SEARCHING FOR WORK WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD[*]

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ABSTRACT

To date, researchers have been very attentive to how the stigma of criminality informs employers' hiring decisions, and, in the process, diminishes ex-offenders' employment opportunities. Few, however, have investigated the extent to which the mark of a criminal record also shapes ex-offenders' search strategies in ways that might either attenuate or amplify ex-offender effects. We fill this gap in the literature by investigating how arrest and conviction influence the search strategies that employed and unemployed job-seekers deploy to find work. Analysis of NLSY97 reveals that much of the disadvantage of penal contact comes with arrest, not conviction. Compared to non-arrestees, arrestees are less likely to search through friends and relatives, labor market intermediaries, *and* go-it-alone strategies. Lower odds of search across methods likely signify the disillusionment that these job-seekers feel after early attempts to find work fail. Further analysis reveals, however, that arrestees' employment disadvantages are specific to their use of two methods. Go-it-alone strategies reduce arrestees' odds that a search will end successfully (with a job), and network search significantly lengthens search duration. But labor market intermediation emerges as an equalizing force, moderating the effect of ex-offender status on employment outcomes. Significantly, too, race and gender mediate the relationships between search methods and search outcomes, highlighting how these axes of difference also help to structure ex-offenders' labor market experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research indicates that contact with the penal system depresses ex-offenders' employment outcomes. Arrest, conviction, and incarceration reduce the odds of getting a job, and, once a job is found, reduce the number of weeks worked annually (Freeman 1991; Grogger 1992; Waldfogel 1994a, 1994b; Nagin and Waldfogel 1995; Needels 1996; Bushway 1998; Kerley and Copes 2004; and Western 2006; but for exceptions see Kling 1999; Pettit and Lyons 2007; Sabol 2007).[1] To explain these relationships, some scholars contend that ex-offenders' employment problems are largely the result of pre-offense individual-level attributes; i.e., the characteristics that predict criminal behavior also explain poor employment outcomes, post-offense (Grogger 1995). Other scholars locate ex-offenders' post-offense employment disadvantage in the loss of valuable human and social capital, which erodes with incarceration (Waldfogel 1994b; Western, Lopoo, and McLanahan 2004; Lopoo and Western 2005). Most researchers, however, highlight the mechanisms by which the stigma of a criminal record diminishes ex-offenders' odds of getting work. Specifically, they point to legal barriers to ex-offenders' employment (Dale 1976; Hahn 1991; May 1995; Olivares et al., 1996; Petersilia 2003); employers' fears that they will be found liable for negligent hiring if "marked" employees act criminally on the job (Bushway 1996; Glynn 1998; Connerley et al., 2001); and employers' general distrust in a pool of applicants who essentially have been certified untrustworthy by the penal system (Schwartz and Skolnick 1964; Boshier and Johnson 1974; Holzer 1996; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996; Pager 2003, 2007a; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2007).

Few, however, have investigated how a criminal record might also shape ex-offenders' search strategies in ways that affect their employment prospects (for an exception, see Harding 2003). Since search decisions are not without consequence, this omission is important. Search

[1] Ex-offender status also depresses wages and annual earnings (Western 2006; but see Grogger 1995, who finds only moderate and short-lived effects).

methods affect job-finding success (Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987; Blau and Robins 1990; Osberg 1993). Methods vary significantly in terms of the amount of information and influence they provide, and so they differ, too, in their ability to buffer applicants from the stigma of criminality. Following this logic, how ex-offenders' search for work—what methods they deploy—should affect their search outcomes—whether or not they find work and how long it takes to do so. To date, however, researchers have neglected to investigate this possibility, and so we complement previous research by addressing this gap in the literature. Specifically, our study is motivated by the following set of research questions: First, to what extent do arrest and conviction shape jobseekers' search methods? Second, what effect do arrestees' job search methods have on job finding success and job search duration? Finally, to what extent do race and gender mediate the relationships between having a criminal record, job search strategies, and job-finding success?

To address this set of research questions, we analyzed the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97). We find that much of the disadvantage of penal contact comes with arrest, not conviction. Compared to non-arrestees, arrestees are less likely to search through friends and relatives, labor market intermediaries, *and* go-it-alone strategies. Lower odds of search across methods likely signify the disillusionment that these job-seekers feel after early attempts to find work fail. Further analysis reveals, however, that arrestees' employment disadvantages are specific to their use of two methods. Going-it-alone strategies reduce arrestees' odds that a search will end successfully, and network search significantly lengthens search duration. But labor market intermediation emerges as an equalizing force, moderating the effect of ex-offender status on employment outcomes. Significantly, too, race and gender mediate the relationships between search methods and search outcomes, highlighting how these axes of difference also help to structure ex-offenders' labor market experiences.

COMPARING THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF SEARCH METHODS

Job search methods generally fall into three major categories.[2] Jobseekers search for work through their networks of friends, family members, and acquaintances; through labor market intermediaries, such as private and public employment agencies, college placement offices, or union halls; and through their own efforts, such as checking with employers directly and placing or answering ads in newspapers or on the Internet. In terms of efficiency, these methods vary considerably. Below, we discuss each method in kind.

Network Search

Although the efficacy of personal contact use has been shown to vary by race and gender (Brass 1985; Hanson and Pratt 1991; Green, Tigges, and Diaz 1999; Smith 2000; Falcon and Melendez 2001), network search is pervasive, exceeding 80% among some populations, such as Latinos and the poor (see, for instance, Corcoran, Datcher, and Duncan 1980a, 1980b; Holzer 1987a, 1987b; Marsden and Campbell 1990; Granovetter 1995; Green, Tigges, and Diaz 1999; Falcon and Melendez 2001). This is for good reason. Previous research suggests that searching for work through friends and relatives is more efficient than using other methods of job search. First, network search is relatively costless. It generally takes little effort or time to learn about job opportunities from those with whom we already have relations because we are close to them and/or we see them with some regularity. Second, jobseekers who search through friends and relatives tend to have more successful searches—not only are they more likely to receive an interview, they are also more likely to receive and accept offers, and their search duration tends to be shorter (Holzer 1987a, 1987b; Wielgosz

[2] Search methods are often categorized as either formal or informal. Formal methods are methods linked to efforts by institutions or organizations, such as employment agencies, placement offices, and newspapers, to inform and recruit potential applicants for job openings. Informal methods are linked to efforts individual jobseekers initiate, such as searching through friends, relatives, and acquaintances and applying directly to employers (Granovetter 1974; Drentea 1998). However, because we are interested in how the stigma of arrest affects jobseekers' deployment of social capital (network search), institutional capital (LMIs), or neither (go-it-alone strategies), this distinction is not very useful, since it would cause us to collapse into one category methods of search that, for our purposes, are analytically quite distinct.

and Carpenter 1987; Blau and Robins 1990; Newman and Lennon 1995; Fernandez and Weinberg 1997; Coverdill 1998; Petersen, Saporta and Seidel 2000; but see Mouw 2003 and Fernandez and Fernandez-Mateo 2006). Indeed, it is primarily through networks that *non-searchers* find new jobs (Granovetter 1995). And finally, finding work through friends and relatives also increases the likelihood of *keeping* the job (Taylor 1994; Fernandez and Weinberg 1997; Neckerman and Fernandez 2003; but see Fernandez, Castillo, and Moore 2000).

