

Does Changing Ownership Change Crime?

An analysis of apartment ownership and crime in Cincinnati

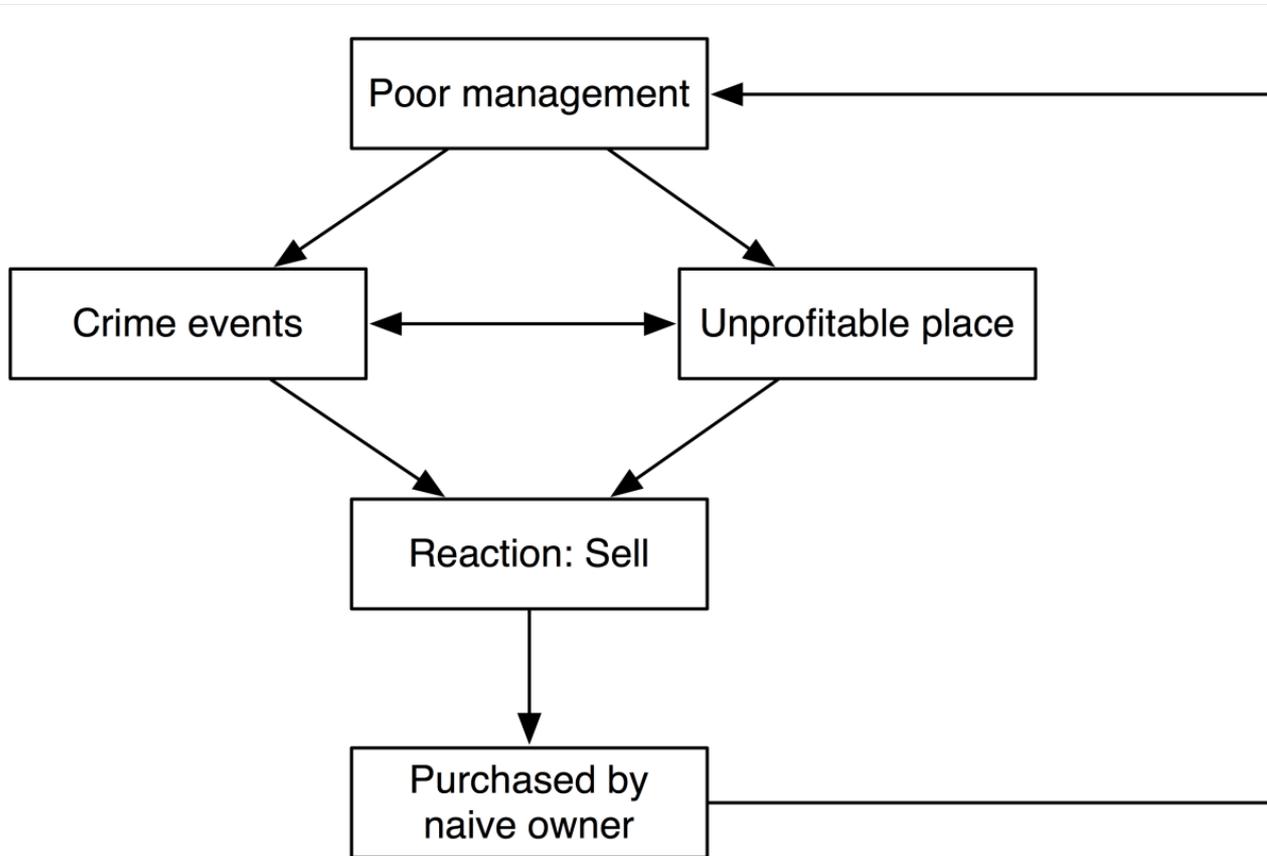
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Key question:

Does crime increase when ownership of an apartment building changes?

Why crime might be related to ownership change



Hypotheses

- H1: Ownership change is rare compared to ownership stability.
- H2: A relative handful of apartments produce a disproportionate amount of crime.
- H3: Ownership change will be associated with increases in crime; these increases will be greater at places with a history of crime problems.

