sometimes it's like a revolving door. And, so, first, for me, you have to know yourself and decide that your gonna and you want to make a change. Then you have to decide, what type of change; to what type of degree do I wanna go to make a change. Like, what do you want to do? Or, like, my thing was was that I wanted to make a change as far as trying to stay away from criminal stuff inside so it can help me out here; that was the first thing. And I was like, "I'm not getting high no more," and I made that decision in jail in 1987; I stopped doing everything. I stopped smoking cigarettes, I stopped drinking, I stopped doing anything…I mean I have been sober for 23 or 24 years, since 1987.

> The last time I got high off of anything, they had a mysterious fire at Western Penitentiary that night. And they moved everybody to the auditorium because the block was on fire. And, we had some weed and some wine, and we was talking..the guys was running around, and some guys were actually starting to beat other guys up and all kinds of crazy stuff. And I was like, man, this was like my 5th year in the joint, and I got twenty years left. You know, the only way that I am going to get out of here is to become more conscious and, you know, decide what I'm gonna do. So, I said, the first thing that I'm gonna do is I'm gonna refrain from any kind of intoxicants; try to keep a clear head, because I know that you can do more if your head is clear.

> I mean, I got high for years, doing a lot of stuff. So, I don't have anything against guys getting high. But, when you got a strike against you, as far as a record..and then I knew that when I got out, that I was gonna be on parole. And when you are on parole, they aint' gonna let you do nothing. They'll let you drink, but they will tell you that you can't. So, I'm saying if you want to maintain, or you figure your gonna make it on parole, you have to start..you have to discipline yourself to do the things you need to do before you do get parole. You don't wait to get out the door when they put you on parole and say, "stop."

> And I figured the best way to stop was to stop on the inside. And then when I get out, it'll be easy because I ain't did nothing like this in years. And in my fifth year this was my concept, and I stick with it to this day. You've got to quit any bad habits that you got, it's got to start, you know, with you getting away from them when your locked up. I had to discipline myself and say, "I am not going to do this or this." And it does take time. I mean I am not going to say that I am exceptionally strong, but I'm like this, "if I say that I'm gonna stop doing something or do something, and if I have it and say it in my mind, then mentally I'll apply it. And I'm still trying to do it today, almost twenty-some years later now.

Frederick is a current street worker in his sixties. While out on the streets of Pittsburgh he

recognizes or realizes that he had a serious drug habit and he explains,

Almost 20 years of being on these drugs man. And you know what prompted me to stop was while I was out there growing older my sons had grown up. And the same love and discipline I gave them as children they gave it back to me in the form of they saying "no" to me.

Frederick goes on to explain that on one Sunday afternoon, "the hardest day to get drugs you know," he called up both of his sons for some money in order for he and his brother to purchase drugs and get high. His eldest son met him on the North Side near a coffee shop where he bought Frederick a meal and a cup of coffee and some cigarettes, and then offered Frederick only a couple of dollars so as Frederick would not have enough money to be able to go and get high. Frederick then goes on to explain his story.

And when it dawned on me my well filled up, you know what I'm saying, tears came to my eyes and reality finally hit me right. There was no more illusions and disillusions and delusions; it was none of that, it was cold blooded reality.

And I made a decision, because I knew what I had to do. I call my oldest son back one more time. Ok, but before I called him, my brother came from across the street, knowing that I had got some money so that we could get high. So, my brother come over and he said, "alright man, let's go on up the street and cop a couple because I'm on crap man, I'm not feeling well." So, I'm like, "dude, I'm done." I said, "I'm done." He said, "aahh man come on quit playing man." "Dude, I am done."

And then I call my son back on more time. I say to him, "look man, I need you to do me one more favor." He said, "what's that?" And I said, "I need you to take me to the detox." And by the grace of god, from the detox I went to rehab up in Philadelphia; that was almost 16 years ago. I haven't touched a thing since then.

And finally, Jack, a 48 year-old current street worker, asserts that, "I made the choice in prison and I have been going to NA, AA meetings, and all of that for over eight years now. And I've been doing the Christian walk..and, you know, for me it's like a brotherhood, you know, the trust and me being accountable that keeps me going."[27]

There is a growing body of literature that highlights the importance of the individual serving as an agent of their own personal change (Maruna, 2001). In fact, Laub and Sampson (2003) argue that in order for desistance even to begin to be successful that, at the very least, ex-

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offenders need to be open to change. Baskin and Sommers (1998) contend that forming a

commitment to change is only the first stage in the desistance process. Maruna (2001) however

explains further that recovery is an individual, agentic process that is purposeful as the

individuals who are going straight undergo a change in their self-conception. Similarly,

Giordano et al. (2002) emphasize the ability to reflect and envision personal change. And

moreover that "cognitive shifts" serve as a key part in the transformation process. Therefore,

making a commitment to change indicates a cognitive shift, which is a precursor for behavior

change (Laub and Sampson, 2003). According to Maruna (2001), as well as the street workers

accounts here, all of these are necessary to begin the long-term process of desistance.

Family Dynamics

There is a vast amount of literature on the affects that marriage/romantic relationships

and children may have on criminal offending (Edin, Nelson, and paranal, 2001; Giordano et al.,

2002; Horney, Osgood, and Marshall, 1995; Huebner, 2007; King, Massoglia, and Macmillan,

2007; Leverentz, 2006b; Sampson, Laub, and Wimer, 2006). In particular, and in line with Laub

and Sampson (2003), it is argued that marriage will have a positive effect of reducing offending

by increasing social control, changing routine activities, and decreasing time spent with

offending peers. The effect of marriage on offending specifically is considered gradual and

cumulative, reflecting the importance of a high-quality bond that develops over time (Horney et

al., 1995; Laub and Sampson, 2003). On top of this literature, for some men, particularly older

fathers, they use the experience of incarceration to try to reestablish ties with their children

(Edin, Nelson, and Paranal, 2001). However, according to some scholars, children tend to be

more of a key to women's self conception, and their children are often a central theme in their

narratives of change (Giordano et al., 2002).

Accordingly, in terms of the street workers in the present subsample, only two of these street workers (Scott and Dillon) contend that it was marriage and/or their children that directly impacted their desistance process. Scott is a current street worker in his late 40's and he simply states that, "I think it's my wife that saved me from going back down that dark alley. I could have gone one-way or the other, but we had our kid on the way and she just wasn't gonna have it if I got sent back up (to prison) again." Dillon, a current street worker in his late 40's, was a recovering drug addict like his future wife. He explains that,

> My wife, who wasn't my wife at the time, was a recovering addict like me when I met her. I was working on going to NA and, well, we supported each other through it you know; we still do to this day in fact—I still go. But there was a time when I would go to those meetings and pay no attention to them. I just had that mindset..I wasn't ready. But when I met her and we connected it was someone to help me keep me going with.

According to Leverentz (2006b), when one or both partners have a history of offending, the relationship may evolve into mutually supportive and noncriminal relationships. However, according to Oliver and Hairston (2008), these relationships may face many challenges. For example, the chances of relapse, re-arrest, and re-incarceration are high (Oliver and Hairston, 2008). And this potential may cause strain and distrust (Oliver and Hairston, 2008).

While evidence suggests that there is a "good marriage" effect in the literature (Laub and Sampson, 2003), the low number of street workers who claim that marriage/romantic relationships and/or their children have affected their desistance process is striking. In fact, during the data collection phase for this study, only 9 of the 45 street workers in total were married. And while 6 live with someone, 3 are engaged, and 4 street workers are separated from their spouse or are divorced, most of the street workers point to other factors—many times such factors that led to desistance stem to a time before this relationship even began. It should be mentioned however that many of the street workers who participated in the present study do

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point to their family, generally, and their children specifically as motives for their change; again, however, very few of them attribute their desistance processes to a marriage, romantic relationship, their children, and the development of a high-quality bond over time.

According to some recent literature, incarceration reduces the likelihood of marriage for Blacks by as much as 32% (Huebner, 2007). Ebaugh (1998) contends that ex-prisoners relationships are often fraught with tension as they experience a "hangover identity" from their previous status as an offender. This role may be especially pronounced in long-term relationships (Ebaugh, 1988). Collins (2005) further suggests that we need to consider the way that race, sex and gender dynamics have evolved since the 1990's in many African American communities. Within such communities, under the sort of 'code of the street,' masculinity consists of having loosely connected romantic relationships and acquiring multiple sexual partners; sometimes ending up with multiple children from multiple partners (Anderson, 1999; Collins, 2005). Thus, in short, the belief in the institution of marriage seems to be relatively nonexistent (Anderson, 1999; Collins, 2005).

Proximate Causes of Crime and Eliminating Peer Relationships

While marriage, a romantic relationship, and/or having and taking care of children were described as beneficial for only a small subset of the street workers, one common action taken by street workers (N = 6) in order to leave crime behind was for them to move out and away from their old social worlds, locations, and eliminate old peer relationships. For these street workers, moving out of their old neighborhoods away from familiar people and activities was perceived as a necessary condition to avoiding crime and drugs, especially for the women who participated in the this study. While current and former offenders are generally a transient population, 26% of the subsample of street workers here did take several measures to sever ties with old

associations. Although it should also be mentioned here that some of the street workers old peer

relationships and associations were also 'eliminated,' as family members and friends had been

either arrested and incarcerated and/or passed-away or some were even killed.

For example, asked how he managed to stop using drugs, Jonathan, a 51 year-old current

street worker, replied, "(a)fter doing my time in the half-way house I decided to move into an

apartment in East Pittsburgh. And the purpose was for me to get me and my son away from the

North Side." Similarly, Tommy, a 36 year-old current street worker, claims that, "I had to move

out of there (North Side) in order to be somebody different. It was getting way too dangerous

and it just wasn't worth it no more; so I moved…" And Douglas, a current street worker in his

late 40's, explains that the reason he and a few of the other street workers moved to new

locations in and around Pittsburgh were because of the "pressures of the environment." He goes

on to state that, "(s)ome of the decisions I made in the past I realized were because of my place,

my environment, and they led to destructive behavior and eventually incarceration." In terms of

this subsample of street workers, as well as many of the other street workers in this study

generally, they explain that many times they were in and out of prison or jail and the clutches of

the criminal justice system a number of times before deciding to move out or away from their old

environments or before giving up crime and/or drugs. As Laub and Sampson (2003) put it, these

street workers would "zig-zag" in and out of crime before moving to a new location.

Even while these street workers moved to a new location, many explain that there were

still some difficulties that they would come to confront. Take again Jonathan, a current street

worker in his 50's. After he and his son moved to East Pittsburgh, he explains that,

> My son Jonathan Jr., he got shot Dec 13th, and it was a real crush and blow because he
> was paralyzed. And after moving up to East Pittsburgh he still would take his car up over
> to the North Side. My son, who is from North View Heights, was coming across the
> Bridge one day. Now, the North Side is a targeted area; I think there has been more

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killings over there than in anywhere in the city, ok. My son, coming across the bridge with two friends in his vehicle. Now he is paralyzed, but he got a handicap apparatus to drive his vehicle. Coming across the North View heights bridge, he pulls up to the intersection of Charles Street and Perrysville. He goes to make the right on Perrysville to go up to Marshall Avenue and they shoots his car out. Somebody standing outside shot his car out with them in it. You see, these are territories that these guys are not supposed to be you know. They are hazardous places to be, but I'm still dealing with it..my son just won't leave it alone, you know what I mean.

While some street workers moved out of their old neighborhoods into a different place of residence, like that of Jonathan, they were still confronting problems; whether through their children or, for most street workers, they report moving to and living in similar types of neighborhoods characterized by violence and drug activity. Overall, these findings are consistent with recent literature on returning prisoners who, upon release, end up moving to and residing in neighborhoods characterized by significant disadvantage (Leverentz, 2006). It is more likely than not that these street workers, like returning prisoners, are financially constrained and moving to and living in a more stable and desirable neighborhood becomes somewhat difficult to do. As a consequence, such individuals are more likely to "zig-zag," recidivate, and/or relapse into drug and/or alcohol and crime activities.

Interestingly, beyond just simply relocating, the desisting street workers in the current subsample describe themselves as also having to accept giving up the "lifestyle," certain material possessions, and that they then had to basically live within their means. For example, Tommy, again a street worker in his mid-thirties, claims that, "I had to feel comfortable with not living that lifestyle no more." And Jeremy, a current street worker in his 30's, asserts, "it took me to give up wanting all the material possessions in my life that came with that type of lifestyle—you know, all the clothes, jewelry, nice cars, rims..all those things that I thought used to make me look good and feel good." Other street workers, like Douglas, again a current street worker in his late 40's, also point out that they had to avoid "…going to certain social parties and bars and

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clubs." This was not only because they could not financially afford such events but, moreover, that these were sort of toxic environments full of various types of "pressures."

Yet another major factor in explaining desistance from crime is the disassociation from delinquent peers (Warr, 1998). That is, in line with moving out and away from the sort of proximate causes of crime and giving up the "lifestyle, a few number of street workers here also describe eliminating certain peer group networks. For example, according to Jeremy, "I had to leave all my old friends alone; I mean I didn't and don't need the trouble at this time in my life." Tommy explains that he use to "run" with his older cousin selling mainly cocaine until his cousin was arrested and sent to prison. Maurice is a current street worker in his mid-thirties who claims desistance through his commitment to Mr. Garland and the OVOL organization. However, he himself explains that, "(a)lot of dudes that I was close with are dead or in the penitentiary. I've lost like fifteen friends and family members to the streets." For Maurice, Tommy, and yet other street workers, as they got "deeper into the game" or were hustling almost full time, they started seeing and losing friends and family members to the criminal justice system and even to the violence in the streets. For some of these individuals, their family members and peer group networks were essentially being eliminated over time, prompting them to the decision to "leave the game alone."