Labor Market Intermediaries

Labor market intermediation represents another category of job search used by a significant minority of jobseekers. According to Benner, Leete, and Pastor, labor market intermediaries (LMIs) are "organizations—public, private, nonprofit, or membership-based—that help broker the employment relationship through some combination of job matching, training, and career support services" (2007: 10). A number of organizations, very different in form and content, fall into this category. While some LMIs have been shown to reduce search duration, others are associated with longer search times (Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987; Blau and Robins 1990; Bishop and Abraham 1993; Osberg 1993). In our discussion, we privilege three types of LMIs—temporary employment agencies (or temporary help services), public employment offices, and non-profit community-based organizations—because these agencies assist a disproportionate share of disadvantaged workers—the young, women, low-income, blacks, and ex-offenders.

Temporary help services. Because of the benefits it provides to both employers and jobseekers, the use of temporary help services has grown exponentially.[3] Although they do not

[3] For employers, temporary work has a lot to recommend it—it increases employers' flexibility in hiring, firing, and scheduling; it helps to reduce labor costs; it minimizes administrative work; and it allows for the screening of workers for permanent positions (Nollen 1996; Houseman 1997; Segal and Sullivan 1997; Blank 1998; Houseman and Polivka 2000; Houseman et al. 2003). But from a supply-side perspective, temporary employment also has a number of benefits. While more affluent workers appreciate temp work for the extra income, diversity of work experiences, and the flexibility it provides, disadvantaged workers often see temp work as a means to gain entree into the labor market, to get free general skills training, to develop valuable work experience and skills, and as a

appear to be as efficient as network search strategies—temp services yield similar rates of offers but lower acceptance rates (Blau and Robin 1990)—they generally yield superior results compared to public employment agency use and go-it-alone strategies of job-matching.

Public Employment Agencies. In the past, neither employers nor jobseekers liked to use public employment agencies (PEAs). Employers avoided them because they often failed to screen applicants well and thus often provided poor-quality referrals (Van Ours 1994; Thomas 1997). Jobseekers, too, have been averse to using PEAs because they infrequently provide access to information about *good* jobs for which jobseekers are qualified (Van Ours 1994; Thomas 1997). Thus, although previous research indicates that public employment agencies (PEAs) can provide an important safety net during severe economic downturns (Osberg 1993) and that PEAs that provide intensive mediation methods compare favorably with other search methods (Van Ours 1994), research also reveals that PEAs have been one of the least efficient and effective approaches to job-matching (Holzer 1987a; Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987; Blau and Robins 1991; Bishop and Abraham 1993; but see Thomas 1997).[4]

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stepping-stone to regular, full-time employment (Nollen 1996; Segal and Sullivan 1997; Blank 1998; Houseman and Polivka 2000; Autor 2001; Houseman et al. 2003). For the downsides to finding work through temporary help services, see the following: Nollen 1996; Segal and Sullivan 1997; Heinrich et al. 2005; and Autor and Houseman 2009.

There are a number of downsides to finding work through temporary help services, however. Temp workers express major concerns about the uncertainty of their income, work hours, and travel costs (Heinrich et al. 2005). And even after taking into consideration selection effects, temp workers average lower wages, get fewer benefits, and develop fewer skills than their non-temp counterparts (Nollen 1996; Segal and Sullivan 1997; Heinrich et al. 2005; Autor and Houseman 2009). Importantly, too, those employed through temporary help services are also significantly more likely to experience job instability; compared to non-temp workers, they are more likely to change employers, become unemployed, and fall out of the labor force involuntarily (Houseman and Polivka 2000; Autor and Houseman 2009; but see Heinrich et al. 2005 and Lane et al. 2003, who find little evidence of negative long-term effects of temp work.). When compared to the unemployed or those with severely limited employment opportunities, however, the benefits temp workers experience are substantial (Lane et al. 2003; Heinrich et al. 2005; Andersson et al. 2009; Heinrich et al. 2009). When temporary jobs are transitional jobs that provide bridges to regular, full-time (and thus stable and higher paying) employment, workers reap substantial and long-term employment benefits (Anderssen, Holzer, and Lane 2009; Heinrich et al. 2009). In terms of employment and earnings, temporary workers who transition into full-time, regular employment have substantially better outcomes than workers who remain employed through temporary help agencies and their non-temp worker counterparts (Anderssen, Holzer, and Lane 2009; Heinrich et al. 2009). For a thoughtful discussion of the social construction of the temporary employment agency market, see Smith and Neuwirth (2008).

[4] Relatively recent research, however, calls into question conventional wisdom that public employment agencies delay transitions to employment relative to other search strategies. In an attempt to reconcile contradictory findings from non-experimental studies, which report longer unemployment spells among jobseekers matched to jobs by public agencies, and studies based on experimental designs, which report significantly shorter unemployment spells among those job-matched by public agencies, Thomas (1997) examined the effect on unemployment spells of initial search method and actual job-finding method. He proposed that many jobseekers who eventually found jobs

Community-Based Organizations. Jobseekers also accept labor market intermediation from a host of other institutions and community organizations, including but not limited to school placement offices, and labor unions. Blau and Robin (1990) report that school placement offices, community organizations, urban leagues, welfare agencies, and local CETA or WIN jobs programs are efficient methods of job placement, rivaling private employment agencies and personal networks in terms of offers and acceptances per employer contact (also see Holzer 1987b; Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987). Just as friends and relatives can vouch for the trustworthiness and skill set of their job-seeking relations, agents of community-based organizations and institutions, who are often very familiar with jobseekers' positive and negative attributes, can too, thus substantially improving jobseekers' odds of finding work and doing so faster.

