RESEARCH REPORT
External Research Program

Housing Discrimination Against Victims of Domestic Violence

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Housing Discrimination Against Victims of Domestic Violence

CMHC Final Report

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Housing Discrimination Against Victims of Domestic Violence

INTRODUCTION

Battered women say that they have problems finding safe, affordable housing.

One reason may be discrimination, based on commonly-held stereotypes concerning battered women. Landlords might hold the same stereotypes, see battered women as undesirable tenants, and not give them a fair chance to rent a unit.

This study, under the External Research Program (ERP) funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), attempted to find out if landlords discriminate against battered women.

METHODOLOGY

Survey 1

A rigorous experimental design examined whether landlords discriminate against victims of domestic violence. Three scenarios were used—basic, child and answering machine (see below). Within each scenario there were three conditions—shelter, friends and control (see below). The researchers telephoned landlords, giving one of the conditions, and asked if an advertised rental unit was available.

Basic scenario

Shelter condition	Friends condition	Control condition
"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, **I'm staying at a shelter for battered women right now**, but I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"	"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, **I'm staying with friends right now**, but I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"	"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

Child scenario

In the child scenario, "with my little girl" was added in each of the three conditions after the statement "I'd like to move."

Shelter condition	Friends condition	Control condition
"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, I'm staying at a shelter for battered women right now, but I'd like to move **with my little girl** at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"	"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, I'm staying with friends right now, but I'd like to move **with my little girl** at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"	"Yes, I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____and actually I'd like to move **with my little girl** at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

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Answering machine scenario

In the answering machine scenario, the caller left a message on the landlord's answering machine in each of the three conditions that was similar to the basic scenario, but said the caller was employed.

Shelter condition	Friends condition	Control condition
"Hi, my name is **Jane** and I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ **I'm staying at a shelter for battered women right now**, but you can leave a message for me at my workplace at anytime. The number is _____. Please call and let me know if the apartment is still available. Thanks."	"Hi, my name is **Patricia** and I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____. **I'm staying with friends right now**, but you can leave a message for me at my workplace at anytime. The number is _____. Please call and let me know if the apartment is still available. Thanks."	"Hi, my name is **Rebecca** and I'm calling about the one-bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____. You can leave a message for me at my workplace at anytime. The number is _____. Please call and let me know if the apartment is still available. Thanks."

Survey 2

To explore whether or not landlords would admit discrimination to a researcher, additional landlords were surveyed. These landlords knew that they were speaking to a researcher and were directly asked whether or not they would rent a unit to a hypothetical battered woman. Their answers were compared to the availability of rental units in the shelter design of the basic scenario. In addition, open-ended questions about renting to a battered woman were asked.

Participants

A total of 273 landlords were called in Survey 1. Another 54 landlords were asked to take part in Survey 2; 31 agreed. Overall, 47 per cent of the landlords were women, and the average asking rent was $832.10.

Procedure

The landlords were randomly selected from *Toronto Star* newspaper advertisements offering one-bedroom apartments and they were never called more than once.

When each call was made, the dialogue from one of the nine scenario/conditions or combinations in Survey 1 or Survey 2 was randomly used.

In the basic and child scenarios, the researcher asked if the apartment was available and then disclosed to the landlord that she was a researcher.

In the answering machine scenario, landlords were asked to call back. The researcher noted whether the landlords called back and the availability of the rental unit.

In Survey 2, the researcher introduced herself and asked the landlord to participate by answering a few questions.

FINDINGS

Basic scenario

- In the shelter condition, landlords were significantly less likely to say that a rental unit was available compared to the control condition.

- There was no significant difference between the shelter condition and the friends condition.

Child scenario

- In the shelter condition, landlords were significantly less likely to say that a rental unit was available compared to both the friends and control conditions.

- When the basic and the child scenarios were combined across conditions and compared to each other, there was no significant difference.

Answering machine scenario

■ In the shelter condition, landlords were significantly less likely to say that a rental unit was available compared to the control condition.

■ There was no significant difference between the shelter condition and the friends condition.

Combined across the three scenarios

■ In the three shelter conditions, landlords were significantly less likely to say that a rental unit was available compared to the three control conditions.

■ In the three shelter conditions, landlords were significantly less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available compared to the three friends conditions.

Survey 2

■ There was no significant difference between the availability of the rental unit in the shelter condition of the basic scenario compared to landlords' answers to the survey question about whether or not they would be willing to rent a unit to a battered woman.

■ Open-ended responses suggested, not surprisingly, that ability to pay the rent would be the most important factor in whether a landlord would rent to a battered woman. Some believed that the rent money would be in jeopardy because of her precarious situation. Other perceived risks included general notations about "problems" and "dangers" that might result. The open-ended results also showed that a small minority of landlords blamed battered women or were openly hostile toward them and would clearly not rent a unit to them regardless of their ability to pay.

In all three scenarios, availability was significantly different between the shelter condition and control condition. This indicates that housing discrimination against battered women exists.

Because there were mixed results when the shelter condition was compared to the friends condition, whether housing discrimination is more likely against women staying at a shelter or more generally against women without stable living conditions is less clear.

There was a significant difference in the child scenario, but not in the basic and answering machine scenarios. This lack of significance was likely due to sample size, because collapsing across the three scenarios strongly supports the hypothesis that a landlord is more likely to say there is a rental unit available if the caller says she is staying with friends than if she says she is staying in a shelter for battered women.

This provides some evidence that victims of domestic violence are prone to housing discrimination as a direct result of their status as victims rather than because of the assumptions, such as being unemployed, poor or undesirable, that go along with having unstable living conditions.

The child scenario was included to help determine whether assumptions about battered women with children might influence the results. The significant difference found in the basic scenario persisted and was actually strengthened in the child scenario, so assumptions about battered women with children should not have affected the results of the study. Similarly, the significant findings persisted in the answering machine scenario, which specified that the caller had a job, which served as a control for employment.

This study also examined willingness to admit discrimination and the results suggest that landlords are willing to admit discrimination to a researcher.

There was no significant difference between the number of landlords who said they would rent to a battered woman and those saying that the rental unit was available in the shelter condition of the basic scenario.

In addition, a substantial number of landlords were surprisingly candid in their unwillingness to rent to a battered woman and some were even openly hostile towards battered women.

A secondary purpose of this study was to determine whether the answering machine scenario could be used successfully in discrimination research. The results suggest that this is a feasible method, but it is not equivalent to a live-caller design. The availability base rate was substantially lower because a number of landlords did not call back or did not indicate in their message whether the apartment was still available. This method may be particularly well-suited when vacancy rates are high and might not work when vacancy rates are low.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest that housing discrimination against battered women exists, although the reasons for the discrimination are less clear.

It was impossible to control for every possible assumption about battered women. The researchers chose to control for having a child and for being employed, neither of which completely accounted for the discrimination found in the results.

Ironically, because a number of landlords were willing to admit that they were unlikely to rent to a battered woman, they might also be willing to openly discuss the problem and help generate solutions. It will be important to make positive connections between advocates for battered women and landlords in efforts to change landlords' assumptions and stereotypes about victims of domestic violence. These links are particularly important and needed with landlords who rent units in desirable, high-security buildings.

Future studies should explore which rental units are particularly prohibitive toward battered women and determine the extent to which housing discrimination is responsible. Battered women face many challenges when leaving an abusive partner. The need for secure housing cannot be overemphasized because women are at the greatest risk for serious injury when they leave an abusive partner.[1] They should not be additionally burdened with discrimination that keeps them from renting the best housing that they can afford.

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[1] Hotton, T. (2001) "Spousal Violence after Marital Separation" *Juristat* 21(7), Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada.

La discrimination à l'égard des femmes victimes de violence conjugale qui cherchent un logement

INTRODUCTION

Les femmes victimes de violence conjugale disent avoir de la difficulté à trouver un logement sûr et abordable.

La discrimination pourrait être en cause, car la population et de nombreux professionnels ont des opinions toutes faites à l'égard des femmes battues. Il n'est pas exagéré de croire que les propriétaires-bailleurs puissent entretenir les mêmes stéréotypes, et ainsi percevoir les femmes maltraitées comme des locataires indésirables et leur refuser toute chance équitable de louer un logement.

La présente étude a été réalisée dans le cadre du Programme de subventions de recherche (PSR), que finance la Société canadienne d'hypothèques et de logement (SCHL). Elle avait pour but de déterminer si les propriétaires-bailleurs ont des comportements discriminatoires vis-à-vis des femmes battues.

MÉTHODE

Sondage 1

Les chercheurs ont eu recours à une démarche expérimentale rigoureuse pour examiner si les propriétaires-bailleurs font preuve de discrimination à l'égard des victimes de violence conjugale. Trois scénarios ont été élaborés : un scénario de référence, un second avec enfant et un dernier avec message vocal (voir ci-dessous). Chaque scénario comportait trois situations hypothétiques : le logement en refuge, le logement chez des amis et la situation témoin (voir ci-dessous). Les chercheurs ont téléphoné à des propriétaires-bailleurs, exposant une des situations et demandant si le logement annoncé était disponible.

Scénario de référence

En refuge	Chez des amis	Situation témoin
« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, **je loge en ce moment dans un refuge pour femmes battues**, mais j'aimerais déménager à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »	« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, **je loge en ce moment chez des amis**, mais j'aimerais déménager à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »	« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, j'aimerais déménager à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »

Scénario avec enfant

Dans le cadre de ce scénario, la femme ajoutait « avec ma petite fille » après l'énoncé « j'aimerais déménager » dans les trois situations hypothétiques.

