



evidence for “redemption” do we observe in this sample (Blumstein & Nakamura, NIJ Journal No. 263, June 2009)?

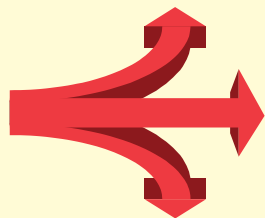
In addition, these trends highlight the fact that desistance may take a different course for different people at different phases of life. Criminologists have noted that it is important to distinguish between desistance as an end state versus desistance as a process (Laub & Sampson, 2001). Desistance as a process of change suggests that

it might look different at different points in the life span. Before it reaches a point of complete termination, criminal careers may go through a transition involving movement from a relatively higher rate of criminal activity to a relatively lower rate, or movement from relatively more serious or harmful form of the activity (e.g., armed robbery) to relatively less serious form of the activity (e.g., theft). The broad trends illustrated in this newsletter suggest that, at first glance, there is some evidence of this posited variability in the desistance process. Moving forward, we will be working on refining these ideas through more sophisticated and focused analyses.

PATHWAYS PERSONNEL

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Observations from the Pathway Study in the Context of National Arrest Trends

It is important to remember that the trends observed in the Pathways study occurred within the larger context of a more general decline in rates of juvenile crime. In its most recent report (Puzzanchera and Adams, Juvenile Offenders and Victims: National Report Series, December 2011), the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) gives us a picture of national trends in juvenile crime as a whole and for specific crimes. Below are a few highlights from this report.



The number of juvenile arrests for violent crimes in 2009 was the lowest in two decades

- ✓ The number of arrests for a violent crime among juveniles in 2009 was 14% less than in 2006 and lower than any year since 1990.

Female violent crime rates remain relatively high

- ✓ In 1980, the arrest rate for violent crime among juvenile males was 8X that for females. In 2009, the arrest rate for violent crimes by males was only 4X greater than that for females.

Arrest rates declined for all racial groups since the mid-1990s

- ✓ Since the mid-1990s, rates of violent crime decreased by 65% for Asians, 52% for American Indians, and 48% for both White and Black youth.

We recommend that our readers keep these national trends in mind when reviewing patterns of behavior among subgroups such as the Pathways study participants.

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Volume 18

Seven-year Arrest Trends Among Pathways Study Participants

One of the central goals of the Pathways study is to provide a picture of the criminal careers of the serious adolescent offenders enrolled in the study. It is important to know how many of these adolescents re-offend and what types of criminal activities they engage in. When information about re-offending is combined with other study data regarding such things as background characteristics, indicators of individual functioning, psychosocial development and attitudes, and changes in family and community context, there is considerable promise for enriching our picture of how desistance unfolds as well as the factors that promote the end of involvement in crime and successful adjustment in early adulthood.

In the Pathways study, criminal careers have been documented from two different vantage points: self-reported antisocial activity and official record information regarding arrests. These two measures of antisocial activity certainly follow each other. Adolescents reporting high levels of antisocial activity are more likely to get arrested; adolescents with more arrests report more antisocial activity. That makes sense. At the same time, these two lenses on involvement in antisocial activity do not provide identical pictures. Some of the self-reported antisocial activities are unlikely to lead to an arrest, and many things that might produce an arrest are not listed on the self-reported list of activities. It is important to look at arrests because they show what these adolescents do over the follow-up period that brings them to the attention of the criminal justice system again.

In this edition of the newsletter, we summarize initial, descriptive analyses of the official



records about the arrests that the Pathways study participants had over the seven years subsequent to their enrollment in the study. This overview represents our first glimpse into the trends that we see in this data and it will be the springboard for more in-depth analysis as we move forward.

As you read through this information, keep in mind a few important points.

- Participants in the Pathways study were all enrolled subsequent to an adjudication for a serious, and in almost all cases, a felony-level offense.
- The seven-year period covered in this overview represents the time when they were, on average, ages 16 through 23.

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*Research
on Pathways
to Desistance*

➤ This overview of re-arrests is based entirely on official records. Indicators of arrest prior to the age of 18 were based on petitions to juvenile court recorded in Maricopa and Philadelphia Counties. Arrests after age 18 were based on FBI records nationwide. We do not account for adjudication status of the charges in the adult arrests (after age 18), since the FBI records do not have this information. Self report information regarding the occurrence of an arrest or the type of arrest is excluded from this examination.