Going It Alone

In addition to seeking information and influence from friends and relatives and labor market intermediaries, jobseekers can also go-it-alone—search without the assistance of personal or institutional intermediaries. Included in this category are those who, unsolicited, contact employers directly (also known as walk-ins) and those who respond to help wanted or classified ads placed in newspapers and, increasingly, the Internet (Kuhn and Skirtend 2000). The walk-in strategy of job search is one of the most widely used search methods (Holzer 1987a, 1987b; Blau and Robins 1990; Osberg 1993). As with network search, the costs associated with walk-ins are relatively low (Bishop and Abraham 1993), and compared to other methods, it is relatively efficient at matching jobseekers to jobs (Holzer 1987a; Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987; Blau and Robins 1990; Osberg 1993). Jobseekers who search by placing

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through public employment agencies actually began their job search by deploying other strategies that jobseekers tend to favor. As these alternative approaches proved unsuccessful, jobseekers eventually switched to public agencies, which in time ended their unemployment spells. Findings from Thomas's analysis of income survey data confirmed his hypotheses. Jobseekers who sought assistance from public agencies soon after job loss actually experienced faster transitions into employment. Furthermore, long spells of unemployment that ended with public agency use were, in fact, searches that began with other search strategies.

and responding to ads in newspapers, however, do not tend to find work quickly, and so this is one of the least efficient and effective approaches to job-matching (Holzer 1987a; Wielgosz and Carpenter 1987; but see Thomas 1997). Although searching through classified ads is a low-cost approach to learning about job vacancies, any one job announcement can garner the interest of thousands of jobseekers, dramatically increasing the pool of applicants and the level of competition for positions. Thus, although this approach leads to a great deal of contact with employers, because this contact tends to be rather superficial, rates of offers and acceptances per employer contact are relatively low (Blau and Robins 1990).

OVERCOMING THICK BARRIERS OF DISTRUST: EX-OFFENDERS, SEARCH METHODS, AND THE MANAGEMENT OF EMPLOYERS' IMPRESSIONS

Barriers to employment abound for jobseekers with a criminal record. Federal and state laws restrict ex-offenders' access to government employment, and there are numerous provisions against extending licenses to ex-offenders for government-regulated private occupations (Dale 1976; Hahn 1991; May 1995; Olivares et al 1996; Petersilia 2003). In addition to legal blockages, ex-offenders' employment prospects are dimmed by employers' fears that they may be found liable for negligent hiring if "marked" employees act criminally on the job (Bushway 1998; Glynn 1998; Connerley et al., 2001). For these positions, search strategies matter little since the nature of intervention would do little to improve ex-offenders' odds of employment.

Most remaining employers, however, are disinclined toward hiring ex-offenders because they generally perceive them to be too risky to trust with business operations and assets (Schwartz and Skolnick 1964; Boshier and Johnson 1974; Holzer 1996; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996; Pager 2003, 2007a; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2004). Employers also reject such applicants because they are clueless about how long ex-offenders must remain crime-free before they represent a negligible risk of re-offending (Blumstein and Nakamura 2009).[5] In an

[5] Recent research indicates that after roughly 4.5 to 8.5 years, the risk of an ex-offender committing another crime is no greater than that of individuals who had never been arrested or *less* than the risk of arrest for those of the same

audit study designed to examine the effect of having a criminal record on hiring, for instance, Pager (2003) shows that employers are twice as likely to call back non-offenders as they are to call equally qualified ex-offenders. Furthermore, findings from employer surveys indicate that two-thirds of employers would not knowingly hire ex-offenders, and over 40 percent indicated that they probably would not or definitely would not (Holzer 1996; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2007). Indeed, fewer than six percent report that they would *definitely* hire ex-offenders.[6]

To increase employers' willingness to hire applicants with a criminal record, employers would want assurances that the jobseeker is no more likely than jobseekers without records of arrest to cause harm to the physical, financial, and/or reputational well-being of the workplace (Blumstein and Nakamura 2009). How ex-offenders present themselves to employers could shape employers' impressions. According to Harding (2003), when searching for work, presumably through go-it-alone approaches,[7] ex-offenders adopt different impression management strategies in an effort to either completely eliminate the negative consequences for employment of having a criminal record or to blunt its effect. Among the former prisoners he studied, those who sought to eliminate the effect of the criminal record chose not to disclose their negative credential to employers at all.[8] Others fully disclosed their status, but tried, in the process, to counterbalance negative impressions by extolling their own personal and professional virtues. Finally, some took the route of conditional disclosure, informing employers only after getting hired and establishing their value to the workplace. Harding's

age in the general population. The younger the offender at first offense, the longer it generally takes to achieve a "clean" record and average or below risk of re-offending (Blumstein and Nakamura 2009).

[6] In "Walking the Talk? What Employers Say Versus What They Do," Devah Pager and Lincoln Quillian (2005) examine the relationship between employers' attitudes toward hiring ex-offenders and their actual hiring behavior. They also use employers' self-reports and actual hiring data to determine employers' willingness to hire black and white ex-offenders. They find that employers who say that they are willing to hire ex-offenders are no more likely to do so than employers who say they are not willing. In addition, although employers claimed to have no racial bias, analysis of actual hiring behavior revealed quite the contrary. Hiring decisions are strongly associated with the race of the job candidate, to black men's noteworthy disadvantage.

[7] Harding does not specify, but every indication supports this presumption.

[8] As access to criminal history records has become cheap and widespread (Bushway et al. 2007), employers have come to rely more heavily on these services to determine if applicants have had contact with the penal system. In 1996, 51% of employers performed criminal background checks on prospective employees. Since then, that figure has increased to 80% (SEARCH 2005). In this context, it would seem that attempts to manage impressions by failing to disclose one's contact with the penal system will fail to achieve its intended goal, since most employers now conduct these checks and will uncover applicants' deceit.

study reveals that ex-offenders, cognizant of how they are perceived by employers, attempt to increase their short- or long-term odds of employment during the job search process through impression management strategies.

Importantly, too, Harding intimates that these impression management strategies affected ex-offenders' employment outcomes. Jobseekers who refused to disclose their status experienced short-term employment gains, and full disclosure produced few employment opportunities, but the few gains made tended to be long-term. But because they married the best of both approaches, conditional disclosures were most successful at gaining access to stable employment opportunities.