Similarly, a number of the women in the present study claim that their criminal role as a "ride-hard-or-die" type of girlfriend ended, and their desistance process began, when they left their significant other for whatever reason. For example, Amy, a 32 year-old current street worker, was dating the then father of her child when,

> …things were getting dangerous. He was a good guy to me; I'd do anything for him, but he lived in the wrong neighborhood—and that's it. You see, I lived in the same neighborhood as my brother, and he was a part of a different gang. And I remember when

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we was at the mall..and just because they are from a different neighborhood..you know, different colors..they were enemies. I remember though we were at the mall and we (her boyfriend at the time and herself) ran into my brother and they had a shootout right there in the mall.

While dating her boyfriend at that point-in-time, Amy would explain that she would run "errands" for her boyfriend if he needed her too. However, with the foreseen ongoing issues between her brother and boyfriend, and the fact that her boyfriend was later arrested and is currently incarcerated, Amy decided to leave him and focus on taking care of herself and her children.

Carmen is a current street worker in her early 20's. While explaining that she was a "ride-hard-or-die" type of girlfriend at the time, one evening and incident with her boyfriend quickly changed all of this. Leaving the local bowling alley with her boyfriend, he got into an argument with a couple of other guys, which, in short, led to Carmen getting shot literally in the head through the brain. Upon her full recovery, she explains that, "…and I knew it was over between us. We had gone through too much, and I didn't want to die..it was a huge point for me and it wasn't worth it no more."

In closing, the women who participated in the present study, they generally claim that their desistance process began when they moved on from their significant other and essentially eliminated their role as a girlfriend who would "ride-hard-or-die." For some, their significant other was either arrested and imprisoned or even later killed. Others, like Carmen above, "had gone through too much" and they themselves made the personal decision at some point to break-up with and leave this significant other.

Conclusion

In the main, the purpose of this dissertation was to address the matter of what do the OVOL violence prevention street workers violence prevention experiences mean to them and,

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along with any other experiences, their desistance process. In total there is a subsample of 29

current and former street workers who claimed desistance in this study. Thinking about Chapter

6, and considering the street workers in the present Chapter, we ultimately learn three things: (1)

OVOL is an opportunity, and one that the street workers are thankful for; and, (2), it offers on

some level, at least initially, to facilitate desistance; and, (3), for a few street workers, to sustain

their desistance from crime.

While Chapter 6 offers insight into points' number one and two above, in the present

Chapter the focus was point number three, or the idea that OVOL employment sustains

desistance for a few street workers. Guided by Laub and Sampson's (2003) modified age-graded

informal social control theory, and considering these current and former street workers OVOL

work-related sentiments, experiences, and internal and external work realities, a few of the

subsample of street workers (N = 6) then describe OVOL violence prevention employment as

specifically their "hook for change" and thus claim desistance through the OVOL organization

over time.

In order to contextualize this process and these few street workers (N = 6) unique

experiences, I first introduced the reader to David, a current street worker in his mid-thirties,

followed by the five other OVOL desisting street workers. More specifically, David, he claimed

that OVOL violence prevention employment specifically facilitated his pathway out of crime. In

line with Chapter 6, and the street workers general sentiments, David expressed that OVOL

violence prevention employment was an opportunity and a sort of second chance for him. What

is unique here however for David is that prior to being offered the OVOL job opportunity by the

Director of the OVOL organization, David was arrested for drugs and for carrying an automatic

weapon. Shortly after being offered the OVOL violence prevention work opportunity, and

before going to court for this most recent set of criminal charges, David discussed this incident over with the Director personally. In brief, the OVOL Director put him in front of the Chief of Police and the Chief of Police and the Director of the OVOL organization got the District Attorney and the police officer who arrested him to drop the charges that were pending against him, while also continuing to provide David with the job opportunity and thus a general second chance. In this sense, the OVOL Director, along with the Chief of Police, essentially intervened in the criminal justice process for David.

Falling in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) first fundamental work related social control mechanism, David explained then that this particular OVOL work opportunity then was a "turning point" and one that he felt personally indebted and/or obligated to the OVOL Director specifically. In return, for this opportunity, David had then already decided to make a personal commitment to the OVOL organization and to the Director himself—to the point where David decided not to "flip bricks of dope" and/or even smoke marijuana anymore, as he did not want to disappoint the OVOL Director and, moreover, he generally did not want to be seen as a "hypocrite" by the OVOL Director, the criminal justice officials who helped to give him this second chance opportunity, as well as by the neighborhood youth, residents, and general community who he now worked for.

On top of this commitment to the OVOL Director and, what we would later come to learn, the OVOL organization and non-violence, David also explained that his sort of routine activities began changing as he began going home after work to spend some more time with his young son as opposed to going out to the local bars and clubs. As time passed, and as the organization expanded and grew with funding and programming activities, David was eventually given more OVOL work related opportunities and responsibilities. In particular for David, the

OVOL organization began sponsoring the "One Vision One Life B-Ball Academy." In short, because of David's past personal experiences with the sport of basketball all throughout his childhood and into high school where he and his team won a State basketball championship, the OVOL organization offered him an area of work where he felt as though it played to his own personal "strengths." On top of this, such work nearly became full-time work during the summer months but would eventually expand into the winter months as he began also managing the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center. Overall, for David, and in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, OVOL violence prevention employment contributed to David's desistance process in a number of compounded and time varying ways.

One final point for David to note here is that working for the OVOL organization, and while doing so through his "strengths," David ultimately felt responsible and/or accountable to something that was personally meaningful to him. And specifically, for David, this type of work gave him a sort of sense of identity. Laub and Sampson (2003), as well as other scholars (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001), argue that meaningful employment can lead to a redefinition of an offender's self conception and can lead to a sort of cognitive transformation. For David, his own personal awareness or realization of this transformation came one late afternoon as his vehicle was shot at and hit multiple times by bullets coming from another vehicle on the road. With the ability and means to himself go and get a weapon, David decidedly chose not to do so and to let the situation dissolve itself, even despite neighborhood friends and peers own will and desire to "catch" these individuals that nearly shot David. David explained that from then on he realized that he was wholly committed to the OVOL Director, his son, and, specifically, to non-violence.

Including David however, there are again a total of six street workers who account for and/or describe OVOL violence prevention employment as specifically their "hook for change" and thus claim desistance through the OVOL organization over time. Similarly, for these individuals, the opportunity for work and the OVOL Directors willingness to give them a chance, they committed to the opportunity. As I noted, an important point here is that, like David, most of these street workers at the time of their OVOL employment were involved with or "caught up in" the criminal justice system in some way. Whether just coming out of prison, or on probation, parole, or in the half-way house, these street workers generally expressed that OVOL work and the Director specifically was or became a sort of intervention for them and their struggles between the criminal justice system, the communities they come from, and their personal situations and circumstances. OVOL then provided such individuals with various work-time structures in which, because of the opportunity as well as mainly their personal commitment and desire, their routine activities of work and family began changing, leading to a general disassociation from the proximate causes of crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Warr, 1998).

In short, much like David, such OVOL work-based programming structures took a considerable amount of the street workers work-time, as well as some personal commitment, obligation, and required some level of personal responsibility and accountability. Taken together, these few street workers, like David, explained that OVOL helped to transform their lives.

In the sections that followed David and the other five OVOL related desisters, the remaining subsample of street workers (N = 23) explained other long-term experiences for their reform. In particular, in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003: 281) theoretical concept of "situated choice," when asked how they managed to abstain from criminal activity, many of the

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subsample of street workers (N = 15) claimed that because of emerging situations and structures in their lives that they made the personal commitment to change. Prison, for example, was the place and a time for many of these street workers for "self-reflection," "soul searching," and "re-evaluation" of life or their own personal pathways. A few of these street workers, however, did begin to reflect on their own personal pathways while in the streets, living under the sort of dangerous "code"—such as Frederick, a current street worker in his 60's who was a former drug addict. Much like the OVOL related desisters, for these street workers, their motives were also tied to desisting for themselves and a second chance, as well as for their children and families, and to ultimately remain drug and crime-free and out of the criminal justice system.

Motivated to change then, these street workers generally describe "agentic" steps toward desistance that went beyond changing their criminal mindset and included following through with their personal commitment. For example, several of these street workers stated that in order to commit to and remain crime-free that they had to give up drugs and/or alcohol and remain sober or conscious. Some claimed that while in prison, or even when out on the streets, attending narcotics anonymous and/or alcoholics anonymous was the key. Yet others took up religion and participated in what they called the "Christian walk." And yet others, like Frederick, were just tired.

In terms of other long-term experiences for reform, a very small number of the subset of desisting street workers (N = 2) explained that it was their family dynamics, or the effect of a good marriage, romantic relationship, and/or their children, that directly impacted them and their criminal desistance process. On the other hand, one final and sort of common set of actions taken by street workers (N = 6) in order to leave crime behind was for them to move out and away from their old social worlds, locations, and eliminate old peer relationships. For these

street workers, moving out of their old neighborhoods away from familiar people and activities was perceived as a necessary condition to avoiding crime and drugs, especially for the women who participated in the this study. Beyond just simply relocating, these desisting street workers claim that they themselves also had to accept giving up the "lifestyle," certain material possessions, and that they then had to basically live within their means.

Yet another major factor in explaining desistance from crime for this subsample of desisting street workers was the disassociation from delinquent friends and/or peers (Warr, 1998). In line with moving out and away from the sort of proximate causes of crime and giving up the "lifestyle," some street workers here also described eliminating certain peer group networks. While for some street workers this occurred as they moved away from or out of their old social worlds and locations, for others they explained that their peer networks were generally eliminated as many of their friends and peers either went to prison or jail for long periods of time or some were even killed. And finally, as far as the women, these street workers generally explained that their "ride-hard-or-die" attitude or mentality changed or ended, and their desistance process began, when they left their male intimate partner.

CHAPTER 8

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

In Chapter 1, I argue that there is a dearth of scholarly attention on the impact that violence prevention employment has on street gang workers (street workers). Research has primarily focused on the implementation, organizational processes, and community-wide impact of utilizing ex-gang members and felons as street workers. For the most part, criminological research has then been inattentive to the street workers own experiences in violence prevention work. Moreover, few studies, if any, have explored the role that this type of work has on the street workers own criminal desistance or reform processes. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to contribute to this body of literature by exploring current and former street workers past personal and criminal backgrounds, the experiences and challenges that they faced upon employment into violence prevention work, the impact of their violence prevention work experiences on the strategies they adopt to desist from crime, and other potential long-term experiences that lead street workers to reform.

In order to begin to address the study's goals, in Chapter 2, I highlight the factors that lead to desistance, violence prevention research, and I arrive at a theoretical framework for this study. In particular, early work on desistance theory emerges from the attempt to explain the age-crime relationship (Quetelet, 1833; Glueck and Glueck, 1940). While these and other scholars maintain that it is maturational reform that is most likely to lead to desistance, other scholars argue that age alone cannot explain change (Sampson and Laub, 1992). A common explanation for desistance is found in Sampson and Laub's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, which asserts that informal ties to social institutions (work, marriage, and/or the

military) can aid the process of reform through building of strong bonds and stakes in conformity. Thus, under these circumstances, one has more to lose from social sanctions and is less likely to commit crime (Sampson and Laub, 2003). Yet other scholars explain that desistance is not merely a product of external forces, but are rather a result of human agency, personal awareness, and the impact of "turning points" (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001; Shover, 1996).

Finally, while some scholars suggest then that it is structural transitions (work, marriage, and the military) alone that explain reform and others maintain that it is the personal choice or human agency, Laub and Sampson (2003) refine their age-graded informal social control theory and contend that it is both structure and human agency that are important elements in constructing trajectories over the life-course. Serving as the theoretical model for this study, Laub and Sampson (2005: 43) conclude that "(c)hoice alone without structures of support, or the offering of support alone absent a decision to desist, however inchoate, seems destined to fail."

Alongside the developing body of literature examining the process of desistance in Chapter 2, I also consider violence prevention research and the general context for street workers, street work practice, and I find that the empirical evidence points mainly at the community level effects of organizations that hire for work street workers. In brief, such evidence again leaves open a need to better understand street workers and their experiences with this type of work. Utilizing Laub and Sampson's (2003) theoretical model then, I located current and formerly employed street workers working to prevent violence for the One Vision One Life (OVOL) organization in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Chapter 3 details the methodologies used to capture the complexities of these street workers lives.