En refuge	Chez des amis	Situation témoin
« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, je loge en ce moment dans un refuge pour femmes battues, mais j'aimerais déménager **avec ma petite fille** à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »	« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, je loge en ce moment chez des amis, mais j'aimerais déménager **avec ma petite fille** à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »	« Bonjour, j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. En fait, j'aimerais déménager **avec ma petite fille** à la fin du mois. L'appartement est-il toujours disponible? »

Scénario du message vocal

Dans ce scénario, la femme laissait un message dans la boîte vocale du propriétaire-bailleur, exposant une des trois situations hypothétiques employées dans le scénario de référence, mais laissant entendre qu'elle occupait un emploi.

En refuge	Chez des amis	Situation témoin
« Bonjour, je m'appelle **Jeanne** et j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. **Je loge en ce moment dans un refuge pour femmes battues**, mais vous pouvez me laisser un message au travail en tout temps, au numéro _____. Veuillez s'il vous plaît me rappeler pour me dire si l'appartement est encore disponible. Merci. »	« Bonjour, je m'appelle **Patricia** et j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. **Je loge en ce moment chez des amis**, mais vous pouvez me laisser un message au travail en tout temps, au numéro _____. Veuillez s'il vous plaît me rappeler pour me dire si l'appartement est encore disponible. Merci. »	« Bonjour, je m'appelle **Rebecca** et j'appelle au sujet de l'appartement d'une chambre que vous avez annoncé […]. Vous pouvez me laisser un message au travail en tout temps, au numéro _____. Veuillez s'il vous plaît me rappeler pour me dire si l'appartement est encore disponible. Merci. »

Sondage 2

Pour vérifier si les propriétaires-bailleurs avoueraient à un chercheur leurs éventuels comportements discriminatoires, on a communiqué avec d'autres sujets. Ces derniers savaient qu'ils s'adressaient à un chercheur. On leur a demandé sans détour s'ils loueraient un logement à une femme battue; leurs réponses ont été comparées aux taux de disponibilité obtenus au moyen du scénario de référence en refuge. On leur a également posé des questions ouvertes sur la location de logements à des femmes battues.

Participants

Au total, 273 propriétaires-bailleurs ont été assujettis au Sondage 1. Parmi les 54 autres qui se sont fait inviter à prendre part au Sondage 2, 31 ont accepté. En tout et pour tout, 47 % des propriétaires étaient des femmes, et le loyer demandé s'élevait en moyenne à 832,10 $.

Procédure

On a choisi aléatoirement des propriétaires à partir d'annonces, parues dans le *Toronto Star*, offrant en location des appartements d'une chambre. Jamais un propriétaire n'a été appelé plus d'une fois.

À chaque appel, on retenait au hasard le dialogue d'un des neuf scénarios/conditions expérimentales ou de combinaisons du Sondage 1 ou du Sondage 2.

Dans le contexte du scénario de réference et du scénario avec enfant, la femme demandait si l'appartement était disponible et révélait ensuite au propriétaire-bailleur qu'elle était chercheur.

Dans le cadre du scénario du message vocal, on demandait au propriétaire-bailleur de rappeler. Le chercheur indiquait alors si le propriétaire avait rappelé et si le logement locatif était disponible.

Dans le cadre du Sondage 2, le chercheur se présentait et demandait au propriétaire de participer en répondant à quelques questions.

RÉSULTATS

Scénario de référence

- Les propriétaires-bailleurs étaient beaucoup moins susceptibles de répondre qu'un logement locatif était disponible si la femme disait vivre en refuge que si elle s'en abstenait (situation témoin).

- Il y avait peu de différences entre le fait de loger dans un refuge et celui d'habiter chez des amis.

Scénario avec enfant

- Les propriétaires-bailleurs étaient beaucoup moins susceptibles de répondre qu'un logement locatif était disponible si la femme disait vivre en refuge que si elle s'en gardait (situation témoin) ou qu'elle prétendait habiter chez des amis.

- Il y avait peu de différences entre les situations sous-jacentes du scénario de référence et les situations correspondantes du scénario avec enfant.

Scénario du message vocal

- Les propriétaires-bailleurs étaient beaucoup moins susceptibles de répondre qu'un logement locatif était disponible si la femme disait vivre en refuge que si elle s'en abstenait.

- Il y avait peu de différences entre le fait de loger dans un refuge et celui d'habiter chez des amis.

Ventilation des données des trois scénarios

- Quel que soit le scénario, les propriétaires-bailleurs étaient beaucoup moins susceptibles de répondre qu'un logement locatif était disponible si la femme disait vivre en refuge que si elle s'en abstenait (situation témoin).

- Quel que soit le scénario, les propriétaires-bailleurs étaient beaucoup moins susceptibles de répondre qu'un logement locatif était disponible si la femme disait vivre dans un refuge que si elle affirmait habiter chez des amis.

Sondage 2

- Aucune différence significative n'a été constatée entre le taux de disponibilité obtenu lorsque la femme disait vivre en refuge dans le scénario de référence et le taux de réponses positives observé quand on demandait aux propriétaires-bailleurs s'ils seraient prêts à louer un logement à une femme battue.

- Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, les réponses aux questions ouvertes révèlent que la capacité de payer serait en fait le facteur le plus important aux yeux des propriétaires-bailleurs qui se retrouvent devant la possibilité de louer un logement à une femme battue. Certains propriétaires pensent qu'ils risqueraient de perdre des revenus de loyer en raison de la situation précaire de la locataire. Parmi les autres risques perçus, les propriétaires ont notamment fait allusion de façon générale à d'éventuels « problèmes » ou « dangers » connexes. Les réponses aux questions ouvertes montrent par ailleurs qu'une petite minorité de propriétaires-bailleurs blâment les femmes battues ou manifestent ouvertement de l'hostilité à leur égard et refuseraient catégoriquement de leur louer un logement, quelle que soit leur capacité de payer.

Dans les trois scénarios, les taux de disponibilité diffèrent considérablement si la femme dit loger dans un refuge que si elle s'abstient de le faire. La discrimination à l'égard des femmes battues existe donc bel et bien dans le contexte du logement.

Parce que les résultats ne convergent pas tous lorsqu'on compare la situation du logement en refuge avec celle du logement chez des amis, il est plus difficile de savoir si la discrimination se fait spécifiquement contre les femmes logeant en refuge ou plus globalement contre celles dont les conditions de vie sont instables.

En effet, on a observé des écarts significatifs dans le scénario avec enfant, mais pas dans le scénario de référence ni dans celui du message vocal. Ce phénomène tient probablement à la taille de l'échantillon, parce que les données ventilées des trois scénarios appuient nettement l'hypothèse selon laquelle un propriétaire-bailleur sera plus susceptible d'affirmer qu'un logement locatif est disponible si la femme prétend habiter chez des amis que si elle dit loger dans un refuge pour femmes battues.

Selon ces indications, les victimes de violence conjugale à la recherche d'un logement seraient sujettes à la discrimination en raison de leur situation de victime, et non pas à cause de présomptions liées à des conditions de vie instables, comme le fait d'être sans emploi, pauvre ou indésirable.

Dans le cadre de l'étude, on a retenu le scénario avec enfant pour déterminer si les idées préconçues à l'égard des femmes battues avec enfant pouvaient influencer les résultats. Non seulement la différence significative constatée dans le scénario de référence se confirmait, mais elle apparaissait encore plus nettement dans le scénario avec enfant. Ces préjugés ne devraient donc pas avoir influé sur les résultats de l'étude. Par ailleurs, ces mêmes tendances marquées s'observaient dans le scénario du message vocal qui, en laissant entendre que la femme occupait un emploi, permettait d'évaluer cette variable.

En outre, la présente étude servait à vérifier si les propriétaires-bailleurs avoueraient à un chercheur leur éventuelle attitude discriminatoire. Les résultats montrent qu'ils y sont effectivement disposés.

On note un écart quantitatif peu important entre les propriétaires-bailleurs qui se disaient prêts à louer un logement à une femme battue et ceux qui ont répondu dans l'affirmative à la femme vivant prétendument en refuge dans le scénario de référence.

En outre, de nombreux propriétaires-bailleurs ont indiqué avec une étonnante franchise qu'ils n'étaient pas disposés à louer des logements à des femmes battues, et certains étaient même ouvertement hostiles à leur égard.

La présente étude avait pour objet secondaire de déterminer si le scénario du message vocal pouvait être employé avec succès dans le cadre de recherches sur la discrimination. Selon les résultats, il s'agit d'une méthode réalisable qui n'équivaut toutefois pas à celle mettant en communication directe le chercheur et son sujet. Le taux de disponibilité de base était beaucoup plus faible dans le cadre de ce scénario, parce que certains propriétaires-bailleurs ont négligé de rappeler ou de préciser dans leur message si l'appartement était toujours libre. Il se peut que cette méthode convienne particulièrement bien quand les taux d'inoccupation sont élevés, mais qu'elle ne fonctionne point quand les taux sont bas.

CONCLUSIONS

Les résultats de l'étude semblent indiquer que la discrimination existe bel et bien contre les femmes battues à la recherche d'un logement, même si les motifs de discrimination sont plus ou moins clairs.

Il était impossible de tenir compte des effets de toutes les variables présentes dans la réalité des femmes battues. Les chercheurs ont choisi de mesurer l'incidence des variables enfant et emploi, et ni l'une ni l'autre ne peut expliquer entièrement la discrimination qui ressort des résultats.

Paradoxalement, les propriétaires-bailleurs disposés à reconnaître qu'ils ne loueraient probablement pas de logements à des femmes battues accepteraient peut-être de discuter ouvertement de la question et de contribuer ainsi à trouver des pistes de solutions. Pour que les propriétaires-bailleurs cessent de faire des suppositions ou d'entretenir des idées préconçues à l'égard des femmes victimes de violence conjugale, il sera important d'établir des liens positifs entre eux et les défenseurs des femmes battues. Ces liens seront d'autant plus importants et nécessaires dans le cas des propriétaires-bailleurs qui louent des logements situés dans de beaux immeubles hautement sécurisés.