However, previous research indicates that the ability to successfully appeal to employers' sympathies is at least in part contingent on the race of the jobseeker. Pager's (2007b) audit study reveals that white auditors who were able to explain to hiring personnel the circumstances that led to their contact with the penal system had significantly greater odds of getting callbacks. This was not the case, however, for black auditors, who experienced no employment benefit from having such opportunities. Thus, whereas personal contact with employers mattered for whites, it made no difference for blacks. Combined with the stigma of criminality, the stigma of blackness limited the effectiveness of black auditors' efforts to manage employers' impressions.

Under the assumption that third-party trusted intermediaries are better positioned to successfully manage employers' impressions of ex-offending jobseekers, reducing or eliminating employers' concerns about the risks that specific ex-offenders might pose, intermediary-based approaches to search should be more efficient at job-finding than searching without intermediaries. By explaining the circumstances that led to penal system contact, by highlighting the ex-offenders' process of redemption, and by giving prominence to ex-offenders' positive qualities, intermediaries can attenuate the negative effects of the criminal record, especially if they are trusted by employers.

Managing Impressions through Friends and Relatives

The overwhelming majority of ex-offenders who find work immediately post-incarceration do so either by returning to the jobs they held pre-incarceration or by receiving help from family members and friends (Nelson, Deess, and Allen 1999; Leverentz 2006; Visher and Kachnowski 2007; Cobbina 2009).[9] Without the use of personal intermediaries, however, Nelson, Deess, and Allen (1999) report that finding work appears to take significantly longer, and all too often ex-offenders fail in their attempts to find work.

We should be careful, however, not to overstate the role for networks. Successful search through friends and relatives is contingent on at least two factors. First, there is the question of social capital access. Social capital refers to the resources that individuals have access to by dint of their connections with others (Coleman 1988; Lin 1999). In relative terms, ex-offenders probably have limited access to social capital for job-finding, since their pre-offense networks are more likely to consist of others engaged in criminal activity, not people who could inform them about job vacancies and influence the hiring process on their behalf (Sullivan 1989). Furthermore, with incarceration, social capital tends to erode, especially so with relatively long sentences and frequent stints of incarceration. Once released, former prisoners might find lost whatever access they once had.

And then there is the question of social capital mobilization. Even if job-seeking ex-offenders have access to relatives and friends who could help, there is no guarantee that jobseekers will seek the help they so desperately need (Smith 2007). Ex-offenders might choose to forego their network of relations for many reasons, but research by Smith (2007) identifies two plausible motivations. Underlying both is a fear of losing face. Drawing from a sample of young, low-income black jobseekers, Smith discovered that some jobseekers were

[9] Roughly two-thirds of former prisoners held jobs before arrest and incarceration (Lynch and Sabol 2001). The overwhelming majority of these workers do not return to the jobs they held before contact with the penal system, but among the relatively few ex-offenders who do find work immediately post-release, this is one of the two ways quick employment occurs (Nelson, Deess, and Allen 1999; Visher and Kachnowski 2007). Presumably, drawing from their direct experiences with ex-offenders, employers who rehire believe their ex-offending employees to be of negligible risk.

reluctant to seek job-finding assistance because they feared their requests would be rejected and that rejection would inspire questions among others about their trustworthiness and competence. Reluctant personal contact users also expressed concern about their ability to fulfill the obligations associated with receiving help. When faced with these fears, jobseekers were more likely to forsake help. Thus, although the benefits of using friends and relatives to help manage employers' impressions seem clear, the related costs potentially complicate what might otherwise appear to be a straightforward calculus.

Nor would personal contact use necessarily reduce search times. Drawing from in-depth interviews with blue-collar workers at one larger employer, Smith (2010) reveals that when jobholders were skeptical about whether or not their jobseeking relations were truly sincere about their desire to work, they would put jobseekers through a test of sincerity. Under the assumption that unmotivated and uncommitted jobseekers often made insincere gestures about their desires to work but then quickly lost interest, jobholders waited. It was through constant and somewhat aggressive requests for assistance over a given time period that jobholders came to believe that jobseekers were being sincere. Only at this point would they step in, typically by speaking to employers' on jobseekers' behalf. In another paper, Smith (2012) highlights how one jobholder refused to help his friend get a job at his workplace until his friend had abstained from criminal activity for one full year. Only with a year of criminal sobriety would the jobholder be convinced of his friends' commitment to work in the legitimate economy.[10] In other words, to be willing to intervene in the job-matching process, friends and relatives also need assurances that jobseekers won't be risky hires, especially since their own reputations are on also on the line (Smith 2005, 2007; but also see Coleman (1990) on intermediaries). Because tests of sincerity take time to administer and complete

[10] According to Smith (2012), with emotional and financial support from the jobholder, his friend succeeded in abstaining from criminal activity and in so doing was rewarded with job-finding assistance that led to a new job.

successfully, they can also significantly lengthen search durations. If successfully completed, however, it can improve jobseekers' chances of gaining long-term employment.

Managing Impressions through Labor Market Intermediaries

Recent research also suggests that labor market intermediation positively effects the employment outcomes of job-seeking ex-offenders, at least in the short term (Pettit and Lyons 2007; Sabol 2007). Drawing from administrative data of ex-offenders released from a Washington State prison, Pettit and Lyons (2007) analyze the effect of incarceration on post-incarceration employment and wages. Their result is surprising: Compared to pre-incarceration levels of employment, incarceration is associated with *increased* odds of employment immediately post-release. Also analyzing administrative data, Sabol (2007), too, reports higher post-incarceration employment among men recently released from Ohio State prisons (also see Kling 2002). In both studies, the employment gains found immediately after release are eventually lost, falling below pre-incarceration levels within thirty months. But the initial gains are impressive and robust.

To explain this surprising finding, the authors from both studies point to post-prison supervisory programs, but they could only speculate about the precise mechanisms. In each case, however, speculations implicated labor market intermediation practices. For instance, Pettit and Lyons suggest that "Supervisory personnel may engage in positive labeling of ex-convicts, and employers may be encouraged by supervisory personnel to employ recently released inmates. In addition, ex-inmates assigned to community supervision also have access to a network of potential employers and employment contacts through the supervisory program" (2007: 214). Depending on the form of prisoners' release, participation in reentry programs is mandatory (Sabol 2007). Almost by definition, then, participation in such programs privileges this method of search (while not necessarily excluding other methods). Furthermore, to the extent that the number of these mandatory reentry programs has grown to

remedy high rates of recidivism (Nunez-Neto 2008),[11] trends favor higher rates of LMI use among ex-offenders over time.

