

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

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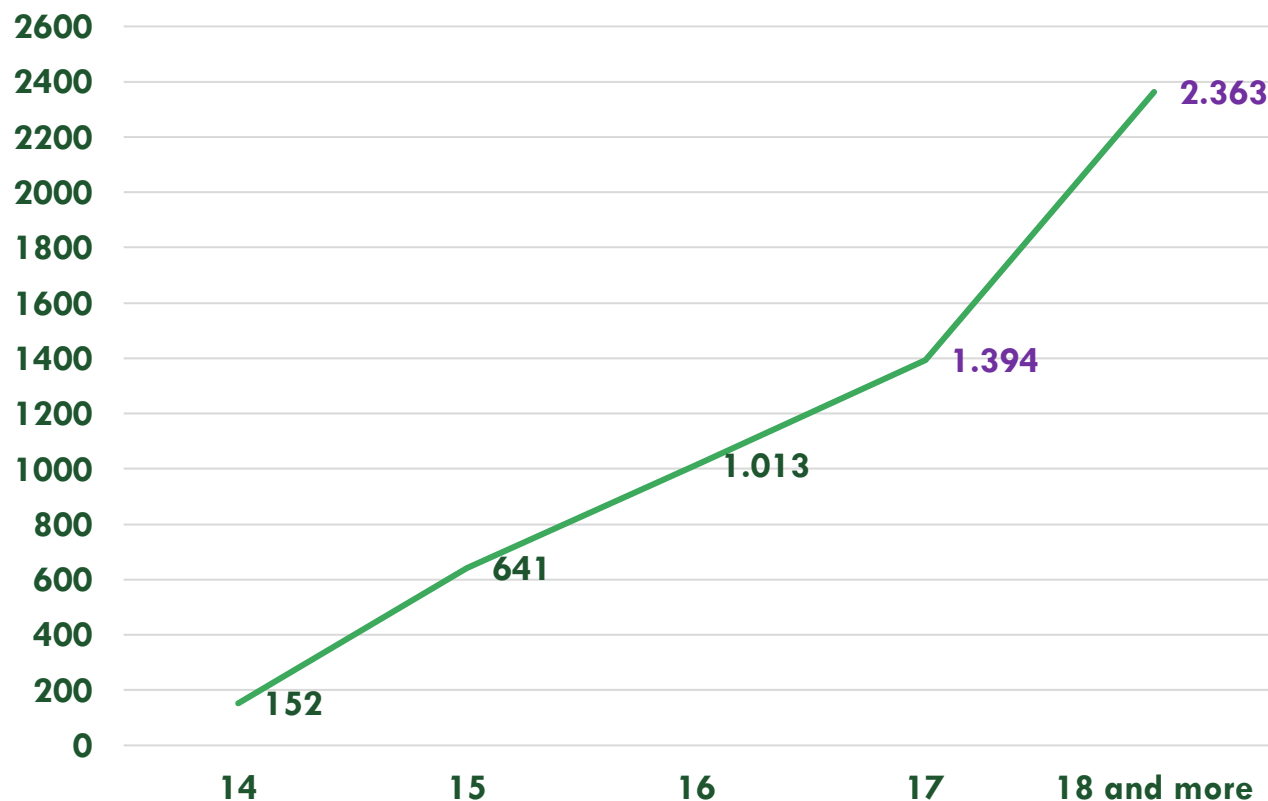


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Juvenile intervention in Catalonia

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**

New clients from the Catalan Juvenile Justice System
2015 (N=5564) in ages. Source: Idescat



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; Loz  res & L  pez-Rold  n, 2012)

- Relationships are analyzed through 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

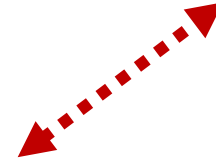
Transition to adulthood

Experience of Juvenile Justice Intervention

**Personal network
Time 1**

**Personal network
Time 2**

Process of desistance from crime



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

Time 1

Reconstruction of the past

- **Personal Interview 1**
- Justice Risk Assessment SAVRY
- Police detentions records
- Juvenile Justice criminal records

Life trajectory

Time 2 *serving time*

- **Network questionnaire 1**
- Self-reported questionnaire
- Police detentions records
- Juvenile Justice criminal records and sentences

Personal Network 1

Time 3 + 8 months

- **Personal Interview 1**
- Self-reported delinquency and desistance
- Police detentions records

Intervention experience

Time 4 +1,5 years

- **Network questionnaire 2**
- Self-reported questionnaire
- **Personal Interview 2**
- Police detentions records