Data sources

- Hamilton County Auditor
- Cincinnati Police Department
- Cincinnati Area GIS



Variables

- Dependent variable:
 - Count of calls for service in 2009
- Independent variable of interest: Ownership change
 - Number of owner changes from 2002-2009

Controls

- Prior calls for service
 - Three-year average
- Economic resources
 - Assessed property value
 - Foreclosure (dummy)
 - Delinquent taxes
- Size
 - Land use code (4-19; 20-39; 40+)
 - Total acreage
- Neighborhood-level calls for service (2009)
- Neighborhood-level ratio of single family dwellings to apartments

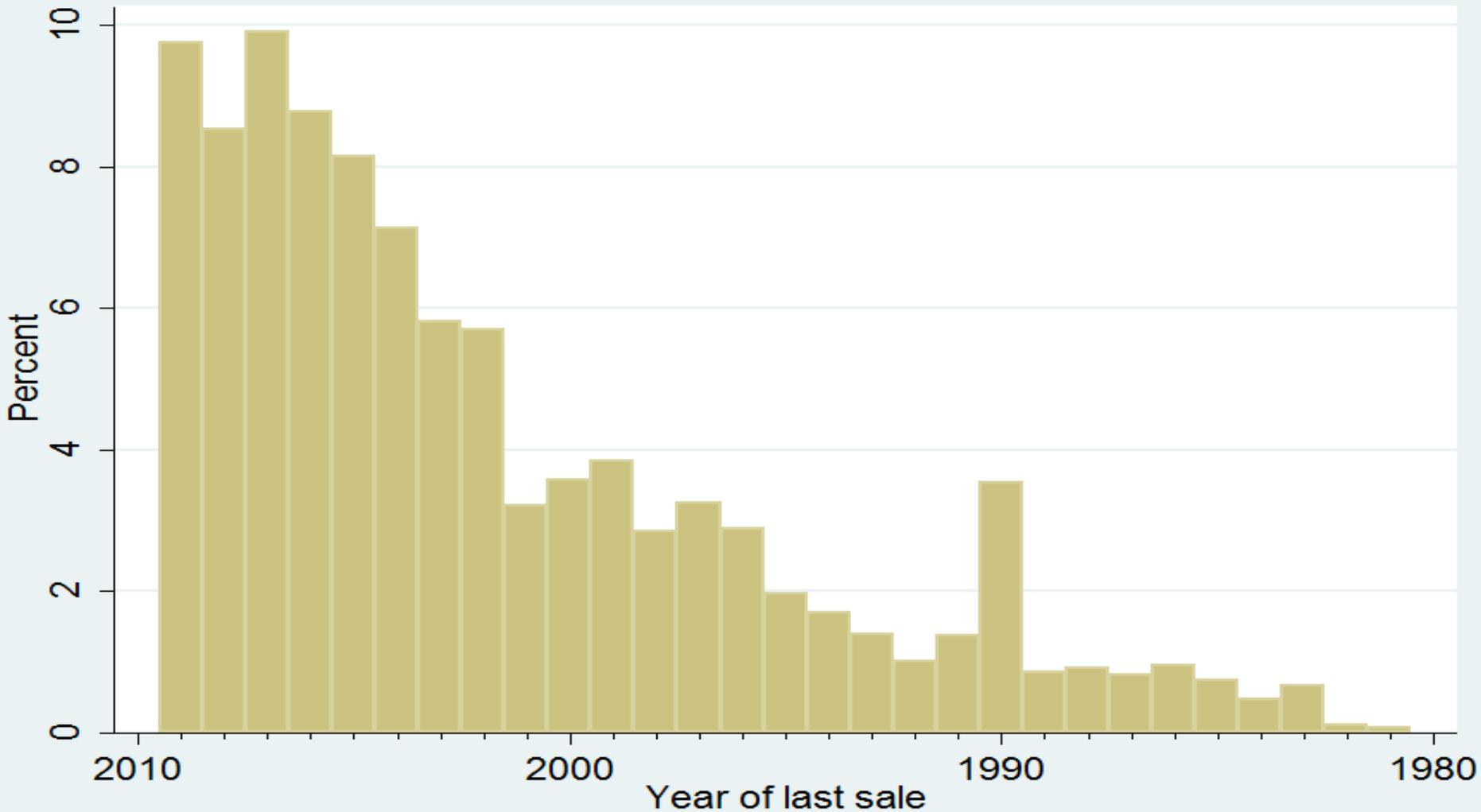
Apartment characteristics: Most are small