But temporary employment agencies have also seen their share of total employment grow dramatically over the past 40 years (Segal and Sullivan 1997; Houseman et al. 2003), and many of these agencies specialize in providing services for difficult-to-place job-seekers, like ex-offenders. Although these placement services are often at high cost to the jobseekers they serve, because they represent one of the few paths to employment, stigmatized jobseekers seek out their services nonetheless. For this reason, too, when compared to their non-offending counterparts, we would expect higher rates of labor market intermediation among ex-offenders and greater odds of finding work through this method.

But LMIs will not always reduce search times. To the extent that jobseekers receive aid from LMIs that provide extensive program participation, job-finding might actually be delayed, although for productive reasons. And, as Smith (2007) shows, staff at LMIs might also put difficult-to-place clients/jobseekers through a series of tests to determine job how motivated jobseekers are.

DATA

This study is motivated by the following set of questions: First, to what extent do arrest and conviction shape jobseekers' search methods? Second, what effect do arrestees' job search methods have on job finding success and job search duration? Finally, to what extent do race and gender mediate the relationships between having a criminal record, job search strategies, and job-finding success?

To address these questions, we use the 2003-2008 panels of the 1997 cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY97). The NLSY97 is an ongoing panel study

[11] According to a study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, roughly two-thirds of former prisoners are re-arrested within three years of release (see Nunez-Neto 2008).

following individuals who were age 12 to 16 at the end of calendar year 1996. The dataset has a couple of properties that recommend it for our purposes. First, it includes both a nationally representative sample containing 6,748 youths, as well as an over-sample of 2,236 Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks born in the same time period.[12] Second, the NLSY97 is uniquely structured for longitudinal analysis of life outcomes, because it focuses specifically on transitions, such as those from school to work, from marriage to divorce, or, as in our case, one state of employment to another. Furthermore, the nature of the data collection schedule allows researchers to pinpoint exact moments, down to the week, that transitions occur.

Although the structure of the NLSY97 dataset does facilitate analysis and discussion of person-level data – in this case, analysis of job search strategies and outcomes within each respondent – this unit of analysis would cause us to obscure patterns of job search across an individuals' entire job history. This is because analyses at the person-level treats a respondent who searches for work twice during our 6-year period the same as a respondent who searches for work ten times. This is especially problematic if we consider the possibility that each of these respondents total search time could be similar, despite the clear variation in number of searches. At the person-level, the search duration for respondent A might equal that for respondent B—say, for example, 23 weeks—but they should not be weighted equally since respondent A engaged in two searches over 23 weeks while respondent B engaged in 10 searches.

In order to correct for the potential aggregate-level bias, we restructured the data to highlight individual job searches as the unit of analysis. This revised format produces a dataset that includes a record (i.e. row of data) that corresponds to an individual job search period. Each respondent's number of job searches within our 6-year period thus corresponds to the number of records they have in the dataset. By choosing job searches as our unit of analysis, we eliminate from our sample respondents who had never searched for work. This revised

[12] Because we control for race in our regression models, we do not use weights to correct for over-sampling.

structure includes 23,505 observations (or job searches) from a sample of 6,024 unemployed and employed jobseekers between the ages of 18 and 26 in 2006.

Dependent Variables. We examine the effect of a criminal record on the methods of search that jobseekers deploy, the odds that search will end with a job, and job search duration. Each year respondents are asked to report, down to the week, whether or not they are employed. Respondents whose responses mark multi-week gaps in employment are then asked, "How many of those weeks were you actually looking for work?" Once the unemployment period is confirmed, respondents are asked, "What would you say was the main reason that you were not looking for work during that period?" This allows for the isolation of respondents who became unemployed by quitting, layoffs or firings (vs. respondents who wanted to leave the workforce for personal reasons, school, or medical leave).

Respondents are also queried about their search behaviors while employed. Specifically, they are asked, "During the time you [worked/have worked] for [employer's name], [have/had] you done anything to look for work?" Both unemployed and employed jobseekers are then asked to examine a list of ten job search activities and to select all methods they used. These include the following: contacted employer (directly), employment agency, and/or school placement center; checked union or professional organizations' job registers; attended job fairs; searched through friends or relatives; sent out resumes or filled out applications; and placed an ad, looked at ads, and used the internet.[13]

To measure the effect of a criminal record on how jobseekers search for work, we created three categorical measures—*networks, labor market intermediaries (LMIs) and going-it-alone.* Network searches include searching for work through friends and relatives. We categorized job searches that include contact with an agency and/or school placement office,

[13] Three years—2003-2005—contain the category "other," but because few were included in this category and the content of these categories were unclear, we excluded cases that report "other" as their only search strategy. The omission of these cases did not significantly affect our outcomes (based on sample trends with and without the "other" category.

signing up with a union or professional register, and/or attending job fairs as LMI. And if job searches entailed sending out resumes or filling out applications, and /or placing or looking at ads, we categorized them as going-it-alone. We operationalized each of these methods as dummy variables, where a score of one signifies category membership and zero signifies non-membership. As shown in Table 1, whereas 28% of the searches were conducted with the help of friends and family members, 18% included LMIs, and 49% were going-it-alone.[14]

We also employ analysis to predict the rate of success associated with job searches. We operationalized *success* as a dummy variable indicating a job search that ended in new employment. Nineteen percent of job searches in our sample ended in success.

Finally, we operationalized our third dependent variable, *search duration*, as the number of weeks it takes to find a job. In general, we assume that shorter searches are better,[15] but longer searches may occasionally reflect jobseekers' attempts to gain extra training. It might also reflect the test of sincerity that stigmatized jobseekers undergo to prove their commitment to work (Smith 2010). Searches last 9.80 (s.d.=13.23) weeks, on average (see Table 1).

[INSERT TABLE 1 HERE]

Independent Predictors. The NLSY97 allows us to determine how arrest and conviction shape job search strategies, by race and gender. Each year, respondents are asked if they have been arrested in the preceding two years. Respondents receive a score of "1" if they report having been arrested two years prior to their job search, regardless of whether or not they were convicted or incarcerated. Within our sample, 28% of job searches are conducted by individuals who have ever been arrested, and 10% are conducted by individuals who have been convicted. In addition, we code race as a set of dummies for non-Hispanic *black*, non-Hispanic *white*, and *Hispanic,* where white is the reference category. We code gender as a dummy variable, where males are coded as 1 and females as 0.