Il faudrait un jour examiner quels logements locatifs sont particulièrement inaccessibles aux femmes battues et déterminer dans quelle mesure la discrimination est en cause. Toute femme maltraitée qui quitte son conjoint violent doit surmonter de nombreuses difficultés. On n'insistera jamais trop sur la nécessité d'avoir un logement sûr, car c'est lorsqu'une femme quitte un conjoint violent qu'elle est le plus vulnérable physiquement[1]; elle ne devrait pas avoir par surcroît à subir des attitudes discriminatoires qui l'empêchent de louer le meilleur logement qu'elle peut se payer.

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[1] T. Hotton, *La violence conjugale après la séparation*, Ottawa, Centre canadien de la statistique juridique, Statistique Canada, 2001, série « Juristat », vol. 21, nᵒ 7.

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Abstract

Research on housing battered women has largely focused on the availability and affordability of housing; however discrimination is also likely to play a role. This study had two purposes. The first was to explore the role that discrimination may play by using a rigorous experimental design in which a researcher called landlords in different conditions and inquired about the availability of an advertised unit. Three experimental conditions (staying at a shelter; staying with friends; control) were repeated across three scenarios (basic design; child design; answering machine (job) design). The second purpose was to examine whether or not landlords would admit discrimination to a researcher. An additional sample of landlords was called and surveyed about their willingness to rent to a hypothetical battered woman. **Findings:** Across all three scenarios, rental units were significantly more likely to be available in the control condition than in the condition in which the caller indicated that she was staying at a shelter for battered women. Comparisons between the shelter condition and the staying with friends condition resulted in mixed findings. There was a significant difference in the child scenario and when the data was aggregated across the three scenarios. The results of the survey indicated that landlords were as likely to admit discrimination as they were to actually indicate that a rental unit was not available when a caller said she was staying at a shelter for battered women. Overall, the results indicated that housing discrimination against battered women exists and that landlords are willing to discuss discriminatory practices, which suggests open discussions between landlords and victim advocates are possible.

Executive Summary

Introduction

Battered women express difficulty in securing and keeping safe affordable housing. One of the reasons for this may be discrimination. The general public and a number of professionals hold stereotypes about battered women, so it is not unreasonable that landlords would also be influenced by these stereotypes and see battered women as undesirable tenants. The result may be that they are not given a fair chance to rent a unit.

The study, completed under the CMHC External Research Program, explored the role that discrimination may play in housing battered women. There were two main purposes, which lead to a number of hypotheses:

Purpose 1) to examine whether or not landlords discriminate against victims of domestic violence (with and without mentioning a child, with and without mentioning a job)

Hypothesis A: Landlords will be significantly less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available than callers who do not mention their present accommodations.

Hypothesis B: Landlords will be significantly less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available than callers who disclose they are staying with friends.

Purpose 2) to examine whether or not landlords would admit discrimination to a researcher.

Hypothesis C: Landlords will be significantly less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available than landlords will indicate that they are willing to rent a unit to a hypothetical victim of domestic violence.

A secondary purpose was to test a modification (leaving a message on an answering machine) of an unobtrusive method that has been used in the past to explore housing discrimination. No specific hypothesis was made, but feasibility was determined by examining call back rates.

Methodology

A rigorous experimental design was employed to examine whether or not landlords discriminate against victims of domestic violence. This involved telephoning landlords in various conditions and noting whether or not an advertised rental unit was available. Three design scenarios were used (basic, child, and answering machine), and within each scenario there were three conditions (helter, friends, and control).

In the shelter condition of the basic design scenario the researcher called the landlord and said "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, **I'm staying at a shelter for battered women right now**, but I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"
In the friends condition the caller indicated that she was "staying with friends" and in the control condition no mention was made of her present accommodations.

The same language was used for the child scenario design, but it added "with my little girl" in each of the three conditions after the statement "I'd like to move." In the answering machine design the caller left a message on the landlord's answering machine in each of the three conditions that was similar to the basic design, but also indicated that the caller was employed.

To explore whether or not landlords would admit discrimination to a researcher, a survey was conducted with additional landlords. These landlords knew that they were speaking to a researcher and were directly asked whether or not they would rent a unit to a hypothetical battered woman. Their answers were compared to the availability of rental units in the shelter design of the basic scenario. In addition, open ended questions about renting to a battered woman were asked.

Participants

A total of 273 landlords were called in the experimental conditions. An additional 54 landlords were asked to do the survey, 31 of which agreed. Overall, 47.4% of the landlords were women, and the average asking rent was $832.10 (SD = 126.79).

Procedure

The landlords were randomly selected from Toronto Star newspaper advertisements for one bedroom apartments and never called more than once. When each call was made, the dialogue from one of the nine experimental conditions or the survey was randomly employed. In the experimental conditions the researcher noted whether or not the apartment was available and then disclosed to the landlord that she was a researcher. In the answering machine scenario,

landlords were asked to call back. The researcher noted whether or not they called and the
availability of the rental unit. In the survey design the researcher introduced herself and asked
the landlord to participate by answering a few questions.

Findings

Basic Scenario

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the shelter
condition compared to the control condition

$X^2(1, N = 61) = 4.223, p = .040$

● There was no significant difference between the shelter condition and the friends condition.

Child Scenario

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the shelter
condition compared to the control condition

$X^2(1, N = 60) = 7.680, p = .006$

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the shelter
condition compared to the friends condition

$X^2(1, N = 60) = 3.750, p = .053$

● When the basic and the child scenarios were collapsed across conditions and compared to each
other there was no significant difference.

Answering Machine Scenario

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the shelter condition compared to the control condition

$X^2(1, N = 92) = 3.674$, p = .055

● There was no significant difference between the shelter condition and the friends condition.

Collapsed Across the Three Scenarios

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the three shelter conditions compared to the three control conditions

$X^2(1, N = 182) = 12.316$, p = .0001

● Landlord's were significant less likely to indicate that a rental unit was available in the three shelter conditions compared to the three friends conditions

$X^2(1, N = 181) = 5.863$, p = .015

Survey Design

● There was no significant difference between the availability of the rental unit in the shelter condition of the basic scenario compared to landlords' answers to the survey question about whether or not s/he would be willing to rent a unit to a battered woman.

● Open ended responses suggested, not surprisingly, that ability to pay the rent would be the most important factor in whether or not a landlord would rent to a battered woman. Some believed that the rent money would be in jeopardy because of her precarious situation. Other perceived risks included general notations about "problems" and "dangers" that might result. The open ended results also showed that a small minority of landlords blamed battered women or

were openly hostile toward them and would clearly not rent a unit to them regardless of their ability to pay.

Conclusions

Availability was significantly different in all three scenarios between the shelter condition and control condition, which indicates that housing discrimination against battered women exists (Hypothesis A). Whether or not housing discrimination is more likely to occur against women staying at a shelter or more generally against women without stable living conditions is less clear because there were mixed results when the shelter condition was compared to the friends condition (Hypothesis B). A significant difference was found in the child scenario, but not in the basic or answering machine scenarios. This lack of significance was likely due to inadequate power because when power was increased by collapsing across the three scenarios, the hypothesis was strongly supported. This provides some evidence that victims of domestic violence are prone to housing discrimination as a direct result of their status as victims rather than because of the assumptions that go along with having unstable living conditions (e.g., poor, unemployed, undesirable etc.).

The child scenario was included to help determine whether or not assumptions about battered women having children might influence the results. The significant difference found in the basic scenario persisted and was actually strengthened in the child scenario, so assumptions about battered women having children should not have affected the results of the study. Similarly the significant findings persisted in the answering machine scenario which specified that the caller had a job and thus served as a control for employment.

This study also examined willingness to admit discrimination and the results suggest that landlords are willing to admit discrimination to a researcher (Hypothesis C). There was no significant difference between landlords' saying they would rent to a battered woman and landlords' indicating that the rental unit was available in the shelter condition of the basic design scenario. In addition, a substantial number of landlords were surprisingly candid in their unwillingness to rent to a battered woman and some were even openly hostile towards battered women.

A secondary purpose of this study was to determine whether an answering machine design could be successfully used in discrimination research. The results suggest that this is a feasible method, but it is not equivalent to a live caller design. The availability base rate was substantially lower because a number of landlords did not call back or did not indicate in their message whether or not the apartment was still available. This method may be particularly well suited when vacancy rates are high and might not work when vacancy rates are low.

The results of this study suggest that housing discrimination against battered women exists, although the reasons for the discrimination are less clear. It was impossible to control for every assumption that could be made about battered women. We chose to control for having a child and for being employed, neither of which completely accounted for the discrimination that was found in the results. Ironically, because a number of landlords were willing to admit that they were unlikely to rent to a battered woman, they might also be willing to openly discuss the problem and help generate solutions. It will be important to make positive connections between advocates for battered women and landlords in efforts to change landlords' assumptions and

stereotypes about victims of domestic violence. These links are particularly important and needed with landlords who rent units in desirable high security buildings. Future studies should explore which rental units are particularly prohibitive toward battered women and determine the extent to which housing discrimination is responsible. Battered women face many challenges when leaving an abusive partner. They should not be additionally burdened with discrimination that keeps them from renting the best housing that they can afford.

Introduction

Battered women express difficulty in securing and keeping safe affordable housing. The main scope of this project was to explore the role that discrimination may play in housing battered women. The main purpose of this study was to examine whether or not landlords discriminate against victims of domestic violence (with and without a child), and whether or not they will admit discrimination to a researcher. A secondary purpose was to test a modification of an unobtrusive method that has been used in the past to explore housing discrimination.