Number of Units	Freq.	Percent
4-19 units	5,020	74.91
20-39 units	384	5.73
40+ units	292	4.36
Retail, apartments over	1,005	15.0
Total	6,701	100

Apartment Characteristics: Serial ownership change is rare

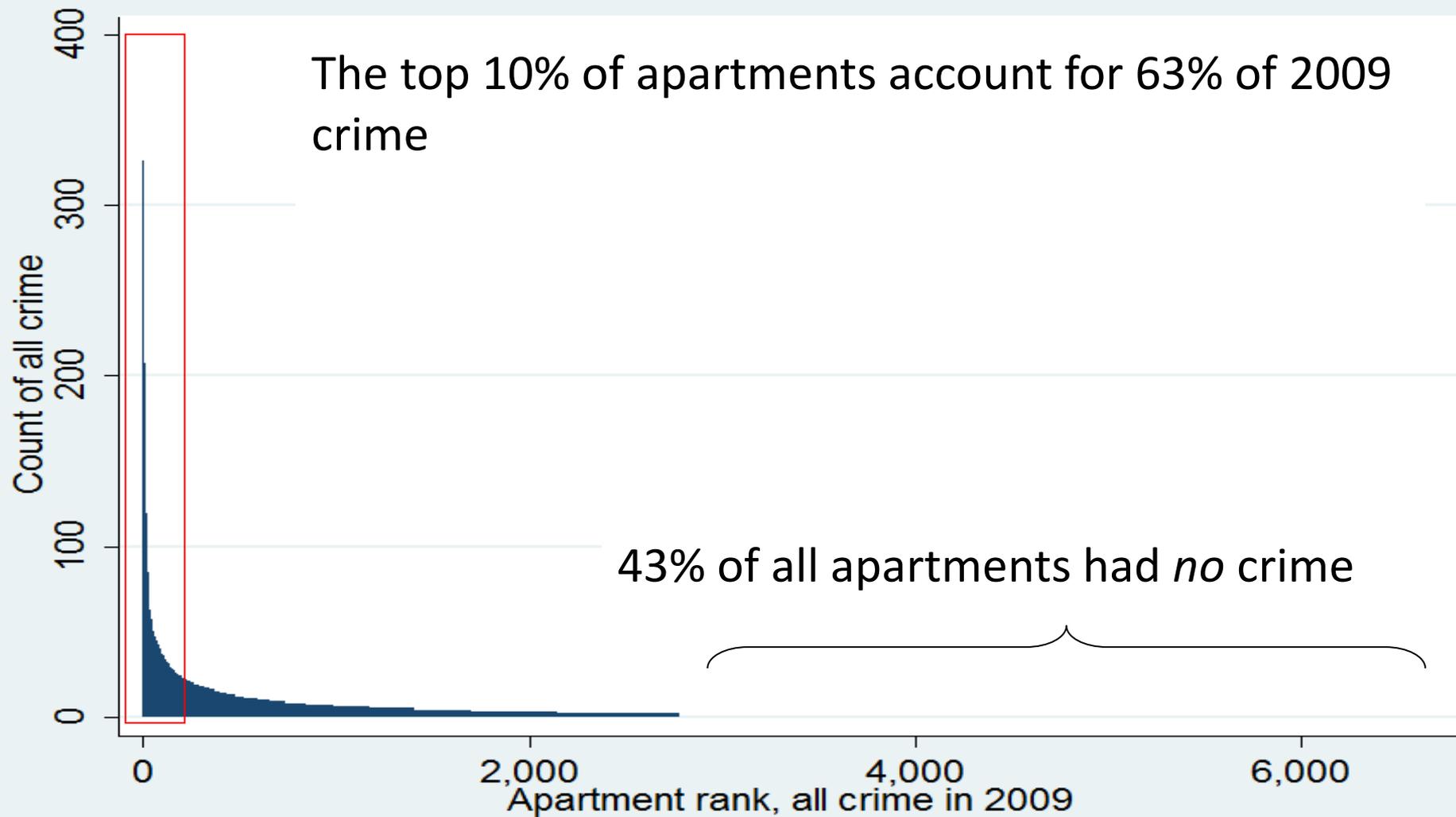
Number of ownership changes	Freq.	Percent
0	3,339	49.83
1	2,172	32.41
2	669	9.98
3	144	2.15
4	15	0.22
(missing)	362	5.4
Total	6,701	100

