Transition to adulthood and desistance from crime. A study of personal networks of clients from the Catalan juvenile justice system.
Juvenile intervention in Catalonia

The importance of the age-crime curve in desistance from crime - most new clients from the Catalan Juvenile Justice System are in their transition to adulthood.
Transition to adulthood / Emerging adulthood

Youth in industrialised societies - Ages 18-25

Jeffrey Arnett (2000:471)

“Emerging adults do not see themselves as adolescents, but many of them also do not see themselves entirely as adults”.

Structural constraints in Spain –

Emancipation 2014 < 30 years old: 22,1 % *Spanish Youth Council

Unemployment rate 2016 25 years old: 42 % *National Employment Agency
Juvenile intervention in Catalonia: probation and custody

The following **educational** activities can be mandatory by the judge:
- Formal education (mandatory until 16 years old)
- Occupational training
- Social-labour activities in the community
- Psychological and social counselling
- General programmes (social skills) and leisure activities (sports, crafts)
- Specific cognitive-behavioural programmes (drugs, violence, sex offences)

Several of them can be applied regarding 1 offense
Purpose of the study

Still, in the Catalan context, there are no studies on juvenile delinquency and:

x) the causes of juvenile delinquency
x) the experience/effects of the juvenile justice intervention
x) processes of desistance/persistence
Theoretical orientation

A relational perspective where social action is considered the outcome of social relationships in the context of:

(a) the exercise of agency

(b) within the limits of a specific social structure

(c) and the influence of others through social interaction

- Social relations are the basic unit of analysis as an alternative to the binominal individualism/holism (Crossley, 2011; de Federico, 2009; Donati, 2011; Lozáres & López-Roldán, 2012)

- Relationships are analyzed through the overall set of interactions between the different actors in the network (Donati, 2011).
Theoretical orientation

- Most theoretical propositions addressing these issues include social relationships as key mechanisms in their explanations:

- Causes of delinquency: i.e. control theories the relationship with parents; differential association – the relationship with peers; labelling – symbolic interactionism

- Desistance from crime: social control and support – family, romantic partners, normative friends; professionals

- In terms of the effects of the intervention, the Organic Law 5/2000 that regulates the penal intervention stipulates in its article 55 the principle of resocialization enhancing the relationships with relatives, acquaintances and the community to avoid negative effects.
Juvenile Justice Intervention and desistance from crime: theoretical models

Positive effect

- Effective Correctional Treatment: risk-need-responsivity (Andrews et al., 1990)

- Supporting Desistance: personal maturation/ agency + social support and social (re)integration (Bottoms & Shapland, 2010; Farral, 2014; Giordano et. al, 2002; Martí & Cid, 2015; Maruna, 2001; Sampson & Laub, 2005; Weaver, 2016)

- Specific deterrence hypothesis (Gibbs, 1975)

Negative effect

- Defiance (Sherman, 1993)

- Cumulative Disadvantage (Sampson & Laub, 1997)
Model of analysis

Transition to adulthood

Experience of Juvenile Justice Intervention

Personal network
Time 1

Process of desistance from crime

Personal network
Time 2
Model of analysis - questions

- Does the experience of the JJI have an effect on the personal network?
  - Are these possible changes related to a process of desistance from crime?

- Are elements from the transition to adulthood conditioning the experience of the JJI?
  - Are these elements related to network changes?
  - Are these elements related to a process of desistance from crime?
**Youth and Desistance Study (2013-2016) – Criminology applied to Penology Research Group-UAB. Coordinated by Prof. José Cid and Prof. Joel Martí (Martí et. al, 2017, in press)**

### JUVENILE JUSTICE INTERVENTION

<table>
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<th>Time 2 serving time</th>
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**CHILDOOD  ADOLESCENCE  TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**
GROUP 1
High-rate offenders raised in non-normative families

Case example

Delinquency context
- Non-normative parents (crime and drugs)
- Family and work responsibilities
- Drug abuse
- School dropout
- Informal labelling by the school and town

Transitional factors
- Juvenile Justice Intervention: emotional support, educational training and job
- Social support: romantic partner and relatives
- Social psychological maturation: network normativity
GROUP 2
High-rate offenders raised in normative families

Case example

**G2**
**Mohammed**

*Custody*

Delinquency context

- Dysfunctional family
- Immigrant
- Drug abuse
- School dropout

Transitional factors

- Juvenile Justice Intervention: educational training and cognitive-behavioural programme
- + Social support: relatives: job
- + Social psychological maturation
GROUP 4
High-rate offenders in which families lack network centrality

Case example

G4
Fernando

Probation, community works and prison

Delinquency context
Dysfunctional family
Immigrant
Alcohol and drug abuse
School dropout

Transitional factors
Juvenile Justice Intervention: counselling
+ Job
+ Social support: mother and acquaintances

PROBLEM: CUMULATIVE DISADVANTAGE CRIMINAL RECORDS
Results on the role of the intervention (49 cases)

- Cases of specific deterrence happen in the context of personal maturation rather than because of the severity of the sanction and the perception of future sanctions;

- Processes of desistance happen in all profiles and always in the context social support from the intervention – occupational training - and social support from relatives and professionals rather than changes in the normativity of the network.

- Cases of cumulative disadvantage (Sampson & Laub, 1997) happen in the context of migrant individuals ending in custody and without legal residency
Results on the role of the intervention

- No cases of defiance (Sherman, 1993; 2014)

- Most persistence cases can be explained through the Situational Action Theory: morality + opportunity (Wikström, 2006)

- Few persistence cases can be explained in the context of personal maturation and transition to adulthood > emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000)
CONCLUSIONS

For the participants (49) of this longitudinal study the role of the Juvenile Justice Intervention, in general, lead to profit from structural and relational resources through a context of social learning and personal maturation, regarding their disadvantage background and current disadvantage structural situations.

In terms of the perceived intervention, the explanations highlight the personal relationship with the professionals and the social support derived from them (both instrumental and emotional) rather than the specific cognitive-oriented treatment.
Thank you very much!

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