Intervention experience
Network changes

CHILDHOOD

ADOLESCENCE

TRANSITION TO ADULthood

GROUP 1

High-rate offenders raised in non-normative families

Case example

Delinquency context

Transitional factors

G1

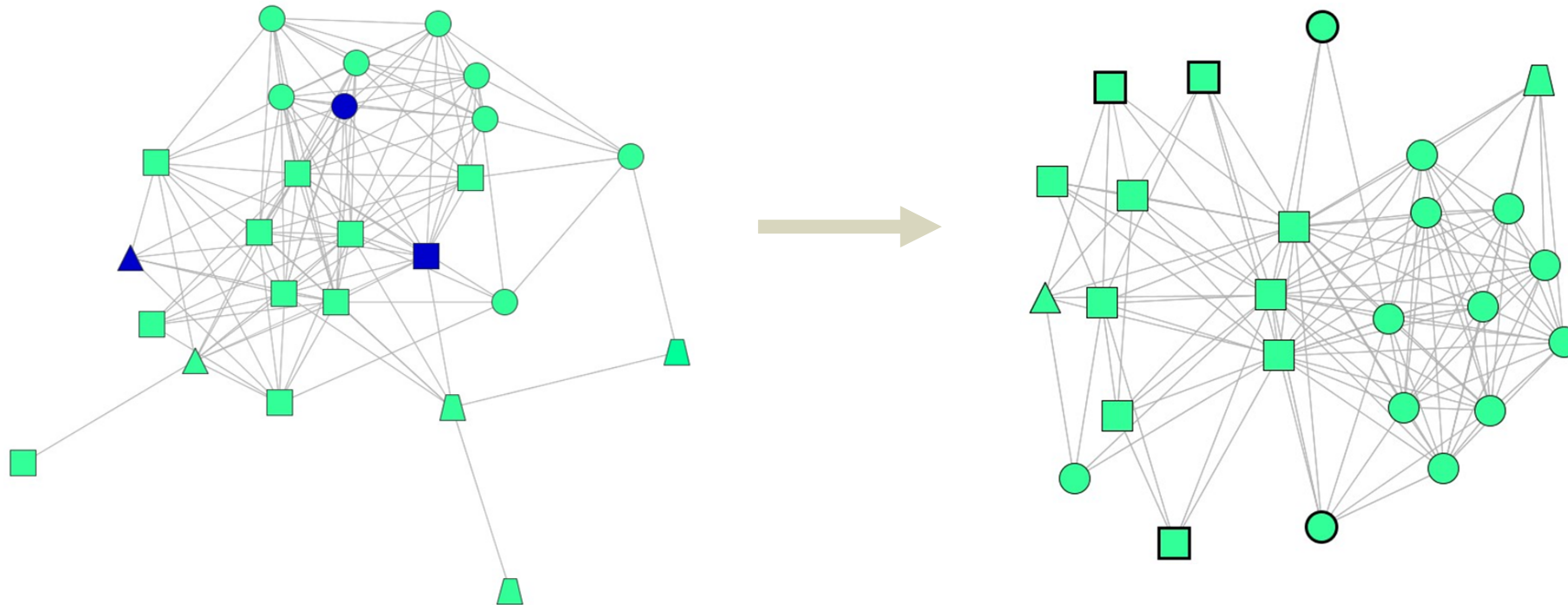
Jordi

Probation

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