Apartment characteristics: Year of last sale

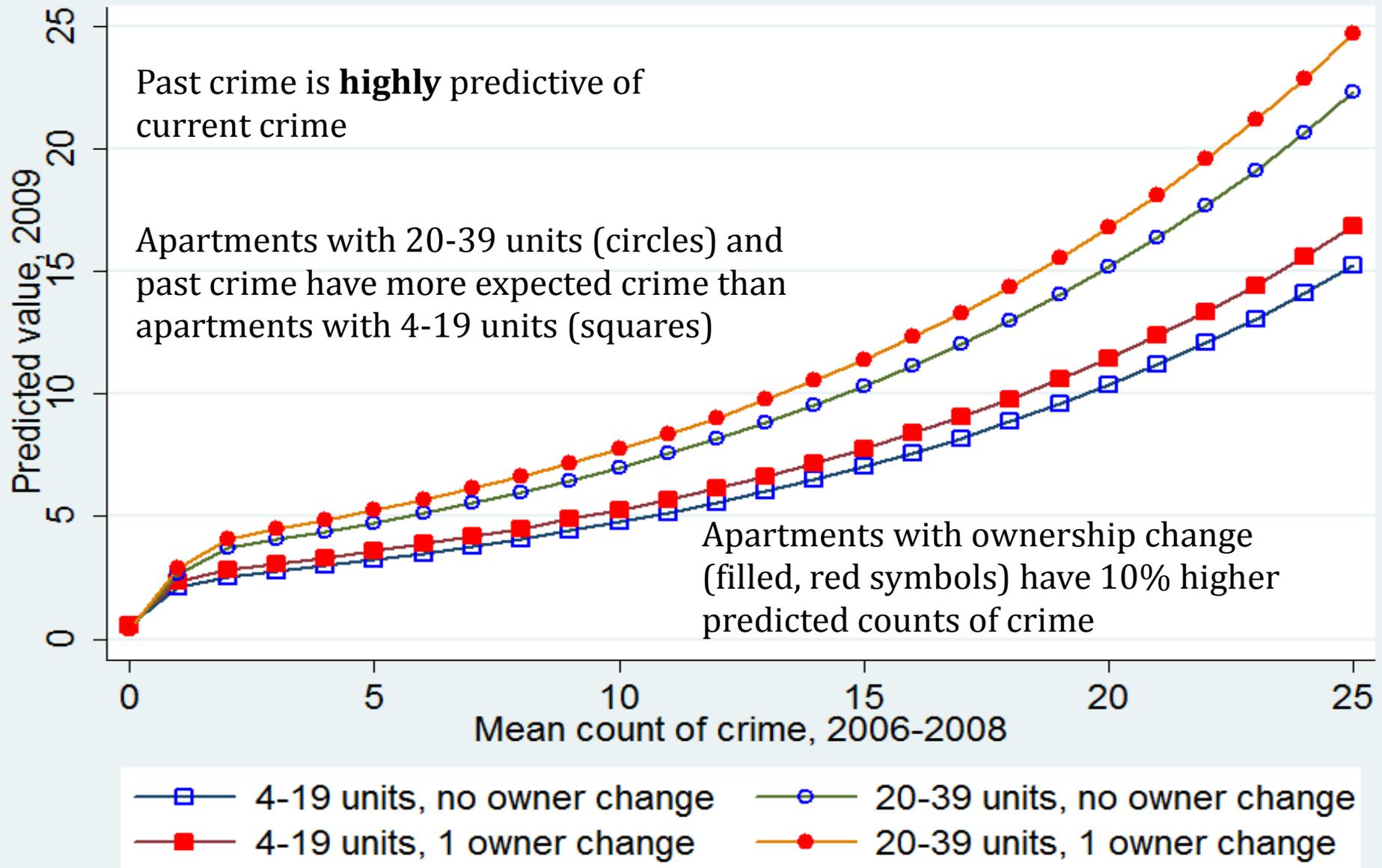




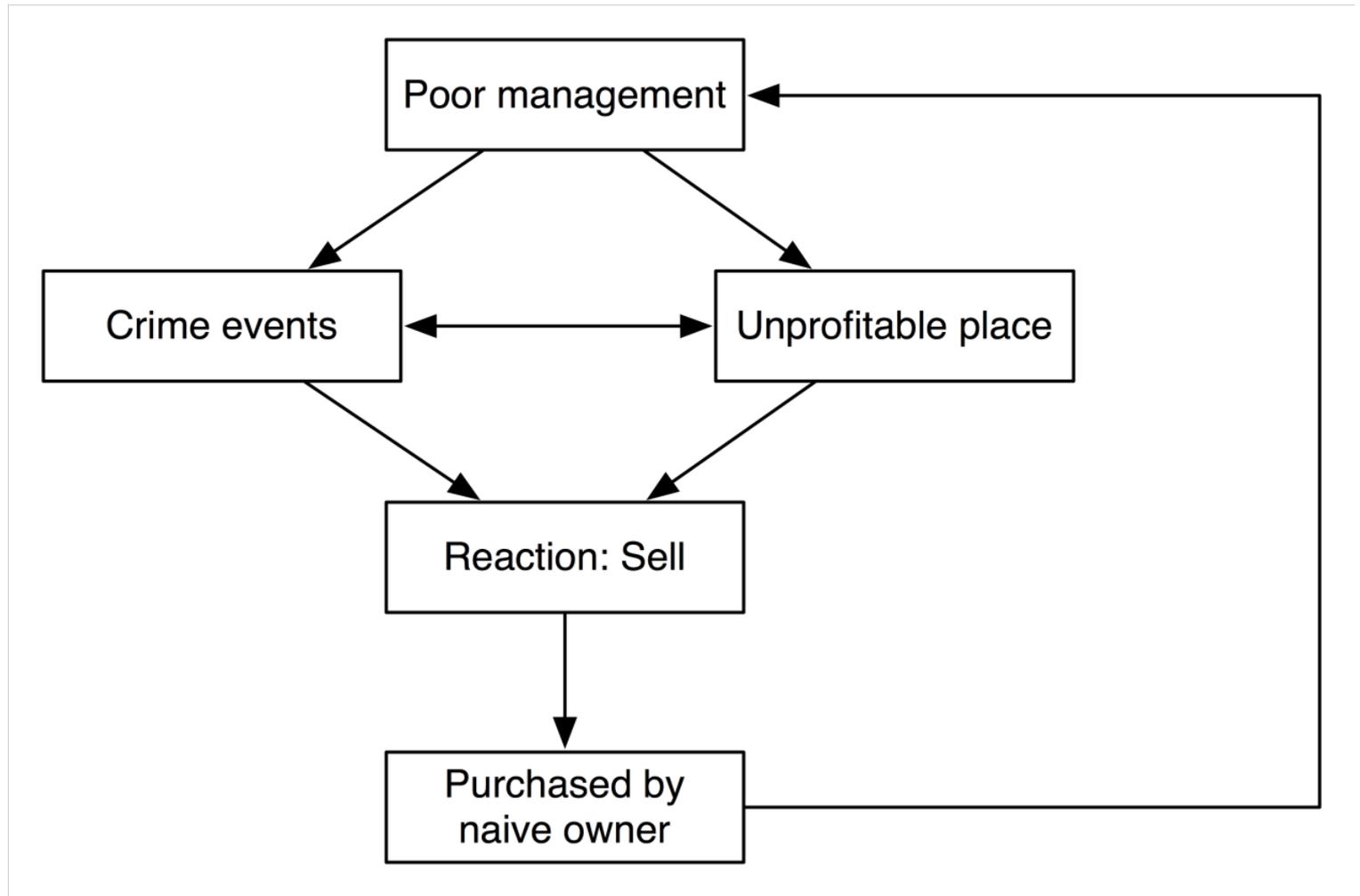
Crime is not randomly distributed



Ownership change, size, and past crime effects on crime counts



Together, these findings show this is plausible





Implications

- Crime prevention should be targeted at larger (>20 units) apartments with high past crime
- When the apartments that are sold are high-crime apartments, ownership change is likely to make the crime problem worse

Final thoughts

- The majority of apartments have zero or one crime – even using a *very* broad definition of crime
- Problem-solvers should work with the majority of apartment owners
 - Positive police contacts
 - Public recognition of landlords with good management practices
- Landlords may be in the best position to educate their peers