For this study, I employed a multi-method research strategy that included an ethnography of the OVOL violence prevention program, formal and informal in-depth interviews with its street workers and managers, supplemented with survey interviews, and an examination of official records (N = 45). My goal in using multiple methodologies and data sources was to provide a means for examining the same topic through multiple lines of sight, or for triangulating the qualitative data (Berg, 2004). This is a common strategy utilized in qualitative research as it increases confidence in the validity and reliability of the analysis process (Lofland and Lofland, 1995). It took approximately thirteen months to shadow and interview 45 current and formerly employed street workers, and the result was the development of rich data that allowed for the thorough analysis of the street workers OVOL violence prevention experiences and desistance processes through an interpretive lens that stems from their perspectives.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I examine the mechanisms that led to street workers initiation into and continuation with crime. More specifically, Laub and Sampson (2003) in their modified age-graded informal social control theory argue that in any study of offending patterns over time one cannot ignore the structural contexts, social history, and the individual's situation and social/personal will. Laub and Sampson (2003) therefore believe that both the social environment and the individual are influenced by the interaction of structure and choice. In Chapter 4, I provide a description of the historical and cultural background of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in order to better understand the social atmosphere of the region and times that contextualize street workers life experiences. Furthermore, my intention was to begin to turn the attention over to the 45 current and former street workers. I then also contextualize this background with some of the street workers own understanding and experiences growing up and living in the city of Pittsburgh.

What we learned was that while Pittsburgh has a long and great history, for the eldest (N = 18) and youngest (N = 27) of street workers growing up mainly in urban neighborhoods around the city that they experienced much in terms of poverty, racism, job closings and lack of employment, as well as increasing drug availability, usage, and, overtime, the rise in gang and/or clique activities, violence, and the sort of slow demise of the general neighborhood, family, and traditional values. According to street workers, these fundamental issues did not come about all at once. As a result of some key turning points, coupled with social isolation, incivility, disorder, and general disorganization, the areas from which both the eldest and youngest of street workers grew up over the decades and currently live in gave way to a sort of alternative culture and/or value system. For these street workers, including both the eldest and youngest of street workers here, this alternative culture or system of values has led them to distinct pathways of crime.

Taking in the history, culture, and street workers own understanding of the city of Pittsburgh and their neighborhood structure and experiences, in Chapter 5, I examine the pathways that current and former street workers take into and continue on with , or even "zig-zag" in and out of, crime. In particular, I discovered distinct patterns as they relate to street workers pathways to drug involvement and non-drug involvement.

First off, there are several factors that shape people's choices and behaviors, and, according to Chapter 4 generally, it could be said that these factors seem to be shaped by various conditions at multiple levels. There is a wealth of literature on the structural and cultural conditions that affect crime and these studies bring to the fore the general theoretical line to the pathway-to-crime framework (Anderson, 1999; Laub and Sampson, 1993; 2003; Sampson and Wilson, 1995; Shaw and McKay, 1942). Moreover, according to empirical evidence, some of the most specific and readily documented factors that shape and affect pathways to criminality

include socio-economic marginalization, family relations, peer group associations, and substance abuse (Anderson, 1999; Farrington, 2000; 2002b; Webster et al., 2006). Therefore, considering the historical and culture background of Pittsburgh, and the street workers general situations, what I learned was that for the street workers who participated in this study there were different routes to distinct forms (drug related involvement and non-drug related involvement) of criminal offending.

When investigating the path to and/or continuation with illicit drug and/or alcohol related involvement, a number of street workers had at least one family member who was drug or alcohol addicted in the household; thus, for these street workers, they were more likely to use drugs and/or alcohol substances when a member of the family was abusing drugs. In addition to exposure to drugs through their family members, most current and former street workers began experimenting and using drugs and/or alcohol in order to fit in or be "down" with their friends and peers. A few of the women who participated in the study however admitted that their initiation into and participation with crime stemmed from their desire to be accepted by their drug-involved male intimate partner, a result that is not uncommon in the literature (Gilfus, 1992; Arnold, 1990). Finally, in terms of drug and/or alcohol related involvement, and in line with general strain theory, some current and former street workers turned to drugs as a way to cope or numb the experience and trauma of abuse and the stress, anxiety, and pain of losing one's job, having to support a large family, and/or dealing with the near loss of a loved one (Agnew, 1992). Coping with such pain, according to Slocum et al. (2005), may hinder or affect one's ability to desist from crime. And, similar to Laub and Sampson (2003) and their results, for some street workers this led to a sort of cycle or the "zig-zagging" in and out of heavy drug and/or alcohol usage, and even crime, over time.

For the current and former street workers, the pathway to criminal activity was also tied to economic motivation. More specific to substance abuse patterns, drug addicted street workers were more likely to have committed economic crimes for the purpose of obtaining money for drugs and/or alcohol. Drug involvement then for these street workers played a significant role in heightening their involvement in crime in order to support their drug habit.

Similarly, for some street workers, economic marginalization seemed to have shaped the onset and the on and off continuation in offending. Consistent with previous research that documents economic hardships as a precursor to offending, for these street workers, the inability to manage economic demands and pressures to care for themselves, their family, and especially their children resulted in their involvement in crime (Greenfeld and Snell, 1999). And finally, some street workers pathways into and continuation with crime emerged because of the desire for money and material possessions. These findings then generally reveal that the triggers to crime are not solely tied to victimization or economic oppression, but are also tied to the cultural emphasis on monetary success and the weak emphasis on achieving this goal through legitimate means (Agnew, 1992; Anderson, 1999; Merton, 1938).

Considering the current and former street workers past personal and criminal experiences up-to-this-point, in Chapter 6, I explored their sentiments, experiences, and the realities that they face(d) upon violence prevention employment for the OVOL organization. That is, with the rise and prominence of the underground economy for them and their neighborhoods and their susceptibility to it, as many street workers explain their involvement in drug and non-drug related crime, in this chapter many of the street workers go on to explain that they feel they have been hampered by their criminal background and/or record and have themselves little legitimate work experience. Therefore, what we find in the first part of this Chapter is that many street

workers view OVOL employment as an opportunity, a way of work, and for a legitimate wage. Importantly then, OVOL violence prevention work is an opportunity to distance themselves from the streets as well as from the criminal justice system. Moreover, in the first portion of the Chapter, I find that nearly all of the street workers see OVOL employment as an opportunity, chance, or venue to help get themselves on their own two-feet, to help their families, and/or even as a chance to symbolically help their fellow community members and overall neighborhood.

However, in the second portion of the Chapter, the OVOL street workers also express their encounters with the internal and external to OVOL violence prevention work realities. Here, beyond the initial opportunity, the street workers feel as though they are "in a fight all the way around" as they must work to negotiate their way through the OVOL organizational work structure and relations as well as the community and its "code of ethics."

Internal to the OVOL organization, as a form of work, street workers express experiencing a lack of structure, resources, training, and, as the OVOL organization continues to transition and transform to tackle violence, they feel as though their definition of work is limited to: (1) caseload management, (2) violence responses and shooting reviews and mediations, and (3) the paperwork or documentation process. Here, the street workers sense that from their work and efforts that there is little or no affect on the communities that they come from. At the same time, some street workers feel as though other street workers are not participating and/or are using the OVOL organization as a shield for illegal practices. And yet others feel as though the OVOL management team is generally unfair and is "getting over on them," as their work is generally dangerous and, on top of resources, it lacks pay and a general structure for upward mobility.

Similarly, along these lines, the street workers express that their external to OVOL work realities are generally dangerous. More specifically, some street workers feel as though they are putting their own, as well as their family's, reputation on-the-line in their local neighborhoods by working for the OVOL violence prevention organization. Some street workers have actually experienced threats and physical dangers, and, because of the "code of ethics," they continue to fear being labeled a "snitch" and the repercussions that may follow. Overall, these internal and external experiences create some level of organizational and personal strain for the street workers.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I considered the process that a subsample of current (N = 25), and a few former (N = 4), street workers take to desist from crime. Of particular importance for this study was the role that violence prevention work plays in the desistance process for street workers. Guided by Laub and Sampson's (2003) modified age-graded informal social control theory, and considering the current and former street workers OVOL work-related sentiments, experiences, and internal and external work realities, few of the subsample of street workers (N = 6) describe OVOL violence prevention employment as specifically their 'hook for change' and thus claim desistance through the OVOL organization over time.

In order to contextualize this process and these few street workers unique experiences, in this Chapter I introduced the reader to a current street worker in his mid-thirties, David, and to his personal story as he moved in and out of crime. For David, he claimed that OVOL violence prevention employment specifically facilitated his pathway out of crime. In line with Chapter 6, and therefore most of those street workers sentiments who participated in this study, David expressed that OVOL violence prevention employment was an opportunity and a sort of second chance for him. More uniquely however for David, prior to being offered the OVOL job

opportunity by the Director of the OVOL organization, David was arrested for drugs and for carrying an automatic weapon. Shortly after being offered the OVOL violence prevention work opportunity, and before going to court for this most recent set of criminal charges, David discussed this incident over with the Director personally. In brief, and as David explained, the OVOL Director put him in front of the Chief of Police and the Chief of Police and the Director of the OVOL organization decided to give him, David, a second chance by continuing to provide him with the job opportunity. In this sense, the OVOL Director, along with the Chief of Police, essentially intervened in the criminal justice process as they got the District Attorney and the police officer who arrested David to drop the drug and gun charges that were pending. Falling in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) first fundamental work related social control mechanism, David explained then that this particular OVOL work opportunity then was a "turning point" and one that he felt personally indebted and/or obligated to the OVOL Director specifically. In return, for this opportunity, David had then already decided to make a personal commitment to the OVOL organization and to the Director himself—to the point where David decided not to "flip bricks of dope" and/or even smoke marijuana anymore, as he did not want to disappoint the OVOL Director and, moreover, he generally did not want to be seen as a "hypocrite" by the OVOL Director and the criminal justice officials who helped to give him this second chance opportunity.

OVOL employment did not come without its own struggles however for David, as he also explained that with the little money that he earned through OVOL work that he generally felt "broke" and "busted." Even so, he stayed personally committed to the OVOL organization and to the Director. On top of this commitment to the OVOL Director and to the OVOL organization, and coupled with the fact that he was generally broke and feeling busted, David

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also explained that his sort of routine activities began changing as he began going home after work to spend some more time with his young son as opposed to going out to the local bars and clubs. As time passed, and as the organization expanded and grew with funding and programming activities, David was eventually given more OVOL work related opportunities and responsibilities.

Accordingly, while David's OVOL work-time became generally spent with youths in a recreational type of environment, in-and-around schools, the local juvenile detention center, attending violence responses, and developing a caseload of clients and completing the necessary paperwork that followed these activities, in particular for David, the OVOL organization began sponsoring the "One Vision One Life B-Ball Academy." In short, because of David's past personal experiences with the sport of basketball all throughout his childhood and into high school where he and his team won a State basketball championship, the OVOL organization offered him an area of work where he felt as though it played to his own personal "strengths." On top of this, such work nearly became full-time work during the summer months but would eventually expand into the winter months as he began also managing the Mount Pleasant Recreational Center. Overall, for David, and in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, OVOL violence prevention employment contributed to David's desistance process in a number of ways.

One final point for David to note here is that working for the OVOL organization, and while doing so through his "strengths," David ultimately felt responsible and/or accountable to something that was personally meaningful to him—and this beyond his young son. And specifically, for David, this type of work gave him a sort of sense of identity. Laub and Sampson (2003), as well as other scholars (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001), argue that meaningful

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employment can lead to a redefinition of an offender's self conception and can lead to a sort of cognitive transformation. For David, his own personal awareness or realization of this transformation came one late afternoon as his vehicle was shot at and hit multiple times by bullets coming from another vehicle. With the ability and means to himself go and get a weapon, David decidedly chose not to do so and to let the situation dissolve itself, even despite neighborhood friends and peers own will and desire to "catch" these individuals that nearly shot David. David explained that from then on he realized that he was wholly committed to the OVOL Director, his son, and, specifically, non-violence.

David is now a full-time employee for the OVOL violence prevention organization; he is also back in school or college, and he continues to take care of his son eight years after the sort of initial OVOL intervention. Including David however, there are again a total of six street workers who account for and/or describe OVOL violence prevention employment as specifically their 'hook for change' and thus claim desistance through the OVOL organization over time. Following David, for these five other street workers, securing violence prevention employment facilitated their personal transitions and transformations out of the criminal lifestyle.

More specifically, in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003) age-graded informal social control theory, and as this theory relates to work generally, these few street workers again expressed or recognized that OVOL violence prevention work started off as a chance for them, or as an initial opportunity in which they felt personally indebted to the OVOL organization and its Director. As I noted, an important point here is that, like David, most of these street workers at the time of their OVOL employment were involved with or "caught up in" the criminal justice system in some way. Whether just coming out of prison, or on probation, parole, or in the half-way house, these street workers generally expressed that OVOL work and the Director

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specifically was or became a sort of intervention for them and their struggles between the criminal justice system, the communities they come from, and their personal situations and circumstances.

Within the framework of this intervention, these street workers also explained making the personal decision to commit then to the organization, and their motives generally included the fact that they wanted to remain out of prison, they wanted to get through the half-way house, or off of parole, and that they ultimately did not want to be back under the clutches of the criminal justice system—not to mention to do it for themselves and their families. OVOL then provided such individuals with various work-time structures in which, because of the opportunity as well as mainly their personal commitment and desire, their routine activities of work and family began changing, leading to a general disassociation from the proximate causes of crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003; Warr, 1998). In short, much like David, such OVOL work-based programming structures took a considerable amount of the street workers work-time, as well as some personal commitment, obligation, and required some level of personal responsibility and accountability. Taken together, these few street workers, like David, explained that OVOL helped to transform their lives.