Housing and Battered Women

Housing battered women so that they can escape the abuse has been recognized as a primary concern since the beginning of the battered women's movement because women often lose their homes when they flee from abusive partners (Morley, 2000). CMHC programs such as Project Haven and The Next Step have recognized that abused women face a number of difficulties in acquiring safe and affordable housing, and that when they do not find housing they are at risk for repeat abuse (Peters, 1990; Weisz, Taggart, Mockler & Streich, 1996). These important projects address emergency and interim housing; however, woman must eventually find long-term housing. If they do not, they are at risk for returning to the abuser (Somers, 1992; Weisz, et al., 1996) or becoming homeless (CMHC, 1996; Toro, et al., 1995) both of which put women at risk for further abuse.

The Effects of Housing Discrimination

We know from the literature concerning housing and minorities that housing discrimination has great social and economic costs for those who are discriminated against

(Dion, 2001). Discrimination can make it almost impossible for those most in need to secure housing (CERA, 2003b). In Toronto racial discrimination is believed to account for "pockets of disadvantage" in which minorities, who are unable to secure housing elsewhere, are forced to live (Carey, 2001; Philip, 2000). Ironically insecure and poorly maintained buildings in Toronto are not substantially less expensive than the more desirable buildings (CERA, 2003b). Discrimination keeps racial minorities and low-income families from renting the most affordable accommodations that they can find and pushes them into undesirable and overpriced rental units (CERA, 2003a). An astonishing 74% of single mothers with children living in poverty who moved in 1991 found accommodations in the medium or most expensive segments of the rental market (CERA, 1998). It is possible that battered women who can afford more for housing may still be kept out of desirable buildings with high security because of discrimination at a time in their lives when security is of paramount importance. Weisz and his colleges (1996) found that 76% of clients cited safety from the batterer as the main difficulty in finding appropriate housing. Yet few public housing units have adequate safety measures to protect these women (Peters, 1990). The need for secure housing cannot be overemphasized because women are at the greatest risk for serious injury when they leave an abusive partner (Hotton, 2001).

Discrimination of Battered Women

The limited research examining housing and domestic violence has largely focused on the availability and affordability of housing (CMHC, 1996; Morley, 2000; Peters, 1990; Weisz, et al. 1996). Certainly these are important concerns that should not be understated; however these are not the only problems that battered women face when they attempt to secure and keep their housing. Battered women may be discriminated against when landlords refuse to rent to them or

unfairly evict them because of their partner's actions. Stereotypes of battered women are likely

to play a part in discrimination. Erroneous and negative stereotypes that blame battered women

for the abuse are held by the general public (Aubrey & Ewing, 1989; Ewing & Aubrey, 1997), by

physicians (Garimella, Plichta, Houseman, & Garzon, 2000), by the police (Viano, 1996), and by

judges, prosecutors and defense attorneys (Hartman & Belknap, 2003). It is likely that landlords

also hold these stereotypes. We know that at least some battered women have experienced

housing discrimination. Battered women have cited being turned away from rentals as a housing

problem (Baker, Cook, & Norris, 2003) and in the United States women have successfully sued

landlords for discriminatory practices (Weiser & Boehm, 2002). We also know that mothers on

social assistance encounter blatant discrimination (CERA, 2003a; CERA 2003b), and that many

women leaving shelters are single mothers on social assistance (Weisz, et.al., 1996). Battered

women may try to hide past abuse from a potential landlord, but it is likely to surface during the

screening process. For example, she may have to leave the shelter phone number, have bad

references (due to violence in the home, police presence, neighbours' complaints etc.), have poor

credit ratings (due to partner's control of the finances etc.), have visible bruising, or have other

problems that are largely due to the batterer's actions. It therefore seems very likely that

discrimination exists, but we do not know the extent to which it exists and keeps women from

securing housing.

Methodology

Research on discrimination in Canada has largely been small surveys of perceived

discrimination "but without more rigorous research, housing discrimination will remain an

unquantified social problem in Canada" (CMHC, 2000b, p.3). Audit studies are quasi-

experiments "in which trained pairs of observer or "auditors" pretend to seek employment or housing in response to a newspaper advertisement" (Dion, 2001, p 526). The auditors represent different conditions (e.g., people of different ethnic groups) within the experimental design resulting in a more rigorous exploration of discrimination than survey studies. However, a problem with audit studies is that there is extensive contact between the auditor and the landlord because the two meet in person, which make bias more likely. The present study used a rigorous experimental design that involves telephoning landlords. The interaction between the landlord and the caller is usually no longer than several seconds in an effort to reduce experimental bias (Page, 1983). Page (1977) developed this method as a measure of general discrimination. He has used this method to examine discrimination against mentally ill patients (1977, 1995), AIDS patients (1989, 1999) and lesbian women and gay men (1998). The present study used the telephone design method, but also modified it by introducing an answering machine design for some of the conditions. This modernized the design because answering machines are in much greater use than they were in 1977 when Page developed the method. Consequently, excluding calls that result in an answering machine is becoming increasingly impractical. Additionally, an answering machine design has the potential to reduce bias because the caller can leave the exact same message on every machine without the possibility of unexpected interjection from the landlord and thus unscripted dialogue between the caller and the landlord. Finally, an answering machine design allows for greater flexibility because more information can be conveyed before the landlord indicates whether or not the apartment is available.

<u>Research questions</u>

The main purpose of this study was to examine whether or not landlords discriminate against victims of domestic violence across three scenario designs (Basic, Child, and Answering Machine) and whether or not they will admit discrimination to a researcher. This was accomplished by exploring each of the scenarios separately (questions 1-3), by collapsing across the three scenario designs (question 4), and by comparing the experimental condition in the basic design scenario to the survey design (question 5).

1) The first research question directly explores landlord discrimination.

Hypothesis 1a) Landlords will be less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available significantly more often than callers who do not mention their present accommodations.

Hypothesis 1b) Landlords will be less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available significantly more often than callers who disclose they are staying with friends.

2) The second question explores whether or not having a child affects discrimination. Hypotheses 2a and 2b mirror hypotheses 1a and 2a. That is, mentioning a child will have a similar discrimination affect as hypothesized in question 1.

3) A third question considers the feasibility of modifying this method by having the caller leave a message on an answering machine rather than speak to the landlord in person.

Hypothesis 3a) Landlords will be less likely to call and indicate that the apartment is available to women who disclose that they are staying at a shelter for battered women compared to women who do not mention their present accommodations.

Hypothesis 3b) Landlords will be less likely to call and indicate that the apartment is available to women who disclose that they are staying at a shelter for battered women compared to women who disclose that they are staying with friends.

4) The fourth research question explores landlord discrimination across the three experimental designs.

Hypothesis 4a) Landlords will be less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available significantly more often than callers who do not mention their present accommodations.

Hypothesis 4b) Landlords will be less likely to tell callers who disclose they are staying in a shelter for battered women that the rental unit is available significantly more often than callers who disclose they are staying with friends.

5) A final question considers whether landlords are willing to admit to discrimination. A researcher will survey an additional group of landlords about whether or not they would be likely to rent their unit to a (hypothetical) victim of domestic violence.

Hypothesis 5) Landlords will indicate that they would be willing to rent the unit to a victim of domestic violence significantly more often than landlords will indicate that the unit is available in the shelter condition of the basic scenario design.

Methods

<u>Experimental Design</u>

      Landlords were asked whether or not the apartment they had advertised was still available in three different scenario designs (basic, child, answering machine) each containing three different conditions (staying at a shelter, staying with friends, current accommodations not mentioned). Their answers (yes, no, not disclosed) were recorded on a data extraction form that varied slightly for each condition and scenario. Appendix A is the data collection form for the shelter condition in the basic design scenario. The dialogue for the three scenarios appears below:

  <u>Experimental Scenario #1: Basic Design</u>

This scenario involved three conditions (A = Staying at a shelter; B = Staying with friends; C = No mention of present accommodations).

A. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

      _____ and actually, **I'm staying at a shelter for battered women**

      right now, but I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

B. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

      _____ and actually **I'm staying with friends right now**, but I'd

      like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

C. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

      _____ and actually I'd like to move at the end of the

      month. Is the apartment still available?"

Experimental Scenario #2: Child Design

This scenario involved the same three conditions as scenario #1, but in each condition the caller mentioned that she has a daughter.

A. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

    _____ and actually **I'm staying at a shelter for**

    battered women right now, but I'd like to move **with my little girl** at the end of the

    month. Is the apartment still available?"

B. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

    _____ and actually **I'm staying with friends right now**, but I'd

    like to move **with my little girl** at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

C. "Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at

    _____ and actually I'd like to move **with my little girl** at the

    end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

Experimental Scenario #3: The Answering Machine Design

This scenario involved the same three conditions as scenario #1, but in each condition the caller mentioned her current employment status. The caller left a message on the landlord's answering machine and asked that the landlord respond by leaving a message for her at work.

A. "Hi my name is **Jane** and I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have

    advertised at _____ . **I'm staying at a shelter for battered**

women right now, but you can leave a message for me at my workplace at anytime. The

number is (416) 340-4531. Please call and let me know if the apartment is still available.

Thanks.”

B. “Hi my name is **Patricia** and I’m calling about the one bedroom apartment you have

advertised at _____. **I’m staying with friends right now**, but

you can leave a message for me at my workplace at anytime. The number is (416) 340-

4531. Please call and let me know if the apartment is still available. Thanks.”

C. “Hi my name is **Rebecca** and I’m calling about the one bedroom apartment you have

advertised at _____. You can leave a message for me at my

workplace at anytime. The number is (416) 340-4531. Please call and let me know if the

apartment is still available. Thanks.”