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

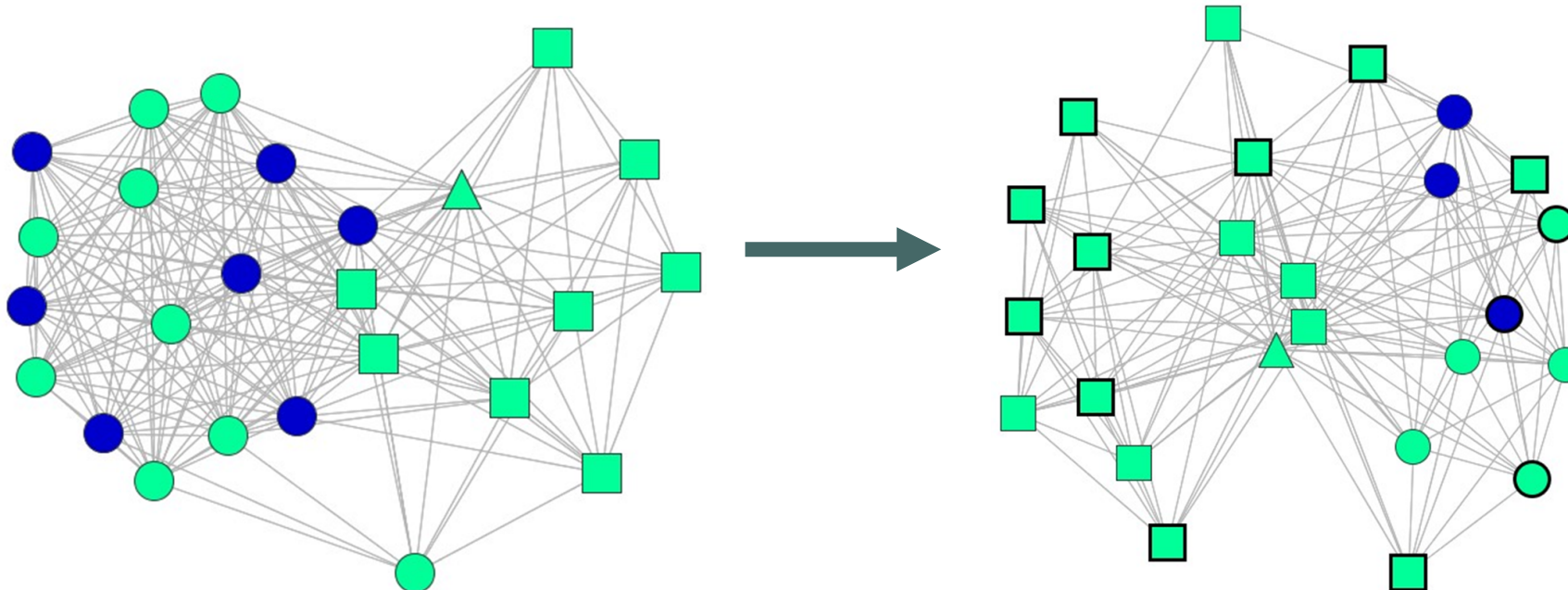
Custody

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

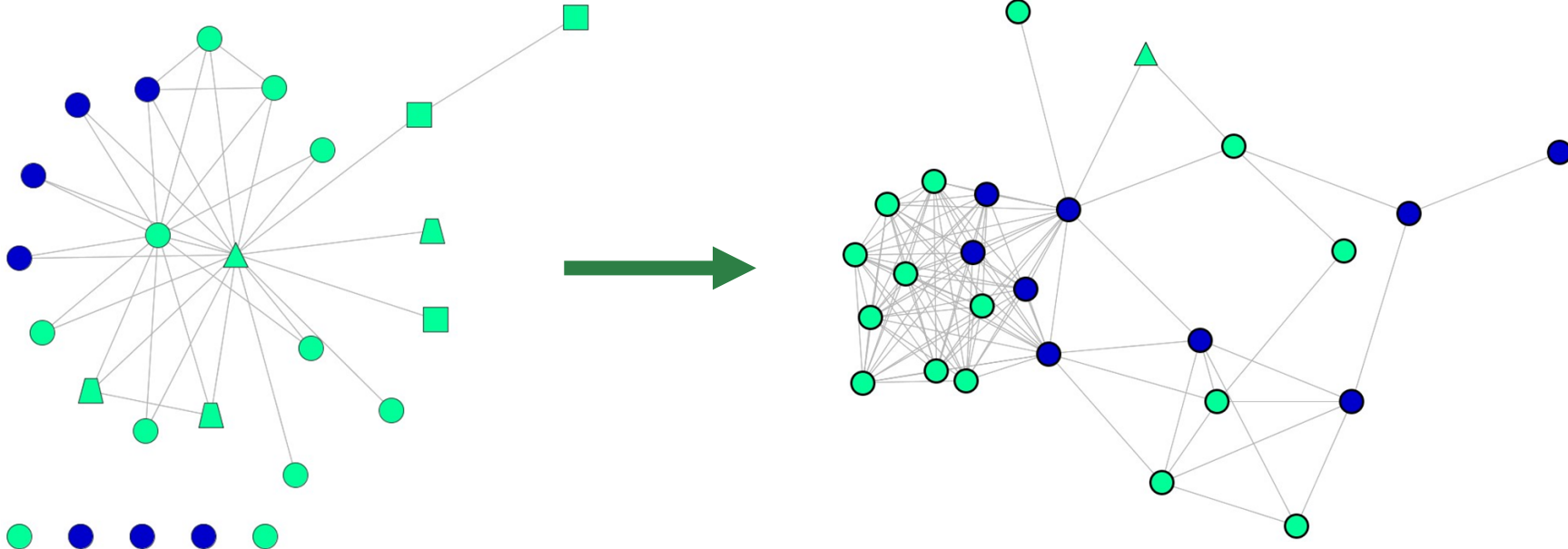
Transitional factors

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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