In the sections that followed David and the other five OVOL related desisters, the remaining subsample of street workers (N = 23) explained other long-term experiences for their reform. In particular, in line with Laub and Sampson's (2003: 281) theoretical concept of "situated choice," when asked how they managed to abstain from criminal activity, many of the subsample of street workers (N = 15) claimed that because of emerging situations and structures in their lives that they made the personal commitment to change. Prison, for example, was the place and a time for many of these street workers for "self-reflection," "soul searching," and "re-

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evaluation" of life or their own personal pathways. It should be mentioned that a few of these street workers, however, did begin to reflect on their own personal pathways while in the streets, living under the sort of dangerous "code." Much like the OVOL related desisters, for these street workers, their motives were also tied to desisting for themselves and a second chance, as well as for their children and families, and to ultimately remain crime-free and out of the criminal justice system.

Baskin and Sommers (1998) contend that forming a commitment to change is only the first stage in the desistance process. Motivated to change then, these street workers generally describe "agentic" steps toward desistance that went beyond changing their criminal mindset and included following through with their personal commitment. For example, several of these street workers stated that in order to commit to and remain crime-free that they had to give up drugs and/or alcohol and remain sober or conscious. Some claimed that while in prison, or even when out on the streets, attending narcotics anonymous and/or alcoholics anonymous was the key. Yet others took up religion and participated in what they called the "Christian walk." In short, these findings follow along with a growing body of literature that highlights the importance of the individual serving as an agent of their own personal change (Baskin and Sommers, 1998; Giordano et al., 2002; Laub and Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001).

In terms of other long-term experiences for reform, a very small number of the subset of desisting street workers (N = 2) explained that it was their family dynamics, or the effect of a good marriage, romantic relationship, and/or their children, that directly impacted them and their criminal desistance process. And, on the other hand, one final and sort of common set of actions taken by street workers (N = 6) in order to leave crime behind was for them to move out and away from their old social worlds, locations, and eliminate old peer relationships. For these

street workers, moving out of their old neighborhoods away from familiar people and activities was perceived as a necessary condition to avoiding crime and drugs, especially for the women who participated in the this study. Beyond just simply relocating, these desisting street workers claim that they themselves also had to accept giving up the "lifestyle," certain material possessions, and that they then had to basically live within their means.

Yet another major factor in explaining desistance from crime for this subsample of desisting street workers was the disassociation from delinquent friends and/or peers (Warr, 1998). In line with moving out and away from the sort of proximate causes of crime and giving up the "lifestyle," some street workers here also described eliminating certain peer group networks. While for some street workers this occurred as they moved away from or out of their old social worlds and locations, for others they explained that their peer networks were generally eliminated as many of their friends and peers either went to prison or jail for long periods of time or some were even killed. As for the women, and in short, these street workers generally explained that their "ride-hard-or-die" attitude or mentality changed or ended, and their desistance process began, when they left their male intimate partner for whatever reason.

Discussion

In this dissertation, we have learned about 45 current and former OVOL street workers past personal and criminal experiences, the challenges they face upon violence prevention employment, and generally the impact street workers violence prevention work experiences had on the strategies they adopted to desist from crime, along with other experiences in the long-term that helped to facilitate desistance. Accordingly, many scholars have revealed various ways in which desistance from crime is associated with gaining quality employment (Agnew, 1992; Giordano et al., 2002; Horney et al., 1995; Laub and Sampson, 1993; Maruna, 2001; Uggen,

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2000).[28] It is Laub and Sampson (2003) however and their age-graded informal social control theory—the theoretical guide for this study—that recognize that both the social environment and the individual are influenced by the interaction of structure and choice. Meaning that structures are determined by individual choices, and in turn structures constrain, modify, and limit individual choices; choices are therefore always embedded in structures (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 282). In a theoretical sense for this study then, it is because of and within the context of OVOL violence prevention work where structures and choices come together for the street workers.

A large, but main, point of this study was to better understand the street workers desistance processes, and particularly within a way of work that has presented itself to 45 street workers. What we have learned is that the street workers general sentiments fall within the opportunity framework, or the idea that employment can lead to an income that can increase and/or provide some level of financial stability, which in return may make criminal activity less attractive or even necessary (Agnew, 1992). For Laub and Sampson (2003) however this opportunity for OVOL work would only be an initiating experience for desisting street workers in this case without some level of personal commitment and/or informal social controls in place to inhibit offending. As Laub and Sampson (2003) again argue, it is in the context of these structures and choices that we can come to better understand the long-term process of or for change.

Subsequently, what we also learned is that OVOL employment turned out to be a "hook for change" for only a select few of the street workers who participated in this study; and, furthermore that "situated choice" can become meaningful very quickly under some circumstances and situations. That is, for these few street workers, the OVOL Director and the

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organization as a whole became a sort of intervention for them at what they described as a key point in their lives. Whether coming out of prison, in the half-way house, on parole or probation, or, like David, recently arrested and standing on a potential conviction, OVOL generally provided these individuals with the potential "out" that they could not or did not want to miss. The question here however is that with such a small number of street workers attributing OVOL work to their ongoing desistance process, are these findings consistent with other studies in the area, which have found that jobs may have limited or no effect on desistance (Massoglia and Uggen, 2007; Leverentz, 2006)? Giordano et al. (2002), for example, found no relationship between job stability and desistance, and the main sort of reason these scholars attribute here to this finding is the lack of jobs that may serve as a social control function.

In fact, in terms of the present study, well over 70 percent of street workers, including these same OVOL desisting individuals here above, claim that the OVOL organization lacked structure, resources, training, and overemphasizes the paperwork process. Violence prevention work as a street worker appears to also affect their reputations on the streets and this type of work is moreover then considered by many to be dangerous, causing strain for the OVOL organization and between its street workers and managers. While, as a consequence, this may have left a number of street workers to claim desistance from elsewhere, in short, this may not mean that OVOL employment is not impacting and/or cannot impact street workers pathways out of crime.[29]

That is, a number of the subsample of street workers claim that they made the more subjective change in their mindsets, whether they made the personal commitment to change, or decided to commit to and follow through with a relationship, or they decided to move away from the sort of proximate causes of crime and break ties with former delinquent friends and/or peers.

In most of these accounts, these street workers for the most part made a pact or a pledge with themselves to cease their criminal behavior, whether this was drug and/or non-drug related, and they continued to take more "agentic" steps toward desistance and change by following through with their original commitment. First, research on individuals serving as agents of their own change seems to fit well with this subset of current and former street workers. And, as a result, while OVOL work may not be a solve-all type of agency for the individual at this or any other point, these cognitive shifts are essentially compounded with "agentic" steps that include a general acceptance of OVOL violence prevention employment and work for these street workers (see Figure 4 for a simple schematic of this process).[30]

Accordingly, research on these cognitive and behavior shifts emerges from symbolic interactionist theory, and this body of literature argues that the impact of "turning points" (such as job stability) on an individual's life may depend on the actors' level of awareness about their problems, motivation and openness to change, or interpretation of events (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001). According to Lefton and Rosengren (1966: 803):

> …the symbolic interactionist approach leads to a conception of formal organizational structures and processes as having only secondary importance, providing only a contextual backdrop against which processes of self-identity, situational definitions, role emergence, and symbol verification are brought into bold relief.

Both Giordano et al. (2002) and Maruna (2001) assert that cognitive shifts serve as an integral part in the transformation process. And yet other scholars argue that, likewise, desistance is related to the personal commitment to change. For example, Adams (1997: 334-335) asserts that:

> Substantial and lasting changes in criminal behavior rarely come about only as a result of passive experience, and such changes are best conceptualized as an outcome of a process that involves significant participation by the offender, who, in many respects, acts as his or her own change agent.

All of these are important to begin the long-term process of desistance. And, importantly, Laub and Sampson (2003: 299) recognize that these cognitive and behavioral shifts are compatible with their revised life-course theory of informal social control and crime.

That is to say that, according to Laub and Sampson (2003), they state that all criminal offenders desist from crime at some point in time in their lifetimes, and essentially all will have some form of a trigger or reason at some point (or even at multiple points considering the "zig-zag" affect). While for a few of the subsample of street workers the "situated choice" and OVOL work opportunity at the time was just enough for them to decidedly give up drug and/or non-drug related crime over the long-term, for many others here, the personal commitment to desist from crime is accordingly preceded by, but yet still currently compounded with, OVOL employment and work—at least for now or for the time being as desistance is an ongoing process (see Crutchfield and Pitchford (1997) for more detail). Therefore, theoretically speaking, maybe we should not underestimate at least the potential that violence prevention work may serve in one's desistance process over the long-term, as it at the very least has some compounding effect for someone who may be ready to take those "agentic" steps necessary for change.

Community-Based Violence Prevention and Street Workers: What Does This All Mean?

Community-based violence prevention programming has taken many forms over the past several decades (please see Chapter 2 for more detail). The general idea of hiring former criminals for this type of work is accordingly not new, but is considered by many scholars to be highly controversial (Klein, 1971; Miller, 1962; Spergel, 1995; Venkatesh, 2000). This debate stems not only from the fact that there have been several such community-based programs that have suffered from implementation issues, but specifically from fraud by those "former" criminals hired to work in and for such programs (Spergel, 1995; Venkatesh and Murphy, 2007).

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In light of this controversy, and considering the present study and what we have learned, community-based violence prevention programming such as One Vision One Life (OVOL) may need to consider some form of accountability measures for its street workers in order to begin to safeguard against such issues and, moreover, to help to build a level of integrity for this type of programming. And while it may not be fully prepared yet to do so, focusing on the former criminals, ex-offenders, or the street workers generally hired for this type of work may at some-point-in-time go a long way for diminishing gun, gang and/or clique violence.

As we already well know, OVOL is a community-based violence prevention program that hires for work former gang and/or clique members, ex-felons and criminals in order to intervene in the ensuing violence in their own local neighborhoods. While the OVOL organization as a place of work for those street workers who participated in this study may hold some potential as a hook for change, the reality is that such individuals generally have the ability to make their own choices within this context. As such, some individuals hired for work may not be ready to ultimately commit to the work and, at the very least, will be willing to take those agentic steps necessary for change. Realizing this, and to begin, the OVOL organization (and potentially programs alike) may need to think about organizing a structure and/or a full-time place of work for street workers that may require them to arrive and leave on a timely basis—at least initially. While this may take the form of assisting others in the running of recreational centers, sports camps, etc., this could be a place where OVOL managers, seasoned street workers, and yet others may personally observe the overall reliability and commitment of those newer street workers to the field of violence prevention.

On top of this, and to even help to potentially bolster accountability, in return the OVOL organization may want to include organizational and work-based incentives for street workers.

Thus, for their apparent commitment and efforts, street workers should be able to work toward goals such as pay increases, promotion, benefits, re-assignment and so on. As is, there appears to be very little structure as to who gets what in terms of salary, benefits, and promotions. While these adjustments may be or seem minor, considering the present study and findings, the street workers seem to need a level of organization and, likewise, the organization seems to need to generally learn about and understand a little bit about the street worker that they are hiring for work.

Finally for now, it is obvious that there is a need for continued evaluation, both internally and externally. To continue to not only self-assess, but also to empirically assess and communicate the findings and results is invaluable to the overall organization and practice surrounding violence prevention. Again, while OVOL and other like programs are attempting to have an impact on violence in their local areas, a potentially good place to start with is within their own organization and specifically with their own street workers and their work structures.

Conclusion

In closing, the OVOL violence prevention organization is generally a part of a larger movement based around providing some level of community justice to neighborhoods and citizens inflicted with past histories of poverty, crime, and violence. The purpose of the OVOL organization, and subsequently this movement, is to generate a level of individual, residential involvement and empowerment in such communities. For street workers, the OVOL violence prevention organization represents a way of work and an overall opportunity for them to begin, at the very least, to help themselves and their communities. However, as we have learned, in order to be affective at any level the street workers themselves need to recognize and commit to their own change processes before such an organization can begin to propel such a movement in

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the right direction. And, violence prevention as a way of work for street workers through the

OVOL organization may be at least one component of the "agentic" steps toward change for

such street workers willing to personally commit to their own change and the long-term process.

As an organization itself however, generating a level of accountability for its street workers may

help the organization to assess the street worker and to potentially better aid the overall

desistance process.

Limitations

This research project, like most others, is certainly not flawless. In fact, there are a few

weaknesses in this study that require some attention. The first area of concern is the research site

itself. For this study, the OVOL organization is the lone organization considered as a way of

work for street workers interviewed and shadowed. The OVOL organization has its own

structures, rules and regulations, which may or may not vary from other violence prevention

organizations that employ street workers, but it is assumed to be slightly different.

The second area of concern for this study is the fact that I used a targeted purposive

sampling technique in an effort to identify street workers in the process of desistance and

comparing these with former street workers released from violence prevention work for various

reasons. The two samples then that were identified for this project are not representative of all

violence prevention street workers and, generally speaking, even ex-offenders and/or recidivists.

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, and the reliance on convenience or snowball

sampling techniques, I am also unable to develop a matched sample for a more rigorous

comparison of the two groups. Therefore, because of the nature of my purposive sampling

strategies, I am unable to make broad generalizations about desistance to some or other

populations.

Similarly, the population for this study is also fairly homogeneous overall. My overall population is composed of mostly men. The OVOL organization itself is organized mainly in African American communities around Pittsburgh and has historically hired mainly African American males. However, in terms of street workers, there are a growing number of women working as a part of a new organizational component to the organization; and while a few women participated in this study, I again am unable to make general comparisons and broad generalizations about desistance to other populations.