After the landlord indicated whether or not the apartment was still available in scenarios one and

two, the caller immediately disclosed that she was a researcher and asked the landlord whether or

not s/he would be willing to answer a few survey questions. The dialogue for the shelter

condition is in Appendix B. Similarly, in scenario three, landlords who left a message on the

answering machine were called back and the caller disclosed that she was a researcher and asked

if the landlord would be willing to answer a few survey questions. Landlords who left a message

on the answering machine were called back a maximum of three times. If by the third call they

were still unreachable, the research was not disclosed. All the open-ended responses were

written down as close to verbatim as possible. This data was collected at the suggestion of our

ethics board and was done to ensure that landlords were not becoming overly disconcerted by

our research method.

<u>Survey Only</u>

An additional set of randomly selected landlords were called and asked to complete a survey (without first being asked if their apartment was available) about whether or not they would hypothetically be willing to rent an apartment to a battered woman. They were also asked what their views were on renting to battered women, why they indicated that they would or would not rent the apartment, and what might make them more or less likely to rent to a battered woman. (See Appendix C for the survey.) All the open-ended responses were written down as close to verbatim as possible.

<u>Participants</u>

A total of 273 landlords were called in the experimental conditions. In scenario one, which was the basic design, 91 landlords were called (shelter = 30, friends = 30, control =31). In scenario two, which mentioned a child, 90 landlords were called (shelter = 30, friends = 30, control = 30). In scenario three, which was the answering machine, 92 landlords were called (shelter = 31, friends = 31, control = 30). A total of 54 landlords were asked to do the survey. Of these 31 agreed, which is a base rate of 57.41%.

<u>Procedure</u>

Following the method described by Page (1977), Toronto Star newspaper advertisements for 1-bedroom unfurnished apartments between $608 and $1008 in central Toronto were used to select the landlords that were called. This price range was determined by calculating the average rent of a random sample of 1/3 of the units listed on the first day that calls were made and

allowing for a range of $200 in each direction. The rent band of $608 to $1008 was chosen to help avoid outlier rental units that would be very under or overpriced for a one bedroom apartment. We determined that a $400 range would be adequate by examining the rent prices for that day and noting that this did not overly exclude many units. On this day 480 1-bedroom unfurnished apartments were listed and the mean for the random sample of 1/3 (n=160) of the units was $808. Note that only a tiny fraction of these units were randomly selected to be called on the first day as approximately 20 landlords were called each day. Occasionally a rental unit advertisement did not disclose its price but was still included if randomly selected, and these units tended to be more expensive. Calls were made during a two hour time period early in the day to help ensure that the advertised apartment would be available. Landlord telephone numbers were randomized each morning by calling every tenth advertisement. To ensure that a landlord was never called more than once a temporary file with landlord telephone numbers was created. Before each new call was made a computerized search of the new number was conducted against all previously called telephone numbers. When the landlord picked up the phone one of the first six conditions or the survey condition was chosen at random. When an answering machine was reached, one of the last three conditions was chosen at random. Randomization was accomplished by having the data collection forms stacked in a randomized pile. When each call was made, the next sheet of paper on the pile was used.

In the answering machine condition, the names of the caller were changed so that when the landlord called back and left a message we could identify the condition. Three common Anglo-Saxon names were used (i.e., Jane, Patricia, and Rebecca). The outgoing message on the answering machine directed callers to the appropriate voicemail box. (e.g., if you are calling for Jane press 1 etc.).

Landlords in the survey condition were randomly selected in exactly the same way as the experimental conditions. In addition they were randomly interspersed with the experimental conditions, but because some landlords did not agree to take part in the study additional calls were made for survey participants. That is, more landlords needed to be called in the survey condition than in the nine experimental conditions; therefore, only the first 32 calls (17 completed surveys) were randomly interspersed with the nine experimental conditions. The final 22 calls (14 completed surveys) were made in succession after all the other calls had been complete.

Quantitative Analyses

Demographics

The sex of the landlord, the average number of units that the landlord rented, and the average

asking rent for the rental unit for each of the three scenarios and the survey design are listed in

Table 1.[1] There was a large variation in the number of units that landlords rented, which was

largely due to five landlords who indicated that they rented over 1000 units. For example, one

landlord in scenario #1 and one landlord in scenario #2 both indicated that they rented 8000

units. For this reason the large differences in means across the scenarios are somewhat

misleading and the number of rented units was also categorized as low, medium and high. See

Table 2.

Table 1: Basic Demographics

	Landlord sex (n)		Price listed			# of Units		
	Male	Female	X	SD	n	X	SD	n
Scenario #1 (Basic) (n=91)	44	38	856.27	139.66	84	321.26	1217.45	43
Scenario #2 (Child) (n=90)	36	45	811.08	111.23	82	266.54	1135.78	52
Scenario #3 (Machine) (n=92)	19	13	819.26	120.43	78	42.72	56.123	18
Survey (n=31)	14	16	859.70	136.26	30	44.78	113.57	27

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[1] The demographic data is not complete because the landlords' sex was not always obvious to the researcher, the rent for the unit was not always published, and some landlords did not answer the survey question about the number of rental units.

Table 2: Number of Units Rented Categorized as Low, Medium and High

		# of Units		
Scenarios	n	Low (1 – 10)	Medium (11 – 100)	High (100+)
Scenario #1 (Basic)	43	11 (25.6%)	18 (41.9%)	14 (32.6%)
Scenario #2 (Child)	52	16 (30.8%)	26 (50.0%)	10 (19.2%)
Scenario #3 (Machine)	18	7 (38.9%)	9 (50.0%)	2 (11.1%)
Survey	27	13 (48.1%)	13 (48.1%)	1 (3.7%)

First Research Question: Basic Design

To answer the first research question, landlords' responses for scenario #1, which was the basic

design, were compared across conditions (1. staying at a shelter, 2. staying with friends, 3. the

control in which no mention was made of the caller's present accommodations) using chi-square

statistics. Responses in which the units were unavailable were collapsed with undisclosed

responses due to the small number of undisclosed responses. Four chi-squares were conducted.

The first was between the three conditions and unit availability, which was not significant X^2(2,

N = 91) = 4.102, p = .129. The last three were 2 X 2 cross tabulations between each of the three

conditions. The Pearson chi-square is sensitive to low cell count (>5), therefore the Fisher's

Exact test, which is more conservative, but also more robust with respect to low cell count, was

also conducted and both are reported in Table 3. The shelter condition was significantly

different from the control condition in the predicted direction using both the Pearson chi-square

and Fisher's Exact test X^2(1, N = 61) = 4.223, p = .040. The odds ratio indicated that landlords

were 7.5 times more likely to say that the apartment was available in the control condition than

in the shelter condition. No other significant differences were found.

Table 3: Responses to telephone requests in scenario #1: Basic Design

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed = total (n)	Total n	
1. Shelter	24	5 + 1 = 6	30	
2. Friends	26	3 + 1 = 4	30	
3. Control	30	0 + 1 = 1	31	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Shelter X Control	4.223 (1)	.040*	.053*	7.500
Shelter X Friends	.480 (1)	.488	.731	1.625
Friends X Control	2.070 (1)	.150	.195	4.615
3 x 2	4.102 (2)	.129	n/a	n/a

Second Research Question: Child Design

The second research question was answered following the same statistical methods outlined for

the first research question. The results are reported in Table 4. The overall chi-square

comparing each of the three conditions was significant $X^2(2, N = 90) = 9.351$, p = .009. In

addition, a significant difference was found between the shelter condition and the control

condition in the predicted direction using both the Pearson chi-square and the Fisher's Exact test

$X^2(1, N = 60) = 7.680$, p = .006 and the odds ratio shows that landlords were over 12 times more

likely to say that the apartment was available in the control condition. A significant difference

was also found using the Pearson chi-square between the shelter condition and the friends

condition in the predicted direction although the significance disappeared with the Fisher's Exact test $X^2(1, N = 60) = 3.750$, p = .053. The odds ratio here was 3.86. No significant difference was found between the friends condition and the control.

Table 4: Responses to telephone requests in scenario #2: Child Design

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed = total (n)	Total n	
1. Shelter	21	6 + 3 = 9	30	
2. Friends	27	2 + 1 = 3	30	
3. Control	29	0 + 1 = 1	30	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Shelter X Control	7.680 (1)	.006*	.012*	12.429
Shelter X Friends	3.750 (1)	.053*	.104	3.857
Friends X Control	1.071 (1)	.301	.612	3.222
3 X 2	9.351 (2)	.009*	n/a	n/a

To examine whether or not having a child affected landlords responses, a 2 X 2 cross tabulation was performed between the responses in scenario #1 and scenario #2. As table 5 indicates, the chi-square was not significant $X^2(1, N = 181) = .218$, p = .640.

Table 5: Responses to telephone requests: Comparison Control for having a child

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed = total (n)	Total n	
1. Scenario #1 (Alone Design)	80	9 + 2 = 11	91	
2. Scenario #2 (Child Design)	77	8 + 5 = 13	90	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
1 X 2	.218 (1)	.640	.667	1.228

Third Research Question: Machine Design

The third research question was answered through a series of cross tabulations between the three conditions in scenario #3. Calls that were undisclosed or unreturned were collapsed with unavailable units and compared to available units. See Table 6 for the results. The overall chi-square comparing each of the three conditions was not significant $X^2(2, N = 92) = 4.578$, p = .101. A significant difference was found in the predicted direction between the shelter condition and the control $X^2(1, N = 92) = 3.674$, p = .055. Significance was lost using Fisher's exact test; however, all of the cells had an expected cell count that was greater than 5, which makes the Pearson chi-square test the more appropriate analysis. The odds ratio indicated that landlords were 2.7 times more likely to say that the apartment was available in the control condition. No other significant differences were found.

