

## Summary

This dissertation examines the risk factors associated with the occurrence of a wrongful conviction. Specifically, the thesis consists of several quantitative, case-control studies of convictions reviewed by the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), a public body that investigates potential miscarriages of justice in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland in order to determine if the cases should be referred to an appellate court. These studies analyzed three samples: a pilot sample of convictions for murder that were investigated and referred to the Court of Appeal ( $N = 59$ ), a sample of convictions for a variety of offenses that were investigated but not referred to an appellate court ( $N = 54$ ), and a sample of convictions for a variety of offenses that were investigated and referred to an appellate court ( $N = 110$ ). Data on these samples were gleaned from appellate court transcripts and from documents maintained by the CCRC. These materials were coded for the presence of hundreds of potential risk factors. The coded data were then analyzed statistically, primarily by means of the odds ratio and logistic regression. The analyses attempted to identify the risk factors associated with a conviction being referred by the CCRC to an appellate court as well as, afterwards, the risk factors associated with a referred conviction being quashed by an appellate court. Additional analyses also investigated the influence of the type of offense on a case's outcome.

Cumulatively, the studies in this dissertation revealed three risk factors to be most commonly associated with the outcomes of interest: legal error, faulty scientific evidence, and police misconduct. More broadly, fresh evidence also played an important role in predicting the outcome of a case. The effect of the risk factors varied based on the samples and data source examined, however. In particular, when examining the CCRC's decision to refer a conviction, the CCRC appeared to evaluate convictions holistically, considering a wide range of risk factors. When examining the appellate courts' decision to quash a referred conviction, on the other hand, the courts appeared more tailored in their approach, focusing on a narrower set of risk factors. Similarly, the courts appeared to set a higher threshold than the CCRC for finding that a potential risk factor undermined a conviction's safety. These findings based on a rigorous analysis of a new, broad dataset help push forward the frontiers of knowledge about wrongful convictions.