

Copie du résumé soumis de la communication

ASC 2022 – Panel

Title: Desisting from crime: Adjudicated youths recount their journeys toward community and social (re)integration

Panel abstract (192/200 words): The journey toward social (re)integration is complex, especially for adjudicated youths. In addition to dealing with the cumulative impact of lifelong adversities, many of them face multiple transitions: from adolescence to adulthood, from “offender” to “ex-offender”, from drug addiction to recovery. To better understand their pathways to community and social (re)integration and, ultimately, develop and implement innovative practices tailored to their needs, *(RE)SO 16-35*, a partnership between researchers, community, and public organizations was established. This panel aims to present some of the findings from the first axis of the partnership’s research program, which will be further detailed in an upcoming book. 141 adjudicated youths (aged 16-35) were interviewed and asked to recount their journey toward community and social (re)integration. Each paper presents results of qualitative analyses conducted on subsamples of participants and focuses on either the challenges faced in the transition to adulthood, identity changes, women’s experiences of assisted desistance in addiction services, and young adults’ experiences with programs offered during incarceration. Papers also discuss implications for policy, practice, and future research. This panel gives a voice to adjudicated youths by sharing their views on their journey toward social and community (re)integration.

Paper 1 – Title: Justice-Involved Youths’ Experiences of the Transition into Adulthood

Abstract (194/200 words): Transitioning into adulthood is especially challenging for young offenders. Throughout their life courses, they often had to face adversity and deal with a broad range of difficulties (ex. substance abuse, mental health disorders, interpersonal problems, family dysfunction and conflicts, association with delinquent peers, out-of-home care and/or placement, etc.), which negative impacts accumulate over time and contribute to further complicate the transition to adulthood (TA). This study aims to better understand young offenders’ TA experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 justice-involved youths (16-21 years old) and a thematic content analysis led to the identification of the challenges associated with TA as well as those associated with desistance from crime. If self-reliance, taking responsibility for one’s action and stability in various life domains (employment, housing, relationship, etc.) defines what it means to be an adult, most participants lack the resources and support needed to meet those criteria. Their experiences of TA will be discussed (their definition of adulthood, perceptions of their situations, goals for the future, etc.), followed by an examination of the strategies they use to beat their own definition of adulthood. To conclude, implications for policy, practice, and future research will be discussed.

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Paper 2 – Title: Identity Changes During the Double Transition From Adolescence to Adulthood and From Criminal Involvement to Desistance: A Qualitative Analysis

Abstract (197/200): Offenders go through a myriad of changes while on their journey toward social reintegration: they behave differently, develop new habits, cut social ties while building or reinforcing others, etc. However, identity changes – broadly defined as coming to see oneself as an “ex” offender – are oftentimes considered the hallmark of desistance. According to the Identity theory of desistance (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009), actions are intentional and reflect how individuals perceive themselves; they shed light on their interests, values, and priorities. Hence, identity changes stem from internal forces, such as an intrinsic desire to reinvent oneself. But how do such changes come about, especially in the context of the double transition from adolescence to adulthood and from criminal involvement to desistance? This paper presents the results of the thematic analysis of 56 semi-structured interviews conducted with young adults (18 to 35 years old) who encountered the judicial system.

Their perceptions of themselves and their situations will be discussed (interests, goals for the future, values, perception of previous delinquent acts, etc.), followed by an examination of how identity comes into play in young adults' journey toward social reintegration. To conclude, implications for policy, practice, and future research will be discussed.

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Paper 3 – Title: Desistance From Delinquency and Recovery From Addiction Among Women Offenders.

Abstract (191/200 words): Drug use and delinquency are often interrelated in the trajectories of people who come into contact with the criminal justice system. Many of them have previously received addiction services at least once in their life. Are there particularities among women offenders? How can addiction services contribute to desistance from crime for these women? How can professionals assist them during this change process? Results of our study on desistance from crime and socio-community (re)integration from the point of view of people aged 16 to 35 who faced the criminal justice system shed some light on these questions. A semi-directed qualitative interview was conducted in 2019-2020 with 141 participants in the province of Quebec. They had been in contact with the justice or correctional system in the past two years, for committing an offense. The results of the thematic analysis carried out on the female sub-sample who had substance use problems (n = 20) will be presented. Specifically, their experiences with addiction services will be discussed. These results can provide avenues for intervention and professional mobilization both for addiction workers and those in the judicial or correctional sector who work with women offenders.

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Paper 4 – Titre: Former Incarcerated Young Adults Views of Correctional Programs in Quebec's Prisons and Their Perceived Impact on Desistance From Crime

Abstract (196/200 words): While the overall crime rate in the province of Quebec (Canada) has decreased by 32% over the past decade, the incarceration rate has increased by 12%. This could be explained, in part, by a backdoor sentencing effect (Travis and Fisher, 2005): imposing community sanctions, which come with conditions to be met, can lead to failures to comply which, in turn, can lead to incarceration. It could also be explained by the fact that male young adults are overrepresented in prison population: they account for almost two thirds of federal prisoners and more than half of provincial prisoners but represent only 17% of the adult population in Canada. However, many studies show that imprisonment has no effect on recidivism and can sometimes have iatrogenic effects. This paper presents how young adults perceive the impact of interventions or services received during their incarceration on their process of desistance from crime. The results of a thematic analysis on qualitative interviews conducted with 38 people who had been imprisoned will be presented. Participants talked specifically about accessibility, transfers, instrumentalization of services, usefulness, and relevance of those services. Unmet needs and most useful services are discussed, as are areas for improvement.

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