Table 6: Responses to telephone requests in scenario #3: Answering Machine Design

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed + call not returned = total (n)	Total n	
1. Shelter	11	3 +3 + 14 + 20	31	
2. Friends	18	0 + 5 + 8 = 13	31	
3. Control	18	2 + 2 + 8 = 12	30	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Shelter X Control	3.674 (1)	.055*	.074	2.727
Shelter X Friends	3.175 (1)	.075	.126	2.517
Friends X Control	0.024 (1)	.878	1.00	1.083
3 X 2	4.578 (2)	.101	n/a	n/a

To examine whether or not having a job affected landlords responses, a 2 X 2 cross tabulation was performed between the responses in scenario #1 and scenario #3. The chi-square was highly significant X^2(1, N = 183) = 29.213, p = .0001, but in an unexpected direction. Apartments were almost 7 times more likely to be available in the first scenario than in the third. See table 7a.

Table 7a: Responses to telephone requests: Comparison Control for having a job

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed + call not returned = total (n)	Total n	
1. Scenario #1 (Alone Design)	80	8 + 3 = 11	91	
2. Scenario #3 (Machine Design)	47	5 + 10 + 30 = 45	92	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
1 X 2	29.213	.0001	.0001	6.966

To help determine whether or not the large number of unreturned calls was accounting for the significant difference, a second 2 X 2 cross tabulation, which included only those calls that were returned was conducted and is reported in Table 7b. The chi-square remained significant X^2(1, N =153) = 3.831, p = .050 in the unexpected direction and the odds ratio indicated that apartments were 2.3 times more likely to be available in scenario one.

Table 7b: Responses to telephone requests: Comparison Control for having a job

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed + total (n)	Total n	
1. Scenario #1 (Alone Design)	80	8 + 3 = 11	91	
2. Scenario #3 (Machine Design)	47	5 + 10 = 15[a]	62	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
1 X 2	3.831 (1)	.050*	.078	2.321

[a] 30 calls that were not returned were coded as missing.

Fourth Research Question: Collapsed Across Experimental Scenarios

In the fourth research question power was increased substantially by collapsing the landlords' responses across research designs. All three research scenarios were collapsed across conditions. As can be seen in Table 8a, the overall chi-square was highly significant X^2(2, N = 272) = 13.615, p = .001. The chi-square comparison between the shelter conditions and the control conditions was also highly significant X^2(1, N = 182) = 12.316, p = .0001 in the hypothesized direction and had an odds ratio of 3.4. The comparison between the shelter conditions and the friends conditions was also significant in the hypothesized direction X^2(1, N = 181) = 5.863, p = .015 with an odds ratio of 2.2. And as expected, there was no difference between the friends conditions and the control conditions.

Table 8b: Responses to telephone requests collapsed across the three scenarios

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed + call not returned = total (n)	Total n	
1. Shelter	56	14 + 7 + 14 = 35	91	
2. Friends	71	5 + 7 + 8 = 20	90	
3. Control	77	3 + 3 + 8 = 14	91	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Shelter X Control	12.316 (1)	.0001*	.001*	3.438
Shelter X Friends	5.863 (1)	.015*	.023*	2.219
Friends X Control	1.302 (1)	.254	.342	1.549
3 X 2	13.615 (2)	.001*	n/a	n/a

To determine whether or not the results were affected by the calls that were not returned, the analysis was redone with the unreturned calls coded as missing. The results are reported in Table 8b. The overall chi-square remained significant $X^2(2, N =243) = 12.147, p = .002$. As reported in Table 8b, the other results also remained consistent with those reported in Table 8a.

Table 8b: Responses to telephone requests collapsed across the three scenarios

	Available (n)	Unavailable + undisclosed = total (n)	Total n	
1. Shelter	56	14 + 7 = 21	77	
2. Friends	71	5 + 7 = 12	83	
3. Control	77	3 + 3 = 6	83	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Shelter X Control	11.440 (1)	.001*	.001*	4.813
Shelter X Friends	4.007 (1)	.045*	.052*	2.219
Friends X Control	2.243 (1)	.134	.211	2.169
3 X 2	12.147 (2)	.002*	n/a	n/a

Fifth Research Question: Survey Design

To answer the fifth research question a comparison was made between landlords' responses to the shelter condition in scenario #1 (Basic design) and their responses to the survey question, "If a woman called you about a rental unit and indicated that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you be willing to rent the unit you have advertised to her?" Due to small numbers, undisclosed responses were combined with unavailability and unwillingness in the 2 x 2 cross tabulation. As Table 9 shows, the chi-square was not significant $X^2(1, N = 61) = 1.818, p = .178$.

Table 9: Hypothetical Willingness to Rent versus Actual Availability

Willingness to rent	Unit available/ Would rent (n)	Unit unavailable + undisclosed/ Would not rent + undisclosed (n)	Total n	
Actual response to availability of unit	24 available	5 + 1 = 6 unavailable	30	
Survey willingness to rent a victim of domestic violence	20 said would rent	7 + 4 = 11 said would **not** rent	31	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Actual X Survey	1.818	.178	.255	.4545

To further compare the survey data to the experimental data, two additional chi-squares were calculated between landlords' responses to the shelter condition in scenario #3 (Machine design) and landlords' responses to the survey question, "If a woman left a message on your machine about your rental unit and indicated that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you return her call?" In the first cross tabulation (Table 10) the unreturned calls were combined with unavailability and undisclosed responses. In the second cross tabulation (Table 11) the unreturned calls were compared to the returned calls to more closely reflect the

survey question. Both chi squares were significant in the expected direction X^2(1, N = 61) = 19.975, p = .0001 and X^2(1, N = 61) = 9.807, p = .002.

Table 10: Hypothetical Willingness to Call Back versus Actual Availability

Willingness to return call:	Unit available/ Would return call (n)	Unit unavailable + undisclosed + call not returned/ Would not return call (n)	Total n	
Actual response to answering machine message	11 available	3 + 3 + 14 = 20	31	
Survey willingness to return call to a victim of domestic violence	28 said would return call	3 said would **not** return call	31	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Actual machine X Survey	19.975(1)	.0001*	.004*	16.978

Table 11: Hypothetical Willingness to Call Back versus Actually Calling Back

Willingness to return call:	Returned call / Said would return call	Did not return call / Said would not return call	Total n	
Actual response to answering machine message	17 returned call	14 did **not** return call	31	
Survey willingness to return call to a victim of domestic violence	28 said would return call	3 said would not return call	31	
	X^2 (df)	P, Pearson chi-square	P, Fisher's Exact test, 2 tailed	Odds Ratio
Actual machine X Survey	9.807 (1)	.002*	.004*	7.688

Post Hoc Analysis

A series of loglinear analyses were conceived to examine whether or not the following variables affected the significant findings: landlord's sex, rental price ($525-$750, $751-$850, $851+)[2], and number of rental units (1-10, 11-100, 101+). To conduct these analyses the data from all three scenarios was pooled to maximize cell count.

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[2] This distribution was selected in order to maximize cell count in each of the three categories.

The first loglinear analysis examined the impact of sex on the finding that landlord's were more likely to indicate that the apartment was not available in the shelter condition compared to the control condition. It included the three-way interaction term [sex (male, female) x condition (shelter, control) x availability (available or not available)], all three two-way interactions, and all three main affects. The highest order interaction (sex x condition x availability) was not significant $X^2(1) = 0.061$, p = .805 and only one two-way interaction (condition x availability) was significant $X^2(1) = 10.155$, p = .0014. This indicates that sex did not impact the significant finding in the original Chi-square analysis. It should be noted that 25% of the cells had an expected cell count of less than 5, which is below the ideal of less than 20%.

The second loglinear analysis was the same as the first, but the comparison was shelter versus friends. Similarity, the highest order interaction was not significant $X^2(1) = 0.560$, p = .4541. and only the 2-way interaction of condition x availability was significant $X^2(1) = 6.175$, p = .0130.

The third loglinear analysis examined the impact of price on the finding that landlord's were more likely to indicate that the apartment was not available in the shelter conditions compared to the control condition. The three-way interaction term [[price (low, medium, high) x condition (shelter, control) x availability (available or not available)] was not significant $X^2(2) = 0.696$, p = .706 and only one two way interaction (condition x availability) was significant $X^2(1) = 14.349$, p = .0002. This indicates that rental price did not impact the significant findings in the original Chi-square analysis.

The fourth loglinear analysis was the same as the third, but the comparison was shelter versus friends. The three-way interaction term was not significant $X^2(2) = 1.410$, $p = .4942$ and only the two way interaction of condition x availability was significant $X^2(1) = 5.390$, $p = .0203$.

Open Ended Analyses

The survey respondents' answers to the six survey questions are summarized in Table 12. The reasons for their answers were written down as close to verbatim as possible and analyzed for content using QSR Nudist.

Table 12: Responses to survey questions

	Yes (n)	No (n)	Unanswered (n)	Total n
1. Willingness to rent to a battered woman?	20	7	4	31
2. Willingness to return call to a battered woman?	28	3	0	31
3. Affect willingness if battered woman had a daughter?	9	21	1	31
4. Aware of family violence in unit(s)?	5	26	0	31
5. Renting to a battered woman is a risk?	11	20	0	31
6. Personally known a female victim?	16	14	1	31

Question 1: If a woman called you about a rental unit and indicated that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you be willing to rent the unit you have advertised to her? Why or why not?