[14] At the person-level, the breakdown is as follows: networks, 22%; LMIs, 18%; and going-it-alone, 51%.
[15] Previous research links prolonged job search to psychological and financial hardship (Wanberg 2012).

Controls. We also include a number of important controls. Because it could be argued that the stigma of a criminal record derives specifically from the criminal activity that leads to penal contact and not arrest and conviction per se, we include three dichotomous variables intended to control for respondent's involvement in criminal activity. The NLSY97 asks whether the respondent engaged in each of the following activities in 2004 or 2005: stealing an item over $50 in value (*steal*), attacking someone with the intent to hurt them (*attack*), and dealing drugs (*deal*), where affirmative responses were coded as 1. Seven percent of searches are conducted by an individual who reported stealing an item worth fifty dollars or more; 2% are conducted by those have dealt drugs; and 2% are conducted by those who have attacked someone with the intent to hurt them.

Whether job searches are conducted through personal networks, LMI, or go-it-alone strategies might also be a function of access to job relevant social capital (Sullivan 1989; Nelson, Deess, and Allen 1999). To control for this possibility, we include a social capital measure based on responses to the question, "How many people do you turn to for advice about employment, education, or training?" On average, job searches are associated with contact with 1.34 advisors.[16] Because the social capital access variable has a long tail, we use and report on its natural log transformation.

Finally, that ex-offenders deploy different job search methods and have poorer outcomes than non-offenders could be attributed to other factors, such as age, educational attainment, number of dependent children, citizenship status, employment status, and previous work experience (Holzer 1987b). To account for these possibilities, we include a set of control variables. We introduce three dummy variables to control for educational attainment—*dropout* (14%), *high school graduate* (53%), and *college degree* 14%). We control for having dependent *children*, since this variable has been shown to affect job-finding success (Wanberg 2012). "Children" is operationalized as a continuous measure representing respondents' total number

[16] At the person-level, jobseekers consulted on average of 1.89 people.

of dependent children. Fifty-seven of searches are conducted by a jobseeker with dependent children. Citizenship is included as a dummy. Those who are born in this country or who have been naturalized after immigration are coded as "1" (81%); else they are coded as "0". Unemployment and work experience have both been shown to affect search methods deployed, job-finding success, and job search duration.[17] Unemployed searchers are coded "1" (84%), and employed searchers are coded "0". Work experience is operationalized as the number of weeks in prior, full-time job. Respondents are coded "1" if prior to the beginning of a new search period they worked for at least four weeks in a full time job. On average, searches are associated with 89 weeks of work experience.

With longitudinal datasets, there is the potential for standard omitted variable and observer bias. Even though each round of the NLSY97 asks about information in the previous year, down to the week level, respondents may have memory recall issues or may underestimate certain behaviors, and this may introduce bias. To correct for potential bias in our models, we include one additional control—*year*. "Year" is operationalized as a continuous variable with six values, each corresponding to one year in the study period.

METHODS

To estimate the effect of arrest and conviction on search methods deployed and job-finding success, we run a series of logistic regression models (logits). These models estimate the odds that ex-offenders will use friends and relatives, LMIs, and go-it-alone methods of job search. They also predict the odds that a search will end with a job (success). To predict the duration of search (weeks), we employ Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models. Models of search duration exclude employed jobseekers because the dataset do not allow us to determine employed jobseekers' search periods. For each set of analyses, we run models separately by

[17] The NLSY defines unemployment as periods of joblessness for respondents (who have been laid off, fired, quit, or never worked) who are actively seeking employment. This is in contrast to respondents who have retired, are on leave, or are out of the labor force.

race/ethnicity and gender, rather than included these as controls. We do this to facilitate ease of cross-group comparison and to determine the true mediating effect of race and gender.

SEARCHING FOR WORK WITH A CRIMINAL RECORD

Search Methods. How does arrest and conviction affect jobseekers' odds of using search through friends and relatives, LMIs, and go-it-alone strategies? Table 2 displays the results of our logistic regression analysis. For the sake of parsimony, we will limit discussion to our primary independent predictors.

In general, arrest and conviction are associated with lower odds of network search, labor market intermediation, ***and*** going-it-alone. This finding suggests that contact with the penal system reduces search effort overall. For the full sample, having a record of arrest is associated with 16% lower odds of searching through friends and relatives. With the exception of Hispanics, for all subgroups arrest, but not conviction, is associated with roughly 35% lower odds of labor market intermediation. And also with the exception of Hispanics, the odds of going-it-alone are reduced for arrestees and/or convicts. Specifically, among males, odds of going-it-alone are reduced with arrest (by 27%) and conviction (by 18%). Similarly, among blacks arrest *and* conviction are associated with about a 30% reduction in the odds of going-it-alone. And among women and whites, conviction is associated with 29% and 22% lower odds of search, respectively. Thus, arrest and conviction status do affect the methods of search ex-offenders deploy. Almost uniformly, contact with the penal system, and in most cases specifically arrest (versus conviction), leads to lower odds of using each major method of search.

[INSERT TABLE 2 HERE]

Job-Finding Success. Displayed in Table 3 are results of logistic regression analysis predicting job-finding success. Five models are presented for the full sample and each of the major subgroups. For three of the subgroups—women, Hispanics, and whites—there is

nothing to explain once controls for demographic characteristics, human capital, and social capital are included in the model. In the full sample, however, and for males and blacks, arrestees' odds of job-finding success are significantly lower than that of their non-offending counterparts, and the search methods they deploy help to explain why. In the full sample and among males, the significant effect of arrest is nullified with the inclusion of our measures for search. This indicates that at least part of the effect of arrest on job-finding success is mediated both by differences in *how* jobseekers searched for work as well as how these search methods differentially affect job-finding success. The key to their difference in outcomes appears to be the effect of going-it-alone. The odds of job-finding success are 2-3 times greater among non-arrestees who go-it-alone, but among arrestees who use this method, the odds of job-finding success are significantly reduced, by 38% in the full sample and by 57% in the male sample (although the latter effect is not statistically significant). The same search method produces very different results, with go-it-alone approaches providing substantial benefits to non-arrestees while significantly disadvantaging arrestees vis-à-vis their non-arrestee counterparts.