Next, while employing a multi-method research strategy that included an ethnography of the OVOL violence prevention program or spending over thirteen months with the OVOL organization and its street workers, desistance is an ongoing process and most street workers are continuing to be active participants in their desistance and/or persistence processes. Therefore, this study captures only a portion of the street workers ongoing life-histories with the narrative accounts and with-in-individual longitudinal records collected and analyzed.

Finally, as with most qualitative research studies, rich information and data could be missed by the researcher themselves. Missing various aspects and perspectives of social reality is quite easy under certain chaotic circumstances; however, this project was designed to minimize this occurrence. More specifically, the methods and procedures section of Chapter 3 were geared toward finding and reporting only the true emerging results of this particular study on street workers desistance processes in light of OVOL work.

Suggestions for Future Research

The street workers introduced in this dissertation, working in the violence prevention field for the OVOL organization, represent only a small fraction of the individuals employed for such work. Future research should first consider broadening the focus to include other

community-based violence prevention programs that hire for work ex-criminals and/or convicts as street workers. Under potentially varying or differing organizational goals and structures (including here resources and training), there is much to learn about this type of work and what it means for street workers and their potential criminal desistance processes—not to mention what such organizations and street workers mean for their neighborhoods.

Along these lines, programs working in neighborhoods that target various ethnic and/or racial groups, and who hire such individuals for violence prevention work, may also prove to be beneficial for our general understanding. And similarly, while there is a dearth of empirical research on violence prevention street workers of differing ethnicity and/or race, women are also becoming a key component to this type of work and should be considered in future research endeavors.

More specific to the present study and findings, there is a need to continue to study OVOL work and the current and former street workers specifically over the long term, or even at time intervals, in order to expand on a deeper understanding of their desistance processes.[31] In fact, for the former street workers, it appears as if this process still needs to be triggered so-to-speak. Even so, criminal desistance is an ongoing process, and one that the current street workers must work to continue to sustain over the course of their lives. And finally, with the increasing number of women employed as street workers in the OVOL organization specifically, it leaves some room for some potentially interesting comparisons.

1. While analyses show a 3.5 percent increase in homicides for 2004 from the 2000 estimate, it should be mentioned that this is a substantial decrease from a decade ago (1995). That is, there has been nearly a 26 percent decrease from the estimated number of murders a decade ago (Department of Justice, 2006).

2. According to Sampson and Laub (2003: 18) to understand the processes of persistence and desistance requires a theory of crime and the criminal offender. Crime is then typically defined as a violation of societal rules of behavior that are embodied in law which, when violated, may evoke sanctions by the state. Deviance, on the other hand, is defined as violations of social norms or generally accepted standards of society (Sampson & Laub, 2003:18).

3. For Sampson and Laub (2005: 21-22) and others (Bushway et al., 2001; Fisher et al., 1993; Vaughn, 1986) desistance is best viewed as a process rather than a discrete event that supports the termination of offending. This view is then opposed to the idea of simple termination, which is the point at which one stops criminal activity (Sampson & Laub, 2005: 21). According to Sampson and Laub (2005: 23) desistance can occur when there is a change, in criminal propensity or a change in opportunities to commit crime.

4. For some exceptions please see Baskin and Sommers (1998), Giordano et al. (2002), Piquero (2002, 2005).

5. And this includes even considering the role of gangs, another key dimension that prior research have shown to relate to onset, persistence and desistance from crime (for a brief review, please see Thornberry and Krohn, 2003). In particular, in 1986 the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Program of Research on the Causes and Correlates of Delinquency took on three longitudinal studies in order to document the impact gang participation has on the prevalence, incidence, and seriousness of offending. While the initial aim of the Rochester Youth Developmental Study, Pittsburgh Youth Study, and Denver Youth Survey was to study adolescent delinquency and drug use, over the years these projects expanded into an investigation of both prosocial and antisocial development across the life course.

In brief, a part of the focus for these programs was gang membership and the key risk factors amenable to change by such prevention and intervention-types of programming (for a complete list of risk factors found in other studies, please see Huizinga, 1998). Overall, according to Thornberry and Krohn (2003), considering gang membership is as important as considering other key dimensions of the life course that relate to onset, persistence and desistance from crime, as knowledge of developmental pathways reflect current problem behaviors in the context of the history of problem behaviors (Thornberry and Krohn, 2003). And knowledge of pathways also helps identify future problem behaviors that need to be prevented (Thornberry and Krohn, 2003). Research findings then from all three projects show that youth getting involved in delinquent careers, and in part because of gang membership, before even the age of thirteen are at a higher risk of becoming serious and violent offenders

than others who begin their delinquent careers later (Huizinga, Esbensen, and Weiher, 1994; Thornberry and Krohn, 2003). These results imply that beyond marriage, work/employment, and/or the military, preventative interventions and controls to reduce offending should be introduced early on in the life course. In fact, Thornberry and Krohn (2003) offer developing preventative interventions at least from the beginning of elementary school-age onward.

6. From what we've learned from the gang programs over the years, the programmatic focus has transitioned more to crime and violence issues, as opposed to the "gangs."

7. It must be noted that the support for community-based action programs that seek to reduce crime, violence, and homicide through a cross-institutional effort is based on several other assumptions: (1) police alone cannot create safe communities, (2) communities are an appropriate arena for crime prevention efforts, and (3) police are more effective when they act with residents to "co-produce" safe communities (Bennett, 1998; Lavrakas, 1985).

8. For a more detailed discussion of this metaphor, please see Huizinga and Elliot (1987) and Wolfgang et al. (1972).

9. The reader must try not to miss-interpret the intention of this sentence and the phrase or usage of "serve."

10. The emphasis on the gang as a group up and into the 1960's was more of a focus on providing recreational opportunities rather than on individual-youth counseling, relations with family, or modifying the local youth-agencies or even school's approaches to delinquent youths (Spergel, 2005).

11. Literature pertaining to detached or street gang workers point out that individual's working in this field have been primarily male, while there has then been little, if any, discussion of women's roles (see Klein, 1971; Spergel, 1966, 2005).

12. It should be noted here that during these time periods, there was an extraordinary focus on suppression to address the gang and violence problem (Rosenbaum, 1988). Special gang units were developed by the criminal justice system and backed by the federal government (see Klein, 2004). Gang units then, and yet still today, adopted tough, moralistic, proactive tactics, and gang youth were largely considered to be evil, remorseless in their criminal activities, and not worthy of civil treatment (Rosenbaum, 1988; Spergel, 2005).

13. The evaluation process was conducted in two parts: (1) an ethnographic research design and (2) a quasi-experimental design (for further details see Wilson et al., forthcoming).

14. To protect the privacy of the participants in this study, I did not record any identifying information during the audio-taped interview or on the interview guide, except for a number that was placed on the bottom left corner of the tape and interview guide. This number and the participant's name were logged to keep track of the completed interviews. In addition, pseudonyms were used for all of the street workers names as well as the names of people to whom they referred.

15. Generally speaking, it should be mentioned that at least two of the One Vision One Life street workers grew up in Pittsburgh like neighborhoods in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

16. In conversation, many times at least, the Hill District neighborhood of Pittsburgh is referred to as just simply the Hill.

17. Throughout this and the following chapters pseudonyms are many times used in place of actual street names and also to protect the identity of the street workers themselves who participated in the present study.

18. Many of the street workers who participated in this study seem to attribute multiple, overlapping reasons for their initiation into crime generally.

19. Briefly, there were a number of street workers who participated in this study that explained being convicted on a felony level charge that they did not at that point commit; they explain that they were wrongfully charged for "that" particular crime. But, many then do also admit that they committed a similar type of crime that they did not get charged for and sometimes they then equalize their experiences to some degree, rationalizing that they had done some type of similar "dirt" that they feel as though they were paying for when supposedly being wrongfully convicted. As for the other 10 street workers, 8 admitted committing crime(s) that would constitute a felony level conviction. These individuals express that they however then have been fortunate not to have been caught or arrested and imprisoned.

20. All street workers employed by the OVOL organization and participating in such programming environments (schools, etc.) had to agree to background checks.

21. It should be noted that not all of the street workers mentioned that there were dangers to this type of work or even that they were confronting internal organizational strains. Amongst other reasons, many of these street workers however were relatively new to the organization, as they had been hired within the last five months of when the data collection phase of this research project took place.

22. Because of their experiences with such dangers, and that there is little structure, resources, etc., many street workers also point out that internally they feel that they are not compensated or paid a fair wage. More than this is the fact that the street workers feel as though there is no 'real' opportunity for moving up or advancing through OVOL work and the organization. They sense little upward mobility.

23. Coupled with this, Laub and Sampson (2003) also utilize supplemental data, mainly quantitative records and data, to help inform them of the Glueck men's life histories and with the ultimate goal of understanding better their general criminal desistance processes.

24. In order to be included in the desistance sample the current and former street workers had to meet two criteria: 1) not returned to jail or prison for committing an offense once employed by the OVOL organization; and 2) self-report that they remained crime free since their last release from prison and OVOL employment.

In terms of this sub-sample of street workers, 25 out of 30 current street workers claim to be desisters. As for the other 5, some either self-reported "straddling the fence," while others were even let go for their ongoing drug and/or crime related activities. As for the 4 former street workers, these individuals for the most part found other social work related jobs in the community and sort of moved up the social ladder with full time, better paying work.

25. As far as OVOL work as part-time work or employment, David explains above that this type of work usually ended up requiring him to work more than his 25 hours a week running the B-Ball Academy, Mount Pleasant Recreational Center, and so on. However, or even so, David was still only making a $1,000 dollars a month through the OVOL organization. To compensate for this, David explains here that,

> So, what I also started doing with the extra time was thinking of other ways to get money. I was doing extra work for the League of Young Voters; working for them getting voters to come in and vote. So, at one point, I was probably having like three checks at one time coming in.

Thus, on top of OVOL work, David also found the extra time and energy to pick-up other legitimate jobs in order to earn a little extra money.

26. Laub and Sampson (2003) suggest that it is primarily work/employment, marriage, and/or the military that can aid one's criminal desistance due to mutual ties, a change in routine activities, indirect and direct social control, and generally human agency. Interestingly, for Jack, and even a couple of other street workers, they suggest that narcotics anonymous and/or alcoholics anonymous may also do the same for them. Other street workers, particularly some of the younger individuals, would argue otherwise. For example, one former street worker claimed that he would use the techniques that others discussed in these meetings to make his drugs stronger or more potent with the hopes of increasing his customer base.

27. While not discussed in this section in detail, it should be mentioned here that along with the personal commitment to change that OVOL violence prevention work does appear to help to facilitate on some level, but generally, the desistance process. As is better described in Chapter 6, the street workers feel as though OVOL is an opportunity for them to help themselves, their families, and neighborhood residents and community as a whole. The personal commitment to change however is of key importance and this sort of commitment seems to have to have begun even before OVOL employment, and not to mention getting out of prison, the half-way house, or even through narcotics anonymous and/or alcoholics anonymous programs. Again, it appears as though the OVOL organization has the potential facilitate the desistance process on some level.

28. First, it is thought that employment can lead to an income that can increase and/or provide financial stability, which in return may make criminal activity less attractive or even necessary (Agnew, 1992). Second, Laub and Sampson (2003), by developing their age-graded informal social control theory, suggest that it is moreover the connections made through work, as they serve as "informal social controls," that inhibit offending. Employment provides social bonds, which increases mutual ties or ties to conventional

society (Laub and Sampson, 2003). In turn, this increases one's stake in conformity; thus, individuals have more to lose from social sanctions and are less likely to commit crime (Laub and Sampson, 2003). At the same time, commitment to work has the capacity to alter criminal social networks and increasing social capital by replacing deviant friends with conventional law-abiding peers (Coleman, 1990; Laub and Sampson, 2003). And finally, meaningful work can lead to a redefinition of one's self-conception and lead to cognitive transformation (Giordano et al., 2002; Maruna, 2001).

29. Indeed, in the present study, nearly all of the street workers view OVOL violence prevention employment as a legitimate work opportunity, and one in which they feel that they can make a legitimate wage—and, for some, for the first time in their lives—as well as the sense that they can help their families, neighborhood residents and symbolically their neighborhoods. Given the nature of many of these street workers past experiences and criminal offending patterns, in which landed a significant number of these individuals in prison, it is easy to recognize how the impact of general employment can affect the individuals' ability to refrain from criminal activity. According to Agnew (1992) and strain theory, because employment can yield a financial return, securing employment may make crime less appealing or attractive to some offenders.

30. In this diagram, the cognitive shift, or the more subjective awareness and commitment to change in the mindset, seems to have to precede the willingness to take an "agentic" step towards change. While "turning points," such as OVOL work and/or prison narcotics anonymous gatherings, may be potentially available, the commitment is again necessary for change. Giving up drugs and/or alcohol and accepting OVOL employment are each one of a potential several "agentic" steps that may be taken on the pathway toward desistance; together they may be compounding factors for desistance.

31. Here, it could be interesting to think about other theoretical dimensions or approaches, such as from a Giordano et al. (2002), Maruna (2001), or even from a more intimate phenomenological perspective.