Twenty landlords indicated a willingness to rent to a hypothetical battered woman. The most common explanation, which was given by eight landlords, was that choosing a tenant was based on the tenant's ability to pay. This was often phrased as a condition upon which they would base their decision. For example, "Yes. As long as she has got money, and can pay rent." An additional two landlords indicated that they simply needed tenants and or the money. Another common response, given by five participants, was that the landlord was not biased or that s/he rented to anyone. For instance, "Yes. She is a person too. No prejudice against anyone." Three landlords expressed sympathy, which sometimes reflected their own experience with violence and three said they saw no reason why they would not rent to a battered woman. One person mentioned his use of the Good Neighbor Program and one began to explain that his answer was contingent on something, but then did not know how to finish and said he really was not sure.

Seven landlords said they would not rent to a battered woman. Three believed that something dangerous or bad would be the result. For instance, "I have my own kids here, and wouldn't want anything to happen." For two landlords their explanations had an element of blame such as "She did something. Women choose their partners and she choose wrong and I don't want her." Two landlords expressed sympathy, but still indicated they would not want a battered woman as a tenant. For instance, "I give donations to shelters, but I'm not looking for this kind of tenant." Two landlords did not think a battered woman would be able to pay the rent and two said that there was a specific policy against renting to battered women.

The four landlords who would not give a definite answer said they would need more information to make a decision. Two would want more information about her ability to pay, one would want to know if there was stalking involved, and one would want to talk to the woman's social worker.

> Question 2: If a woman left a message on your machine about your rental unit and indicted that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you return her call? Why or why not?

Almost all the landlords indicated that they would return the call. Fourteen landlords gave answers that indicated that they were simply looking for anyone that could pay the rent and or that they called everyone back. For instance, "Yes. I want to occupy it. If credit okay, then no problem. I am not biased." And "Yes. I am trying to rent out this unit, so, yes, I would return all calls." Seven landlords explained their responses by expressing sympathy and or a desire to help. For instance, "Yes. Would call her back sooner and want to help her out." Five landlords could not see why they would not call back. Two said they would call back to find out more information. Four landlords had no explanation and one simply said he was a nice guy.

Three landlords indicated that they would not call back, and two of these were quite negative. For example, "People in shelters are the lowest of society and I don't want anything to do with them. They are bad people." The third landlord did not think a battered woman would be able to pay and reiterated that this was a management decision.

Question 3: If a battered woman had a young daughter, would that affect your willingness to rent the unit you have advertised to her? Why or why not?

Eight of the nine landlords who indicated that having a daughter would affect their willingness to rent the unit had initially said that they would rent the unit to a battered woman. However, three of these landlords gave answers that clearly indicated that a daughter would not affect their willingness to rent the unit, so perhaps they did not understand the question. The remaining five gave different explanations. One said it would depend on the size of the unit, one said it would depend on the age of the child, one said that children are an added expense and that the mother would be unlikely to afford the unit, one did not think the unit was in a safe location for children and one said that the building was geared for single adults.

One landlord initially said that he would not rent the unit to a battered woman, but answered yes to question three. However the dialogue clearly indicated that having a daughter would in fact make it less likely that he would rent the unit. He said, "Depends on the age of daughter. Young kids might not be good because it is a basement apartment."

Most of the landlords who said that having a daughter would not affect their willingness to rent the unit to a battered woman did not elaborate on their answers. A few said that children are allowed in their units and a few said that their decision was based on something else, like her ability to pay for the unit.

One person was unsure whether or not having a daughter would affect her willingness to rent the unit. She simply said, "Not sure. Single Moms have a hard time as it is."

Question 4: Have you ever been aware of family violence in your rental unit or units? If yes, what kinds of experience have you had with family violence in your rental unit or units?

Five landlords said they had been aware of family violence in their rental units. Three said the police were called and one of these landlords said "we call the police for every issue with violence." One landlord described hearing husbands and wives arguing, said that alcohol was sometimes involved, and indicated that sometimes "the man is working too much and the women get upset because the men aren't home." One landlord simply said that the experience was negative.

Two landlords said that they had not been aware of family violence but had heard "arguments" and "yelling." Another landlord said, "But there was a man using the woman as a prostitute and the daughter was living in the house." Two landlords believed their tenants were not the kind of people who had problems with family violence. One said, "This is a very rich, and very quiet area, so that stuff never happens." And another said, "I am very careful about who I let in here."

Question 5: Do you think that renting to a battered woman is a risk? If yes, what kinds of risks do you see?

Eleven landlords said that renting to a battered woman was a risk. Six of these landlords thought there would be a risk if the abusive man found out where she was living or came back to live with her. Although the actual risk itself was often unclear and worded in terms of "causing problems". For instance one landlord said, "The man could return to this apartment and could cause problems for her and other tenants. It's a hard question to answer. Unless she had a restraining order, there could be problems." Five landlords thought that the rent money could be

in jeopardy. For instance one thought that women might "escape from the apartment" without paying the rent.   One landlord said all tenants were a risk.

Implications

The main purpose of this research study was to explore the possibility that victims of domestic violence are adversely affected by housing discrimination. The results indicate that there is evidence of discrimination against battered women. Across all three research designs landlords were significantly less likely to indicate that the rental unit was available to a caller who said that she was staying at a shelter for battered women compared to a caller that did not disclose her current accommodations (hypotheses 1a, 2a, and 3a). When power was increased by collapsing the three scenarios, the significant difference was decisively large (hypothesis 4a). The open ended data collected in the survey questionnaire adds further credence to the quantitative finding that housing discrimination exists against battered woman. A third of the landlords in the survey design readily admitted an unwillingness or hesitation to rent to a battered woman.

Whether or not housing discrimination is more likely to occur against women staying at a shelter or more generally against women without stable living conditions is less clear. The hypotheses that landlords would be less likely to indicate that the rental unit was available to a caller currently staying at a shelter compared to a caller currently staying with friends was only partially supported. There was a significant difference when a child was mentioned (hypothesis 2b), but there was no significant difference in the basic design scenario (hypothesis 1b) or in the answering machine scenario (hypothesis 3b). This lack of significance was likely due to inadequate power because when power was increased by collapsing across the three scenarios, the hypothesis was supported (hypothesis 4b). That is, landlords were significantly more likely to indicate that the unit was not available to a caller living in a shelter compared to a caller living with friends. This provides some evidence that victims of domestic violence are prone to

housing discrimination as a direct result of their status as victims rather than because of the assumptions that go along with having unstable living conditions (e.g., poor, unemployed, undesirable etc.). It is worth noting that there were no significant differences between the friends condition and the control condition, which indicates that the caller's mentioning of her current living conditions did not in itself account for the significant difference that were found in the shelter condition.

This research also sought to explore whether or not landlords would admit to housing discrimination against battered women. It was expected that landlords would be more willing to rent to a hypothetical battered woman than to indicate that the rental unit was available to a caller they believed was a victim of domestic violence. In a similar study which explored discrimination against AIDS patients, landlords were much more willing to rent the apartment to a hypothetical AIDS patient that to indicate that the rental unit was available to a caller claiming to have AIDS (Page, 1989). Yet a substantial minority of the landlords surveyed for this study was surprisingly candid about their unwillingness to rent to a battered woman. There was no significant difference between landlords' saying they would rent to a battered woman and landlords' indicating that the rental unit was available in the shelter condition of the basic design scenario. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was not supported. This finding can not be explained by low power because a larger number of landlords actually indicated that the apartment was available compared to the number who said they were unwilling to rent to a battered woman. There are at least two possible explanations for this finding. First, withholding a rental unit from a battered woman might not be perceived as politically incorrect. Battered women are not usually thought of as a group that is discriminated against; therefore, the landlords may have thought that there

was nothing wrong with being honest about an unwillingness to rent the unit. A second explanation may lie in how the survey respondents differed from the landlords in the three experimental scenarios. All of the landlords called in the experimental scenarios were included in the study; however, the survey respondents had an opportunity to decline participation, thus only 57.41% of those called actually completed the survey. Perhaps the landlords who were willing to complete the survey were also more likely to be outspoken and frank in their answers.

To further explore this unexpected finding, a comparison was made between landlords' willingness to call back a victim of domestic violence and the actual call back rate. In this analysis there was a significant difference in the expected direction. Landlords were significantly more likely to indicate that they would call back a battered woman than they were to actually call back a woman who said that she was staying at a shelter. Perhaps a perceived etiquette to return calls or an over estimation of how many calls they actually return influenced the results.

Scenario #2, which mentioned a "daughter" in each of the three conditions, was included to help determine whether or not assumptions about battered women having children might influence the results of the study. The significant difference found in scenario #1 persisted and was actually strengthened in scenario #2, so assumptions about battered women having children should not have affected the results of the study. To further explore the effect of having a child, the basic design (scenario #1) and the child design (scenario #2) were collapsed across conditions and compared to each other. Overall, the results indicated that having a child did not influence whether or not the landlord indicated that the rental unit was available. The collapsed scenarios

produced a relatively large sample of 181, so the null results are unlikely to be the result of low power. This indicates that landlords are not overly influenced by whether or not a potential tenant has a child. However, it is interesting to note that having a child strengthened the differences found between the shelter condition and the other two conditions. That is, the results found in scenario #2 are larger than those found in scenarios #1 and #3. Although this can not be tested, it is interesting to speculate about whether or not there is an interaction between staying in a shelter and having a child so that it is even more difficult for a battered woman with a child to be accepted as a tenant. The open ended questionnaire responses provide some support for this idea. When landlords were asked whether or not their willingness to rent to a battered woman would be influenced by her having a child, about 25% explained why it might make them less likely to rent to a battered woman.   This is somewhat consistent with findings that mothers on social assistance encounter blatant discrimination (CERA, 2003a; CERA 2003b) and it may be that landlords would assume that a battered woman with a child would be unable to afford the rent.