[INSERT TABLE 3 HERE]

The findings for blacks are only slightly different. With controls, black arrestees have 48% lower odds of job-finding success. In Model 2, the inclusion of search method measures reduces the effect by ten percentage points. The inclusion of arrest and search interactions in Model 3 further attenuates the effect of arrest. Indeed, the arrest effect is reduced to 21% lower odds and becomes statistically insignificant. Here we learn that among arrestees who search through networks, the odds of job-finding success are 47% reduced. Model 4 replaces arrest and search interactions with conviction and search interactions, but results look little different from those of Model 2; the effect of arrest returns to significance. Model 5 includes both sets of interactions. Once again, the effect of arrest is eliminated. But with the inclusion of both sets of interactions, we learn that among non-arrestees who go-it-alone, the odds of

job-finding success are almost four times greater (than if they had not used this method), but among arrestees, going-it-alone was associated with 47% lower odds of job-finding success, compared to non-arrestees. As with the full sample and the males subsample, non-arrestees benefit from going-it-alone, but arrestees suffer significant disadvantage, and, at least among blacks, this significant difference in effect helps to explain arrestees' poorer employment outcomes.

Finally, it should also be noted that, by and large, labor market intermediation among ex-offenders was associated with greater odds of job-finding. Across the board these findings were insignificant, and so we cannot say with confidence that arrestees are more likely to find work when they search through LMIs than non-arrestees. At the very least, however, we can say that their outcomes are certainly no worse than those of non-arrestees who search through LMIs; if anything, they are better.

[INSERT TABLE 4 HERE]

Search Duration. Displayed in Table 4 are the results of our Ordinary Least Squares Regression analysis, which estimates the effect of arrest on the number of weeks it takes to find work. After including important controls for demographic characteristics, human capital, and social capital, the effect of arrest is nullified. But the inclusion of search method measures and related interactions do reveal noteworthy patterns. For instance, with the full sample we see that arrestees who network search and go-it-alone have search duration that are 1.8 weeks and 1 week longer, respectively. The trend is similar but amplified for male arrestees, who search more than 4.5 weeks longer with the use of networks and go-it-alone strategies. Female arrestees experience longer search durations when they use networks and labor market intermediation to find work (3 and 1.5 weeks additional, respectively). And among blacks and whites, arrestees who search for work through families and friends search 1.5 weeks longer than their non-arrestee counterparts. Thus, whereas go-it-alone strategies are implicated in explanations of job-finding success, network search emerges as a key marker of difference

between non-offenders and ex-offenders (though, to be clear, this difference does not explain differences in search duration by arrestee status). While labor market intermediation does not produce significantly shorter search durations, only with women is it associated with longer search durations. In the full sample and among men, blacks, and whites, the coefficient on the LMI-arrest interaction is actually negative, suggesting that for these groups, LMI use is associated with shorter search times.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Arrest, conviction, and incarceration are known to reduce the odds of getting a job and toincrease the length of time it takes to get a job (Western 2006). To explain these poorer outcomes, scholars point to ex-offenders' pre-offense, individual-level attributes (Grogger 1995), the loss of valuable human and social capital, which erodes with incarceration (Waldfogel 1994b; Western, Lopoo, and McLanahan 2004; Lopoo and Western 2005), and the mechanisms by which the stigma of a criminal record diminishes ex-offenders' odds of getting work (Schwartz and Skolnick 1964; Boshier and Johnson 1974; Holzer 1996; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996; Pager 2003, 2007a; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2007). In this paper, we sought to determine the extent to which ex-offenders' poorer outcomes could also be attributed to their methods of search. It appears that they can.

A criminal record, and especially a record of arrest, reduces the odds that jobseekers will search through each of the major categories of search we identify. In comparison to non-arrestees, arrestees are 16% less likely to search through friends and relatives, 37% less likely to search through LMIs, and 19% less likely to go-it-alone. That arrestees have significantly lower odds of searching in each of these categories suggests that they are putting less effort, overall, into job search activities. There are two possible explanations for this. The first is that arrestees are not as committed to finding work as their non-arrestee counterparts. Indeed, employment commitment has been shown to affect job search effort (Wiener et al. 1999;

Wanberg et al. 2010). Since most ex-offenders worked before arrest and incarceration, however, a more compelling explanation is that because they have great difficulty finding work, and because they endure frustratingly long search times, arrestees are more likely to become discouraged and to feel less efficacious during search. And research indicates a lack of confidence in one's ability to succeed at search can negatively affect search effort (Weiner et al. 1999; Wanberg et al. 2005). Future research should investigate this possibility, the results of which can inform public policy.

For three groups—women, Hispanics, and whites—there was no gap in search success to explain once controls for demographic characteristics, human capital, and social capital measures were considered. For males and blacks, however, differences in search methods deployed helped to explain why arrestees were less likely to have successful searches. Non-arrestees who used go-it-alone approaches to search for work were 2-3 times more likely to have a search end with a new job. Relative to non-arrestees, arrestees who used go-it-alone approaches had significantly reduced odds of finding work, by roughly 50% in both cases. Once this difference is taken into consideration, arrestees' and non-arrestees' odds of success look little different.

Most employers are disinclined toward hiring ex-offenders because they generally perceive them to be too risky to trust with business operations and assets (Schwartz and Skolnick 1964; Boshier and Johnson 1974; Holzer 1996; Kasinitz and Rosenberg 1996; Pager 2003, 2007a; Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2004). To overcome this trust problem, employers want assurances that these jobseekers are no more likely than jobseekers without records of arrest to cause harm to the physical, financial, and/or reputational well-being of the workplace. Although previous research indicates that some jobseekers are able to convince employers, through impression management strategies, that they will not be risky hires (Harding 2003; Pager 2007), most employers cannot be persuaded (Holzer 1996; Pager and Quillian 2005;

Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll 2007; Blumstein and Nakamura 2009), and so in the search for work, arrestees are at a relative disadvantage when they deploy go-it-alone strategies.

While arrestees have a more difficult time getting a job through go-it-alone strategies of job search, searching through friends and relatives produces longer searches, all else being equal. For men, women, blacks, and whites, arrestees who conduct network searches take 4.5, 3, 1.5, and 1.6 weeks longer, respectively, than their non-arrestee counterparts. Only among Hispanics is this effect insignificant. Going-it-alone also produces longer search durations for male arrestees, but for no other subgroup is this true.