APPENDIX

SURVEY AND INTERVIEW GUIDE

__#:_____   Date: _____

SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR STREET WORKERS

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. I want you to feel comfortable and relaxed. Your opinion and feelings are important to me. I will be asking you some questions to guide our discussion. However, I hope you will feel free to talk about your experiences fully even if or when a question does not specifically relate to what you have to discuss. You may choose not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. There is not any right or wrong answers. Please ask me to repeat or rephrase a question if I am not making myself clear. In the first part of the interview I will ask you a set of questions and I want you to give me an answer. The second part of the interview will be more conversational and we will discuss some things in more detail. Do you have any questions before we begin? OK, let's get started.

1. What is your date of birth? _____/_____/_____

2. What is your race/ethnicity?

    ___White (non-Hispanic)   ___ Hispanic   ___ Other (please describe)
    ___ Black   ___ Asian

3. What are the names of two intersecting streets near your home? What is the name or your neighborhood? And, how long have you lived in your neighborhood?
    _____

4. In general, how do you rate your neighborhood as a place to live? Would you say: excellent, good, fair, poor, dk, rf.

5. In general, in the past three months, would you say that your neighborhood has become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or it has stayed about the same?

6. How far did you go in your schooling?

    ___ Some elementary school   ___ Associates' Degree (2 yr degree)
    ___ Graduated elementary school   ___ Bachelor's Degree (4 yr degree)
    ___ Some high school   ___ Some graduate studies
    ___ Graduated high school   ___ Obtained graduate degree
    ___ GED   (Master's, Ph.D., J.D. M.D.)
    ___ Some college

7. Are you currently working?   ___ Yes   ___ No

a. If YES, what type of work do you do and how many hours do you work per week?

Work	Full-time	Part-time (hours per week)	Seasonal (hours per week)

b. How did you find the job(s)?

_____
_____
_____

c. How long have you been working at your job(s)?

_____
_____
_____
_____

d. Do you get along with your supervisor? ___ Yes   ___ No   ___Somewhat
e. Do you get along with your co-workers? ___ Yes   ___ No   ___Somewhat
f. Do you have friends at work? ___ Yes ___ No
g. How long do you plan to stay at the job? _____
h. What do you like most about the job?

_____
_____
_____

i. What do you like least about the job?

_____
_____
_____

IF NO:
j. Are you looking for a job?
___ Yes   ___ No
If YES:
k. How are you going about your search? (newspaper, word of mouth)

_____
_____

l. How much time do you spend each week looking? _____
m. Have you had any interviews? ___ Yes   ___ No
     If yes, how many? _____
n. What kind of jobs are you looking for? _____

_____
_____

o. If NO: Why aren't you looking for a job?

_____
_____

p. Do you receive state assistance? ___ Yes ___ No
      q. If YES, how long have you been receiving assistance? _____
      r. How much financial assistance does the state give you each month?

      _____
      _____

8. I am also curious about your personal relationships.
   Have you ever been married? ___ Yes   ___ No
   If YES: Are you currently married? ___ Yes ___ No
      If CURRENTLY MARRIED: How long have you been married? _____
      If NOT CURRENTLY MARRIED: What happened?
         ___ Widowed
            How long ago did your husband pass? _____
         ___ Separated
            How long have you been separated? _____
         ___ Divorced
            How long have you been divorced? ___
         ___ Other (please describe) _____
   IF NEVER MARRIED: Do you currently live with someone? ___ Yes   ___ No
      If YES: Who? _____
      How long have you been in this living arrangement? _____

9. Are you currently involved in a (another) romantic relationship? ___ Yes ___ No
      If YES, for how long? _____

10. Do you have children? ___ Yes   ___ No
      How many are your biological children? _____
      How many are your step children? _____
      How many are adopted? _____

   If YES, how old are your children?
   GIRLS:
      Biological: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____
      Step: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____
      Adopted: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

   BOYS:
      Biological: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____
      Step: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____
      Adopted: _____   _____   _____   _____   _____

   a. Do you have custody of all your children? ___ Yes ___ No ___ Some
   b. If NO, who has custody of your children? _____
      c. Why did you lose custody of your children? _____

_____

_____

11. Have you ever been diagnosed with a physical or mental illness? ___ Yes ___ No
   a. If yes, what is the illness? (PTSD, depression) _____
   b. Have you ever received treatment for your illness? ___ Yes ___ No
   c. Do you currently receive treatment for your illness? ___ Yes ___ No
   d. Do you think the treatment is helpful? ___ Yes ___ No

12. Have you ever used drugs? ___ Yes ___ No
   a. If yes, how old were you when you first used drugs? _____
   b. What types of drugs have you used?

_____

_____

_____

13. Have you ever received drug treatment? ___ Yes ___ No
   a. If YES, are you currently receiving treatment? ___ Yes ___ No
      b. Are you required to participate in drug treatment or did you volunteer to take part in the program?   Required _____   Volunteer _____
      c. How often are the sessions?

      _____

      d. How often do you go? _____
      e. How long are the sessions? _____
      f. How long is the whole treatment program? _____
   b. Do you think the treatment is helpful? ___ Yes ___ No

14. Have you ever gone to AA or NA meetings? ___ Yes ___ No
   a. Are you currently going to AA/NA meetings? ___ Yes ___ No
   b. Are you required to participate in AA/NA meetings or do you volunteer to take part in the program?   Required _____   Volunteer _____
   c. How often are the meetings?

   _____

   d. How often do you go? _____
   e. How long are the sessions? _____
   f. How long are you required to or will you volunteer to go to NA treatment?
   _____

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about different types of violence that you may have been exposed to and how often you have witnessed such activity. Have you ever seen a(n) …

13.

Exposure to violence	How often? When was the first/last	Who committed the attack?

	time?	
Child Abused		
Physical Attack (of an adult)		
Sexual assault		
Family violence		
Stabbing		
Gun shots		
Someone shot		
Drive-by shootings		
Seen someone killed		

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about whether or not you have been a victim of different types of crimes and how often you have been a victim. Have you ever been …

14.

Exposure to violence	How often? When was the first/last time?	Who committed the attack?
Abused as a child		
Physically Attacked (as an adult)		
Sexually assaulted		
Threatened with a weapon		
Stabbed		
Shot		

I will now ask you some questions about your family members and any involvement they may have had with criminal activity.

15. Have any of your family members ever used illegal drugs? ___ Yes   ___ No
    a. If yes, who? _____
    _____

b. What types of drugs did s/he use? _____

_____

c. Was s/he ever addicted to drugs? ___ Yes ___ No

d. Has s/he ever received treatment? ___ Yes   ___ No

e. How old were you when you first realized this person(s) used drugs? _____

f. Did s/he ever use drugs at home? ___ Yes ___ No

g. If YES, how often? _____

_____

16. Have any of your family members ever been addicted to alcohol? ___ Yes ___ No

a. If yes, who? _____

b. Has s/he ever received treatment? ___ Yes   ___ No

c. How old were you when you first realized this person(s) was addicted to alcohol?

_____

d. Did she drink at home? ___ Yes   ___ No

e. If YES, how often? _____

17. Have any of your family members ever sold illegal drugs? ___ Yes ___ No

a. If yes, who? _____

_____

b. What types of drugs did s/he sell? _____

_____

c. How old were you when you first realized this person(s) sold drugs?

_____

d. Did s/he sell drugs at home? ___ Yes   ___ No

e. If YES, how often? _____

18. Have any of your family members ever been arrested? ___ Yes   ___ No

a. If yes, who? _____

_____

b. What crime(s) was the person(s) arrested for?

_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Has s/he been in jail or prison? ___ Yes   ___ No

d. If YES, how many times? _____

_____

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your experiences with the CJS.

19. Have you ever been charged with any crime? ____ Yes ____ No

If yes, please answer the following:

20. What offense(s) were you charged with that led to your last incarceration? If the offense was a parole violation, what was the parole violation? What was the original charge?

_____
_____

21. Where did you do your time?

_____
_____

22. The last time you were incarcerated, how long were you sentenced to prison? Year __ and months___

23. How much time did you actually do? Year __ and months___

24. When were you released from prison? Month ___ day ____year ___

25. How old were you when you were **first** arrested, if ever? _____
    a. (If under 18 years), have you ever been detained at a juvenile correctional facility? ___ Yes ___No
             b. If YES, how many times? _____
             c. How old were you when you were first arrested as an adult? _____

26. How many times have you been arrested as an adult? _____

27. How many times have you been incarcerated as an adult? _____
    a. How many times were you incarcerated for parole violations? _____
    b. How many times were you incarcerated for new offenses? _____

28. Did you have any money the last time that you were released from prison?
    ___ Yes   ___ No
             If YES, how much? _____
             Where did you get it? (check all that apply and give approximate amount)
                      ___ family   ___ from the correctional facility
                      ___ friends   ___ saved from prior incarceration
                      ___ prison job   ___ Other

29. Did you have photo identification when you were released? ___ Yes   ___ No

30. Did the facility you were in give you or offer to give you any clothing when you were released? ___ Yes   ___ No

31. Did the facility you were in give you or offer to give you a bus or train ticket when you were released? ___ Yes   ___ No

32. Did they give you or offer to give you anything else? ___ Yes   ___ No
             If YES, what else did they offer to give you?

_____
_____

33. Since you were released from prison/detention, have you ever tried to … If yes, did you find it very difficult, somewhat difficult, or very easy to accomplish this goal?

	Goal	Very difficult	Somewhat difficult	Very easy
a. restore relationships with family?				
b. restore relationships with children?				
c. regain custody of children?				
d. reestablish contact w/ old friends?				
e. be accepted socially?				
f. stay alcohol free				
g. stay drug free				
h. provide yourself with food				
i. stay away from criminal activity				
j. avoid a parole violation				
k. stay in good health				
l. make enough money to support yourself				
m. further your education				
n. provide yourself with adequate housing				
o. find a job				
p. find a job you enjoy				
q. keep a job				

34. Do you live in a safe neighborhood? ___ Yes   ___ No

35. Are there any types of problems in the neighborhood that you live in? (Probe: gangs, drugs, crime) ___ Yes   ___ No
If YES, what kind of problems? _____
_____
_____

36. Are you living in the same neighborhood you lived in before you were last incarcerated?
___ Yes   ___ No

37. Have you been stopped by the police since you were released on parole?
___ Yes   ___ No
a. If yes, how many times were you stopped?
_____
b. Why were you stopped?

_____
_____
_____

38. Overall, are you satisfied with your progress since your release from prison?
___ Yes   ___ No   ___ Maybe
a. Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____
_____

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about some of your thoughts on the police in or around your neighborhood…

39. First, how many people, including yourself, live in your household_____?

40. Over the past three months in your neighborhood, has theft or burglary been: a major problem, minor problem, not a problem, dk—probe more, rf?

41. How much effort do you think the police have made in dealing with theft and burglary in your neighborhood in the past three months? Would you say: a lot of effort, some effort, or no effort, other (specify), rf?

42. Over the past three months in your neighborhood has drug dealing been: a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem, don't know-(don't probe), rf?

43. How much effort do you think the police have made in dealing with drug dealing in your neighborhood in the past three months? Would you say: a lot of effort, some effort, or no effort, other (specify), rf?

44. Over the past three months in your neighborhood, have gangs been: a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem, don't know-(don't probe), rf?

45. How much effort do you think the police have made in dealing with gangs in your neighborhood in the past three months? Would you say: a lot of effort, some effort, or no effort, other (specify), rf?

46. Over the past three months in your neighborhood have shootings and other gun-related crime been: a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem, don't know-(don't probe), rf?

47. How much effort do you think the police have made in dealing with shootings and other gun-related crimes in your neighborhood in the past three months?   Would you say: a lot of effort, some effort, or no effort, other (specify), rf?

48. Over the past three months in your neighborhood have traffic problems such as speeding, careless driving, or drunk driving been: a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem, don't know-(don't probe), rf?

49. How much effort do you think the police have made in dealing with traffic problems such as speeding, careless driving, or drunk driving in your neighborhood in the past three months? Would you say: a lot of effort, some effort, or no effort, other (specify), rf?

50. How would you rate the job the police are doing in terms of working with people in your neighborhood to solve local problems? Would you say: Excellent, good, fair, or poor, no problems in neighborhood, dk, rf?

51. During the past year, have there been any community meetings held in your neighborhood to try to deal with local problems? Yes, no, no problems in neighborhood, dk, rf?

    If yes, have you attended any of these meetings? Yes, no, dk, rf?

52. When was the last time you saw a police officer in your neighborhood? Was it: within the past 24 hours, within the past week, within the past month, more than a month ago, never see the police, other (specify), dk, rf?

53. Within the past three months, have you called the PPD for assistance? Yes, no, contacted PPD, but not by phone, dk, rf?

    If yes, within the past three months how often have you called the PPD for assistance_____?

    How satisfied were you with how the problem was handled? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, dk, rf?

54. Has anyone else in your household called the PPD for assistance within the past three months? Yes, no, contacted the PPD but not by phone, dk, rf?

    If yes, within the past three months how often have they called the PPD for assistance_____?

55. Other than for traffic control, have you been stopped by PPD officers, while on the street or in a car, in the past three months? Yes, no, dk, rf?

56. How many times within the past three months have you been stopped by IPD officers_____?

57. How satisfied were you with the way you were treated when the officers stopped you most recently? Were you: Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, dk, rf?

58. Has anyone else in your household been stopped by PPD officers, while on the street or in a car, in the past three months? Yes, no, dk, rf?