Scenario #3 was included for two reasons. First, it was included to help determine whether or not assumptions about battered women being unemployed might influence the results of the study. In all three conditions the caller said that the landlord should call her back at work, therefore assumptions about employment were controlled. Landlords continued to be less likely to indicate that the apartment was available in the shelter condition; however the effect size was smaller in the answering machine condition than it was in the basic design, so assumptions about employment may have played a role in the results.

The second reason that scenario #3 was included was to explore the secondary purpose of the study, which was to determine whether or not including answering machines in the design was feasible. Scenario #3 was compared to scenario #1 by collapsing across conditions in each of the scenarios. The answering machine scenario produced a significant and much lower rate of available rental units, which was largely because one third of the landlords did not call back and over 10% called back, but did not indicate whether or not the rental unit was available. The results were maintained when the analysis was done with the unreturned calls excluded. This indicates that the answering machine design is not equivalent to a live caller design. However, on its own, the answering machine design maintained the results found in scenario #1, and is therefore a feasible way to explore issues of discrimination. Although it would not be advisable to randomly assign calls to experimental conditions regardless of whether a live caller or an answering machine was reached, the results here indicate that answering machines can be used as long as the number of answering machines and live callers is equivalent across experimental conditions. For instance, if 30 participants are needed for each, it would be reasonable to include 20 live callers and 10 answering machines in each of the conditions.

However, before this method is used it would be important to determine its effectiveness in different rental markets. When this study was conducted there was a relatively high vacancy rate in the city after a number of years of low vacancy rates (CMHC, 2004). Therefore, landlords might have been particularly motivated to return the calls of potential tenants in an effort to fill vacancies. The survey responses provide some support for this because many landlords indicated that they would return all calls from potential tenants. It will also be important to determine what sample sizes are best for answering machine designs. In the current study a

larger sample size in the answering machine condition would have been beneficial. It would be especially important to increase the sample size in studies that expect a low overall vacancy rate because landlords are probably less likely to call back tenants when the rental unit is no longer available. In future research, it will become increasingly important to include answering machines because they are widely, but not randomly used. Excluding all answering machines may also systematically exclude certain landlords, such as those that work another job or screen their calls.

Limitations

As with all research, there are some limitations to this study. There may have been insufficient power to detect significant differences between staying at a shelter and staying with friends. Unfortunately this makes interpreting the results in scenario #1 and scenario #3 more difficult because it is unclear whether or not the results are a direct result of the caller's status as a victim of domestic violence or because of the assumed instability of shelter occupants. The sample size was calculated on the assumption that a moderately large effect size would be found. This was reasonable given that previous studies using the same research design found very large effect sizes. For example, in a Toronto sample Page (1989) found that 25 of 30 rental units were available in the control condition and only 8 of 30 were available in the experimental condition. One reason for the difference between this study and previous studies is that the vacancy rates were higher in this study. In the live caller scenarios (#1 and #2) none of the rental units were unavailable in the control conditions and only two of the 61 calls made were "undisclosed." This created a situation in which there was a low expected cell count in the live caller cross-tabulations. A second reason for the smaller effect size in this study likely has to do with the

nature of the study itself. There may be less housing discrimination against victims of domestic violence than against AIDS patients, mentally ill patients and homosexual individuals, which were the subjects of previous studies. The open ended responses provide some support for this as a number of survey respondents expressed sympathy for battered women with a few indicating that they had personal experience with abuse themselves. Fortunately, the issue of power is partially rectified by collapsing across scenarios and thus increasing power. The significant results in that analysis indicate that battered women are likely to be discriminated against because they are victims of abuse and not because shelter occupants are assumed to have unstable living conditions. It is worth noting that low power does not take away from the findings that were significant. Despite the low power a significant difference between the shelter and the control condition was found in all three scenarios, which indicates that this finding is relatively robust and not due to chance.

The method used necessitated the use of deception, which is avoided in social science research when possible. The deception was of a very short duration (a few seconds) and the true nature of the call was disclosed as soon as the landlord indicated whether or not the apartment was available. We know that this short deception was not overly detrimental because when the true nature of the call was revealed only two callers expressed concern. Both of these callers were satisfied when we offered to send them a written letter describing the research study. Most callers either reacted with curiosity or with mild annoyance (hung up) much like the landlords who were called to participate in the survey. This research was subject to full committee review by an institutional research ethics board and was approved.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that housing discrimination against battered women exists, although the reasons for the discrimination are less clear. It was impossible to control for every assumption that could be made about battered women. We chose to control for having a child and for being employed, neither of which completely accounted for the effects of housing discrimination that were found. Additionally the post hoc analysis suggests that the sex of the landlord and the price of the rental unit were not determining factors, although post hoc analyses are limited and should always be interpreted with caution. The open ended results provide some indication of why landlords might chose not to rent their unit to a battered woman. A few clearly blamed the battered woman and saw her as undesirable regardless of whether or not the abusive partner continued to be in her life. Some expressed fear, but a larger number were more concerned about undefined "problems" that might be annoying to other tenants. And not surprisingly, one of the biggest concerns was her ability to pay rent. Even when landlords indicated that they would be willing to rent to a battered woman, they sometimes qualified it by saying that that was contingent on her ability to pay rent. Little can probably be done to change the opinions of those that hold openly hostile views toward battered women, and fortunately these landlords were in the minority. Those who hold vague assumptions about battered women bringing trouble or being unable to pay the rent might be encouraged to provide rental units to battered women if their concerns are addressed. Making positive connections between organizations that advocate for battered women and landlords might help change assumptions about victims of domestic violence. These links are particularly important and needed with landlords who rent units in desirable high security buildings. Paradoxically, because landlords

were quite open about their unwillingness or hesitation towards renting to battered women, they might also be willing to openly discuss the problem and help generate solutions.

Findings from other housing discrimination studies that have used the same design as this study have found larger effect sizes (e.g., Page 1989, 1995, 1999) suggesting that housing discrimination may not be as widespread against battered women as it is against other marginalized people. This is certainly encouraging, but it does not mean that housing discrimination against battered women is less important. The impact on battered women may be just as damaging if the discrimination against them is particularly pronounced in high security buildings that they need to gain access to for their own safety. Future studies should explore which rental units are particularly prohibitive toward battered women and determine the extent to which housing discrimination is responsible. Battered women face many challenges when leaving an abusive partner. They should not be additionally burdened with discrimination that keeps them from renting the best housing that they can afford.

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PARTICIPANT NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

1A - SHELTER

Experimental Scenario #1: Basic Design

"Yes I'm calling about the one bedroom apartment you have advertised at _____ and actually, **I'm staying at a shelter for battered women right now**, but I'd like to move at the end of the month. Is the apartment still available?"

Apartment available
Apartment not available
Landlord enters dialogue
Landlord does not disclose if apartment is available

Comments:

Disclosure Dialogue for the Shelter Condition

Disclosure:

"Thanks. Actually I'm not really looking for an apartment. I'm a researcher and I'm interested in what landlords' think when potential tenants first call them. You may have thought that my opening statement was a little bit personal and I'd like to ask you a few more questions about that. Neither your name nor your telephone number has been recorded because we're not interested in individual responses, but rather we're interested in how most landlords think about these issues."

Obtaining consent to continue:

"My name is Laurie and I work from the Women's Health Program at Toronto General Hospital.

"You were chosen at random from the people that currently have a rental unit advertised."

"I would like to ask you a few questions about your first impression of my call that will take less than 5 minutes? Your participation would be voluntary and completely confidential, and neither your name nor your telephone number would be recorded. Would you be willing to participate?"

Answer any and all questions that the participant asks.

Consent to continue with participation obtained: Yes ☐   No ☐

If no,
"Ok, thank-you for your time." [Hang up]

If yes, proceed with questions.

PARTICIPANT NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

TIME: _____

<u>Landlord Survey</u>

Gain consent to participate:

"My name is Laurie and I am calling for the University Health Network, Women's Health Program."

"We are conducting a study to better understand why battered women have difficultly securing rental units. You are being called because you currently have a rental unit advertised. This study has been approved by the University Health Network Research Ethics Board."

"I would like to ask you six questions about your thoughts and experiences with regards to family violence in your rental units, which will take about four minutes. In addition, there are two short questions about your rental unit(s) that should only take a few seconds to answer."

"Your participation would be voluntary and completely confidential, and your name would not be recorded. Would you be willing to participate?" Answer any and all questions that the participant asks.

Consent to participate obtained: Yes ☐   No ☐
Male Voice ☐   Female Voice ☐   Gender not Clear from Voice ☐

1. If a woman called you about a rental unit and indicated that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you be willing to rent the unit you have advertised to her?
Yes ☐   No ☐

Why or why not?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. If a woman left a message on your machine about your rental unit and indicated that she was currently staying at a shelter for battered women, would you return her call?
Yes ☐   No ☐

Why or why not?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. If a battered woman had a young daughter, would that affect your willingness to rent the unit you have advertised to her?
Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, how would it affect your willingness to rent to her?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Have you ever been aware of any family violence in your rental unit or units?
Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, what kinds of experiences have you had with family violence in your rental unit or units?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. Do you think that renting to a battered woman is a risk?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If yes, what kinds of risks do you see?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Have you every personally known a woman who has experienced abuse from her male partner?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Participant Demographics:

1. How many rental units do you rent? ☐

2. What is the (range in) price of your one bedroom rental unit(s)? ☐

Male voice ☐   Female voice ☐   Gender not clear from voice ☐

"Thank –you for participating. Those are all the questions that I have for you. Do you have any questions for me?"

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Advertisement demographics:

Price of one bedroom unit advertised: ☐

Area of the city: ☐