Although differences in network search do not explain arrestees' longer search times—demographic characteristics and human and social capital endowments do that—that network search produces significantly different search durations is worthy of note and further study. In particular, attention should be paid to explaining why it takes longer for arrestees who search through friends and relatives to get work. We propose two possible explanations. The first relates to social capital access. Arrestees likely know fewer people who can either provide information about job openings or influence hires on their behalf. From this perspective, a successful network search takes longer because it takes time for jobseeking ex-offenders to identify individuals in their networks of relations who can facilitate job matches. Our social capital measure is intended to control for access to friends and relatives who can help, and it does perform as expected in most instances, even when effects are insignificant. For instance, in the pooled sample, greater social capital is associated with an increased likelihood of using each search method; among whites, it is associated with increased odds that searches will end with a job; and for all but Hispanics social capital access is associated with shorter search times, although insignificantly so. Thus, the measure is acting as it should. But because the measure is a poor proxy for the quality of information shared or the level of influence these "advisors" have, the measure has limitations. Even when arrestees have access to the same number of advisors as non-arrestees, their advisors might differ enough in terms of the

quantity and quality of job information they have to offer, and they might differ as well in the level of influence they can exert. This could explain why it takes arrestees who search through their networks longer to find work.

The second explanation relates to questions of social capital mobilization. Drawing from Smith (2010), we might attribute arrestees' longer network search durations to the test of sincerity. According to Smith, friends and relatives, like employers, want assurances that their referrals will not do anything that might taint jobseekers' reputation. In part this is because they want their referrals to succeed. But they are also concerned about the affect that their referrals' behavior will have on their own reputations (Smith 2005). Thus, when asked to assist with job search, jobholders wait for clear signs that their jobseeking relations are sincere about their desire to work. Jobholders seemed most impressed by jobseekers who, over a period of a few weeks, constantly asked for help. This type of persistence convinced jobholders that their jobseeking relations were committed to work and so were of limited risk of doing anything that might embarrass jobholders. With these assurances, jobholders were willing to put their own names on the line by vouching for their referral, and, in the process, managing employers' impressions about the referral. Because tests of sincerity take time—at least a couple of weeks—this process can produce significantly longer search durations than we might expect for non-arrestees, for whom there might be less need.

Unlike go-it-alone methods of search, LMIs do not significantly reduce arrestees' odds of finding work. If anything, with labor market intermediation, arrestees are more likely to find work, although insignificantly so. And unlike network search, LMIs do not significantly increase search duration. Indeed, for men, blacks, and whites, LMIs reduce search duration, again insignificantly so. Thus, all things considered, LMIs do not disadvantage arrestees in the search for work in the way that go-it-alone and network search strategies do. If anything, LMIs emerge as an equalizing force, shielding the negative effect of ex-offender status on employment outcomes. Drawing from Pettit and Lyons (2007), we propose that LMIs are at

least as successful at matching arrestees to jobs as they are at matching non-arrestees because they might work to identify employers who would be willing to hire jobseekers who have had contact with the penal system. They might discuss ex-offenders positively when in discussions with employers. They likely develop relationships of trust with willing employers, based on a history of successful matches with ex-offenders, and they might draw on this trust to facilitate future matches.

One of the drawbacks of this study is that, although LMIs differ significantly in form and function, with these data we are unable to parse out the effect of the three types of LMIs we identified—temporary employment agencies, public employment agencies, and community-based organizations. For instance, although respondents are asked whether if they searched through an "agency," this concept, which could refer to a public employment agency, a private agency, or a temporary employment agency, was not defined or differentiated. Had distinctions like this been made, we would have been able to examine the effect of different types of LMIs on arrestees' employment outcomes. Future research should tackle this important question, which has great relevance for public policy.

Thus far, to understand how contact with the penal system shapes ex-offenders' employment outcomes, we have focused our discussion on the extent to which penal contact mediates the relationship between search methods on the one hand and search success and duration on the other. We now shift our attention to the nature of penal contact to highlight that for the most part it was arrest, and not conviction, that mediated jobseekers' outcomes. Indeed, what is worth noting is the almost complete irrelevance of conviction for making sense of the effect of penal contact on employment outcomes when arrest is considered. To make sense of the differential effects of arrest and conviction, we are convinced by the argument put forward by Boshier and Johnson (1974). They contend that the stigma of criminality is a function of individuals' initial contact with the penal system. With contact, individuals are assumed guilty, and even if proven innocent, employers' judgments tend not to change. Thus,

arrestees who have not been convicted are treated only marginally better than convicts. Future research should interrogate how arrest versus conviction shapes jobseekers' sense of themselves and of labor market possibilities, as well as how this shapes their behavior in the labor market.

Finally, we are also interested in how race and gender mediate the relationship between penal contact and search methods, search success, and search duration. A number of patterns are worth noting at length. First, for Hispanics, search methods seem to matter little to explain ex-offenders' poorer outcomes. This is in part because Hispanic arrestees do not search significantly differently than their non-arrestee counterparts. Nor does the interaction between arrestee status and search method reveal any significant differences in search duration. Logit models predicting search success, however, do show that arrestees who search through networks have 90% reduced odds of search, while ex-convicts' odds of success are 37% greater, but these differences do not explain why arrestees' odds of finding work are lower. Differences between arrestees and non-arrestees in demographic characteristics, human capital, and social capital, however, do. And so here again, understanding how ex-offending Hispanics search for work yields few insights. Given previous research, which highlights the role that social networks play among Hispanics for job-finding (Falcon 1995; Falcon and Melendez 2001), we are surprised by the prevalence of null effects, and so we call for future research to help decipher this intriguing puzzle.

The effect of penal contact on duration also differs in noteworthy ways by gender. For both male and female arrestees, network search is associated with longer searches—by 4.5 and three weeks, respectively. However, whereas the use of LMIs reduces (insignificantly) male arrestees' search duration, for female arrestees, LMI use is associated with a 1.7-week increase (significantly). Conversely, whereas going-it-alone reduces female arrestees' search by about two weeks, among male arrestees, LMI use is associated with almost five additional weeks of search. Although previous research has found that women and men adopt different job search

strategies (Drentea 1998) and has underscored the role that social structure plays in that process (Moore 1990; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1982; Campbell and Rosenfeld 1985), the inverse patterns described here also require further study and explanation.

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