59. How many times within the past three months has anyone else in your household been stopped by PPD officers_____?

60. How safe would you feel walking alone in your neighborhood during the day? Would you say: Very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, very unsafe, dk, rf?

61. How safe would you feel walking alone in your neighborhood after dark? Would you say: Very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, very unsafe, dk, rf?

62. Overall, would you say that crime in your neighborhood has increased, remained about the same, or decreased in the past three months?

63. First, the police in your neighborhood try to provide the kind of services that the people in your neighborhood want. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

64. Your neighborhood gets its fair share of police services. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

65. If you saw a crime occur, you would be likely to call the police. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

66. In your opinion, most citizens in your neighborhood have a favorable opinion of the PPD. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

67. In your opinion, PPD officers are professional. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

68. In your opinion, PPD officers are courteous. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

69. In your opinion, PPD officers harass citizens. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

70. The level of police patrol in your neighborhood makes you less fearful of crime. Do you: Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, dk, rf?

71. Overall, how much do you support the PPD on a 1 to 5 scale where 1 indicates no support and 5 indicates strong support_____?

72. Thinking about the number of police you see in your neighborhood, would you say there are: Too many, too few, about the right number, dk, rf?

73. How satisfied are you with the level of police patrol in your neighborhood? Would you say: Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied, dk, rf?

74. In the past three months, have you heard about the police making drug busts in your neighborhood? Yes, no, dk, rf?

75. In the past three months, have you actually seen the police making drug busts in your neighborhood? Yes, no, dk, rf?

76. Considering all the sources you use to get information about crime, what source do you use most often? Would you say: a newspaper, television news, radio news, community meetings, some other source (specify), dk, rf?

77. We know that not everyone reads a local newspaper on a regular basis, and some may read a variety of newspapers regularly. How many days in the past week, if any, did you read the Pittsburgh Gazette_____?

78. First, in what kind of housing unit do you live? Do you live in: a single family home, a duplex or double, an apartment building, a mobile home, or some other kind of housing unit, dk, rf?

79. Does your family own or rent this residence? Own, rent, dk, rf?

80. Currently, are you: working for pay (employed), temporarily unemployed, retired, keeping house, a student, doing something else (specify), dk, rf?

81. Are you employed full time or part time? Full time, part time, dk, rf?

82. Considering all sources of income and all salaries, was your household's total annual income in 2008, before taxes and other deductions, less than $25,000, or was it $25,000 or more? Less than $25,000, more than $25,000, dk, rf?

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STREET WORKERS

Now I would like to continue our interview, but in a different way than we have been doing. Rather than asking you questions where I want you to choose an answer, now I'd like for us to be able to have a conversation about some things in greater detail. In order for us to talk without my taking lots of notes and to be sure to get everything you say, I will be using the tape recorder during the interview. You may ask me to turn off the recorder at any time. When I write up the final report of the study I may quote certain things that

you say, but I will not identify you specifically. So is it okay that we keep going with the interview?

First, I want to talk a little bit about your initial involvement with crime and your history with the criminal justice system.

1. Can you tell me about the first crime you ever committed?

    PROMPTS:
    * What crime did you commit?
    * How old were you?
    * Why did you commit the crime? (i.e. peers, neighborhood, family prob., economic problems, boyfriend/partner, abuse)
    * Did you commit the crime alone or in a group?

2. Have you been involved in any other criminal activities since you committed the first crime? (This may include crimes that you were not arrested for).

    PROMPT:
    * What type of crimes did you commit?

3. Have you used or sold drugs?
    * If YES, can you explain why you started using and/or selling drugs?
    * How did you get involved with drug activity?
    * Can you describe the first incident when you started using drugs?

4. Can you tell me about the **first** time you were ever …
    -   stopped by the police?
    -   arrested by the police?

    PROMPTS:
    * What crime were you arrested for?
    * Why were you engaging in that criminal activity? (i.e. peers, neighborhood, family prob., economic problems, boyfriend/partner, abuse)
    * What were you thinking about prior to committing this crime?

5. Can you tell me about the **last** time that you were …
    -   arrested by the police?
    -   stopped by the police?

    PROMPTS:
    * What crime were you arrested for?
    * Who was involved?
    * Where did the crime happen?
    * Why were you engaging in that criminal activity?
    * What were you thinking about prior to committing this crime?

6. Have you ever committed a crime with or for your spouse/intimate partner/significant other?

    PROMPT:
    * If YES, why?

Ask respondent about victimization experiences if s/he admitted s/he was victimized in the survey

7. What is your definition of a crime?

    PROMPT:
    *What do you think are some worthy offenses to be considered legally?
    *What are some offenses that are currently legal that should not be?
    *here is a list of violent crimes: aggravated assault, forcible rape, murder, and
        robbery
    *here is a list of still Type 1 property crimes: arson, burglary, larceny or theft,
        motor vehicle theft
    *Type II crimes: simple assault, curfew offenses, loitering, embezzlement, forgery and
    counterfeiting, disorderly conduct, driving under the influence, drug offenses, fraud,
    gambling, liquor offenses, offenses against the family, prostitution, public drunkenness,
    runaways, sex offenses, stolen property, vandalism, vagrancy, and weapons offenses.
    * What or which types of crimes do you find most serious, serious, somewhat serious, or
    not serious at all?
    * Why?
    * What has your experiences been in terms of these?

Now, I'm going to ask you about One Vision One Life and your experiences.

5. Can you tell me about the first time you came in contact with OVOL?

    PROMTS:
    *Who or what or how were you introduced to the program?
    *Did you meet with anyone, and, if so, who?
            *What did you talk about?
    *Can you explain how you got the job?

6. What is/was a typical day like with OVOL?

    PROMTS:
    *Were there any things about being apart of OVOL that you liked? If so, what?
    *Were there any things that you disliked? If so, what?

7. What was your job with/while with OVOL?

PROMPTS:
*Did you participate in any community or organizational programming?
  *If so, what are all of the programs that you participated in?
  *What was a typical day like here?
  *What did you actually do?
  *How often did you do this?
  *What did you find useful or helpful about this job/program?
  *What did you find unhelpful
  *Do you think the job/program can be improved to make it more helpful?
    *If so, in what ways?

8. Have you been involved in different agencies during your time with OVOL? (i.e. job placement, mental health, child protection, welfare)

    PROMPT:
    * If so, what are the agencies?
    * Why are you involved?
    * Did you want to get involved in the agency or were you required to get involved in the agency?
    * How did you find out about the agency?
    * How did you get involved in the agency?
    * How long have you been involved in the agency?
    * What do you find helpful about the agency?
    * What do you find unhelpful about the agency?
    * Do you think the agency can be improved to make it more helpful?
    * If so, in what ways?

9. Have you been involved in any violence related interruptions or mediations?

    PROMPT:
    *If so, can you give me an example?
    *What did you do/what was your role?
    *What was the outcome?
    *How often do you do this?
    *What did you find useful or helpful?
    *Do you think the mediation could be improved in any way to make it more helpful?
      *If so, in what ways?

10. What is your definition of success?

    PROMPTS:
    *What does success mean to you?
    *What does failure mean to you?
    *What is does it mean to change generally?
    *For you, what does personal change mean?
    *What does it require of you/what do you need to do to change?

11. Did OVOL change your life? If so, how or how not?

    PROMTS:
    * Did you **gain** anything from having been with OVOL? If so, what? How do you think OVOL helped you gain those things?
    * Did you **lose** from having been with OVOL? If so, what? How do you think OVOL helped you lose those things?

12. Do you think your relationships with other people changed because you joined OVOL?
    PROMPT:
    * If YES, in what ways?
    * If NO, why not?

13. Do you currently have a relationship with your children?

    PROMPT:
    * Can you describe what kind of relationship you currently have with your children?

14. Did OVOL have an affect on your ability to parent your children?

    * Did OVOL make your relationship better or worse?

15. How are your kids doing now?

    PROMPT:
    * Has s/he/they had any problems or difficulties since you've been with OVOL?
    * Have any of your children been in trouble with the law?
    * If YES, what kind of trouble have they been in?
    * Do they currently get in trouble with the law?
    * If YES, what kind of trouble have they recently been in?

16. Do you have a partner/spouse?

    PROMPT:
    * How did you meet?
    * How did you become involved?
    * Has your partner/spouse had any problems or difficulties since you've been OVOL?
    * Has your partner/spouse been in trouble with the law?
    * If YES, what kind of trouble have s/he been in?
    * Does s/he currently get in trouble with the law?
    * If YES, what kind of trouble have s/he recently been in?

17. Do you keep in contact with your old friends?

    PROMPT:

* Have any of your old friends been in trouble with the law?
* Do they currently get in trouble with the law?
* If YES, what kind of trouble have they been in?

18. Have you made new friends since you have been with OVOL?

    PROMPT:
    * How did you meet your new friends?
    * Have any of your new friends been in trouble with the law?
    * Do they currently get in trouble with the law?
    * If YES, what kind of trouble have they recently been in?

19. How do your current friends compare or differ from your old friends?

20. Do you have any clients or caseload members?

    PROMPT:
    *If so, how many?
    *How did you meet?
    *How did you become involved? And for how long?
    *What is your relationship like?
    *Has your client(s) had any problems or difficulties since you have been their caseload manager?
    *Has your client(s) been in trouble with the law?
    *If yes, what kind of trouble have s/he been in?
    *Do they currently get in trouble with the law?
    *If yes, what kind of trouble has s/he recently been in?

21. Did OVOL change your client(s) life? If so, how or how not?

    PROMTS:
    * What did they **gain** from having been apart of OVOL? How do you think OVOL helped s/he gain those things?
    * What did they **lose** from having been apart f OVOL? How do you think OVOL helped s/he lose those things?

Now, we're going to talk in general about some challenges you may have faced in your life time.

22. Are you currently supporting yourself?

    PROMPT
    * If YES, how are you supporting yourself?
    * If working, can you explain how you got the job?

* If NO, why aren't you supporting yourself?
* What type of needs do you currently have?

23. How did you first get set-up with …

PROMPT:
* Housing? Food? Employment? Substance abuse? Child care? Peer support? Counseling? Mental health service?
* Were you able to support yourself when you first became involved with OVOL?
* If YES, how did you support yourself?
* If NO, why weren't you able to support yourself?
* How were you being supported?
* Who informed you about this program?
* What types of needs did you have?
* How did you deal with them?

24. Has anyone in general had a **positive** influence on you during your life time?

PROMPT:
*Can you identify the person, groups of persons, or organizations and/or institutions that have had **positive** influences on you or your release from prison?
* How has this person, group, or organization and/or institutions had a positive impact on your release?

25. Has anyone in general had a **negative** influence on you since you?

PROMPT:
* Can you identify the person, groups of persons, or organizations and/or institutions that have had **negative** influences on your release?
* How has this person, group, or organization and/or institutions had a negative impact on your release?

26. Can you explain some of the obstacles and challenges that you faced while you are/were involved with OVOL?

PROMPT:
* Can you give specific examples?
* How did you deal with these challenges?
* What were some of your thoughts and feelings during that time?
* Did you feel prepared for this challenge?
* What did you do in any of these instances?
* Did you celebrate after your challenge was complete?
        *If YES, how did you celebrate?

27. Have you received any type of concrete assistance during your time with One Vision One Life or upon release from OVOL? (i.e. employment counseling, job training, education, child care, mandatory programming)

   PROMPT:
   * Who provided you with this assistance?
   * What type of assistance did you receive?
   * Was the assistance helpful?
   * What do you find helpful about the assistance you received?
   * What do you find unhelpful about the assistance you received?

28. How would you describe your relationship(s) with your OVOL directors/managers/other street workers?

   PROMPT:
   * Can you give specific examples of how s/he helped you?
   * Can you give specific examples of how s/he made it more difficult for you?
   * How do you feel about that?

BRIDGE: Some people want to talk about their experiences, even when they have been negative.

29. Have you talked to anyone about your OVOL experiences in general or when you were released?

   PROMPT:
   * If so, who did you speak with?
   * Why did you tell them?
   * Have you told other people (who didn't know that you were in prison) that you have done time? Why or why not?
   * If so, who did you tell?
   * How did they react?
   * How did you feel?
   * Have you chosen **not** to tell anyone that you did time?
   * Why or why not?

30. Has there been any job that you wanted but because you have OVOL or were released from OVOL you were not able to get?

   PROMPT:
   * If that happened, how did you know that was the reason?
   * What did you do?

31. Are there other ways you feel like you are judged or labeled because you were a part of OVOL?

PROMPT:
* Can you give examples?

Now, we're going to talk about some ways you may have broken the law since you joined or were released from One Vision One Life. Remember, everything you tell me is confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone else.

32. Have you committed any crimes since you joined/released from One Vision One Life?

    PROMPT:
    *If YES, what crimes have you committed?
    * Why did you commit the crime(s)?
    * What do you think are the benefits of committing crime(s)?
    * What do you think are the costs (sacrifices) of committing crime(s)?
    * How often do you engage in criminal activity?
    * Do you see yourself stopping your criminal activity in the future?
    * What would stop you from committing crimes in the future?

    *If NO, why haven't you committed any crimes? (Are there other reasons besides prison?)
    * What do you think are the benefits of not engaging in crime(s)?
    * What do you think are the costs (sacrifices) of not engaging in crime(s)?
    * Can you explain how you have managed to avoid engaging in criminal activity?

Now, I would like to ask a few questions about your fundamental beliefs and values and about questions of meaning and spirituality in your life. Please give some thought to each of these questions.

33. Do you have any religious beliefs and values that you follow?
    PROMPT:
    * If so, please describe in a nutshell your religious beliefs or the ways in which you approach life in a spiritual sense.
    * Have your beliefs changed over time?
    * If so, how?

34. Do you have a particular political point of view?

    PROMPT:
    *Are there particular issues or causes about which you feel strongly?
    * Describe them.

35. Is there anything else that you can tell me that would help me understand your most fundamental beliefs and values about life and the world, the spiritual dimension of your life, or your philosophy of life?

Now that you have told me a little bit about your past, I would like you to consider the future.

36. Do you have any plans or goals in the next month/year/five years?

   PROMPT:
   * If YES, what are they?
   * Why do you have these goals?
   * How long has this been your goal?
   * What do you think it would take for you to achieve these goals?
   * If NO, why don't you have any plans or goals for the future?

37. Do you have any fears about the future? (e.g. victim of crime/violence, not finding a stable job, place to live, getting custody of children)

   PROMPT:
   *If YES, what are they?
   * What do you think it would take to ensure that this fear that you have does not happen?
   * If NO, why don't you have any fears?

38. Do you think you are going to stay involved with One Vision One Life?
39. Do you think you are going to go back to One Vision One Life?
40. Do you think you are going to go back to prison?

   PROMPT:
   * If so, why stay involved with One Vision One Life?
   *Why or why not go back to One Vision One Life?
   * If so, what would it take to keep you from going back to prison?
   * What, if anything, would bring you back to prison?

41. Is there anything that you would like to add?   TURN OFF TAPE

Table 1. Pittsburgh City and Target Neighborhood Characteristics

	City of Pittsburgh	North Side	Hill District	South Pittsburgh
Total Population	334,563	48,151	15,775	4,236
Percent Women	52%	52%	58%	57%
Percent Black	27%	33%	79%	83%
Average Per Capita Income	$18,816	$17,207	$10,346	$12,062
Annual Homicides (1998-2005)	50	10	7	4
Average Annual Homicide Rate	15.1	21.5	45.2	12.4

Table 2. Street Worker and Management Demographic Data

Street Workers	Total/Percent	Currently Employed	Formerly Employed	Upper-managers
Age:				
18-24	4/9%	2	1	1
25-31	4/9%	2	2	0
32-38	14/31%	8	5	1
39-45	5/11%	3	2	0
46 and older	18/40%	10	5	3
Race:				
Black	40/89%	23	13	4
White	2/4%	0	1	1
Other	3/7%	2	1	0
Gender:				
Female	5/11%	3	2	0
Male	40/89%	22	13	5
Education:				
No Diploma	6/13%	5	1	0
GED	18/40%	11	7	0
High School	8/18%	5	3	0
Associates Degree	5/11%	2	1	2
College Degree	6/13%	2	3	1
Masters Degree	2/4%	0	0	2
Military:				
Yes Service	5/11%	1	4	0
No Service	40/89%	24	11	5
Marriage:				
Never	23/51%	13	9	1
Live with Someone	6/13%	4	1	1
Engaged	3/7%	1	2	0
Married	9/20%	4	2	3
Separated/Divorced	4/9%	3	1	0

Table 2. Street Worker and Management Demographic Data (cont'd)

Street Workers	Total/Percent	Currently Employed	Formerly Employed	Upper-managers
Children:				
None	12/27%	4	7	1
1 Child	10/22%	6	3	1
2 Children	10/22%	6	2	2
3 Children	6/13%	4	2	0
4 Children	5/11%	3	1	1
5 or More	2/4%	2	0	0
Juvenile at First Arrest:				
Yes	25/56%	14	9	2
No	20/44%	11	6	3
Incarceration:				
None	9/20%	5	3	1
Less 1 Year	3/7%	1	2	0
2 to 3 Years	4/9%	2	1	1
4 to 6 Years	9/20%	4	4	1
7 to 9 Years	6/13%	4	2	0
10 to 12 Years	5/11%	3	1	1
13 to 15 Years	2/4%	2	0	0
More than 15	7/16%	4	2	1
Time With OVOL:				
1 Year or Less	29/64%	17	10	0
1 to 2 Years	0/0%	4	0	0
2 to 3 Years	11/24%	3	4	2
4 to 5 Years	3/7%	1	1	1
6 to 7 Years	2/4%	0	0	2
Neighborhood:				
North Side	15/33%	8	6	1
Hill District	15/33%	9	5	1
South Side	7/16%	4	2	1
Other	8/18%	4	2	2

Table 3. Current and Former Street Workers and Their General Initiation into and Continuation with Crime[ab]

Sreet Workers	Age	General Initiation	Prison Time	OVOL
Current				
Daniel	48	Non-drug related	20 years	9 months
Jeremiah	31	Drug related	7 years	6 months
Chris	52	Drug related	4 years	9 months
Stephen	33	Non-drug related	6 years	1 year
Deon	43	Non-drug related	none	2 months
Jeremy	33	Drug related	9 years	1 year
Jonathan	51	Drug related	28 years	7 months
Jack	48	Drug related	6 years	1 year
Lucas	39	Non-drug related	2 years	2 years
Maurice	37	Non-drug related	6 months	4 years
Dan	39	Drug related	15 years	1 year
Nicolas	66	Drug related	20 years	3 years
Shaun	55	Drug related	2 years	4 years
Samuel	58	Non-drug related	25 years	5 months
Kerri	22	Non-drug related	none	9 months
Michael	36	Non-drug related	none	4 years
Tommy	36	Drug related	10 years	6 months
Amy	32	Non-drug related	none	6 months
Carmen	23	Non-drug related	none	8 months
Ryan	33	Non-drug related	13 years	9 months
Dillon	47	Drug related	10 years	1 year
Douglas	49	Drug related	7 years	2 months
Frank	26	Drug related	4 years	5 months
Herman	36	Drug related	2 years	10 months
Scott	48	Drug related	5 years	4 months
Bobby	23	Non-drug related	None	4 years
David	36	Non-drug related	3 years	7 years
Frederick	61	Drug related	11 years	7 years
Ramone	60	Drug related	4 years	3 years
Garland	59	Non-drug related	23 years	7 years

a. mean/median age = 42 years/39 years
b. mean/median prison time served = 7.88 years/5 years

Table 3. Current and Former Street Workers and Their General Initiation into and Continuation with Crime (cont'd)[ab]

Street Workers	Age	General Initiation	Prison Time	OVOL
Former				
Mathew	36	Non-drug related	1 year	2 years
Tayo	22	Drug related	2 months	3 months
Mark	35	Non-drug related	5 years	9 months
Vernon	59	Non-drug related	none	3 years
Tracy	30	Drug related	none	2 years
KC	58	Drug related	37 years	8 months
Arial	62	Drug related	none	7 months
Barry	49	Drug related	10 years	6 years
Frank	32	Non-drug related	9 months	2 years
Damon	38	Non-drug related	5 years	2 years
Leon	47	Drug related	5 years	2 years
Kimberly	32	Drug related	none	6 months
Stanley	25	Non-drug related	6 years	7 months
Reese	40	Drug related	3 years	3 months
Daryl	39	Drug related	2 years	6 months

a. mean/median age = 40.27 years/37 years

b. mean/median prison time served = 5 years/1.5 years

Figure 1. Street Workers OVOL Employment and Work-felt Opportunities and Realities

The Street Workers OVOL Opportunity

     Opportunity for a Legal Wage
          -Help themselves
          -Get back on their own two-feet

     Easing Out of the Criminal Justice System
          -Half-way house
          -Parole
          -Probation
          -Criminal Record a Limitation

     Opportunity to Help the Family, Others, and for Some Piece-of-Mind
          -Build efficacy
          -Chance to work to their strengths
          -Voice in the community
          -Sense of participation
          -intrinsic rewards

The Street Workers OVOL Reality

     Internal Reality
          -Lack structure and resources to:
               Programs and programming
               Training
          -Lacks a clear definition of its focus
          -Lacks professionalism
               Little teamwork/cohesion
               Overemphasis on titles
               "Talk bad" to one another
               Lack supervision/accountability

     External to OVOL Reality
          -Putting your reputation on-the-line
               Become a potential target
               Personal safety an issue
               Considered a potential "snitch"

          -Generally dangerous work
               Confront violence related threats and physical incidents
               Constantly around the proximate causes of crime

Figure 2. Street Workers OVOL Related Desistance

Street Workers "Situated Choice"

| |

Criminal Justice System ←——→ OVOL Opportunity/Choice

↕

Intervention/"Turning-Point"

Mutual Ties and Commitment ←→ Alter Routine Activities ←→ Develop Identity with Work
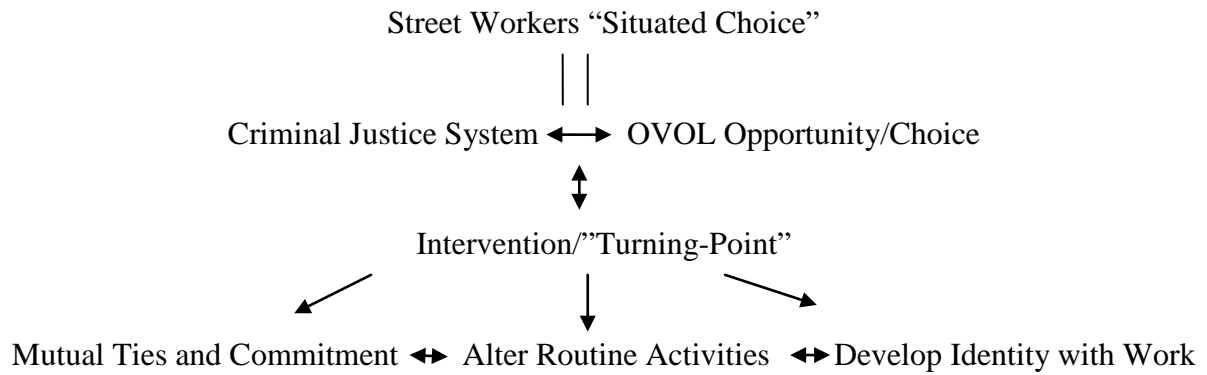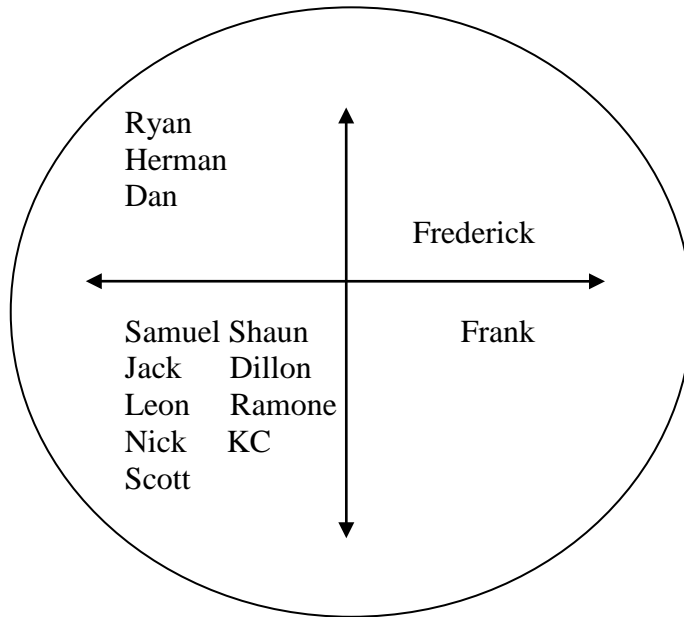
Figure 3. Street Workers Other Long-Term Experiences for Reform

<u>Personal Choice and/or Commitment to Change</u>

Get Out of Prison

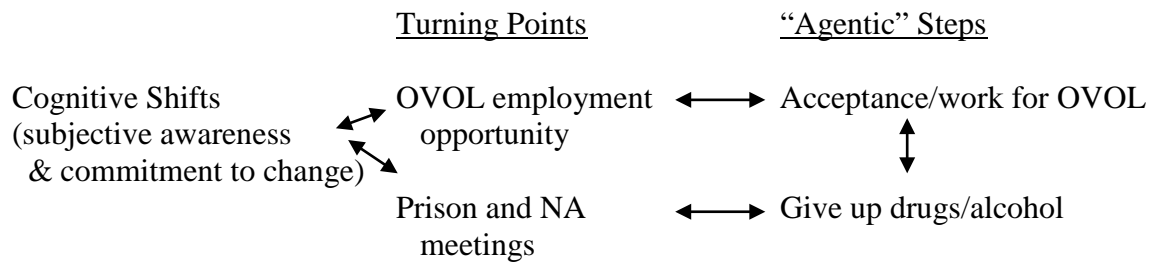Avoid the CJ System and/or Imprisonment

Ryan
Herman
Dan

Frederick

Samuel Shaun
Jack   Dillon
Leon   Ramone
Nick   KC
Scott

Frank

Lost Desire to Commit Crime and/or Take Drugs

Figure 4. Basic Desistance Diagram

Turning Points   "Agentic" Steps

Cognitive Shifts   OVOL employment   ⟷   Acceptance/work for OVOL
(subjective awareness   opportunity   ↕
  & commitment to change)

                          Prison and NA   ⟷   Give up drugs/alcohol
                          meetings

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