In its raw form, the data have the date of a petition or arrest and the charges. We have recoded the data of the arrest so that it reflects the corresponding month in the follow-up period for each adolescent. In addition, we examined the charges associated with each arrest and applied a seriousness ranking to each charge following the ranking system developed by Gottfredson & Barton (1993). We then rank-ordered the charges to determine the most serious charge associated with that arrest. This strategy leaves just one charge (the most serious one) to characterize each re-arrest date. For example, if an adolescent was re-arrested for felonious assault, resisting arrest, and possessing burglary tools, felonious assault would be the representative charge. These coding efforts make it so that each petition/arrest date has an indicator for the type and level of the most serious charge appearing on the petition/arrest.

The Gottfredson & Barton Seriousness Scale
1 = status offense
2 = misdemeanor
3 = possession of narcotics (exclusive of glue and marijuana)
4 = felony offense, not part 1
5 = major property felony (exclusive of burglary)
6 = burglary, felony possession of burglary tools
7 = drug felony, 2nd degree sex offense
8 = felonious assault, felony w/ weapon
9 = murder, rape, arson
Source: Gottfredson & Barton (1993). <i>Deinstitutionalization of juvenile offenders</i> . <i>Criminology</i> , 31(4), 591-611.

How many Pathways participants were rearrested?

The majority of Pathways study participates (74%) were arrested again at least once in the seven years after they enrolled in the study. Looking at the 1,001 individuals who were re-arrested during the follow-up period, we find that they had an average

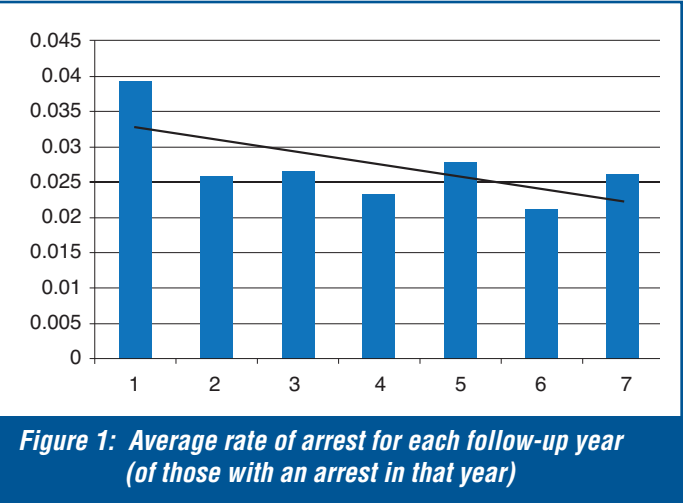


Figure 1: Average rate of arrest for each follow-up year (of those with an arrest in that year)

of about four arrests (median = 4, mean=4.4), with a range of 1 – 24 arrests. When time in an institution is accounted for (by looking at the number of arrests divided by the days in the community during that recall period), these re-arrests occurred at a higher rate in the early years of the follow-up period compared to the later years (when the study participants were older; see Figure 1).



Do baseline characteristics predict those that were re-arrested versus those that were not?

We tested the relations among baseline demographic variables (e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, IQ) and scores on seven risk markers (see the box on facing page) with later re-offending. We looked at whether these factors were related to arrest in two ways: 1) whether the adolescent was arrested or not, and 2) whether the adolescents was not re-arrested, arrested just once, or arrested two or more times. There were significant models that predicted the outcome of getting arrested at all and the number of arrests. When all of these factors were considered, though, only three factors were signifi-

cant within each model: gender, extent of antisocial history, and a history of school problems. Males, youths with more extensive histories of antisocial acts, and youths with more school problems were significantly more likely to be re-arrested and to be re-arrested more than one time.

To illustrate this point, Figures 2 and 3 show the prevalence of re-arrest for males and females in top 1/3 and bottom 1/3 of scores on the antisocial history and school difficulties risk markers. As you can see, more males than females are arrested no matter which level of risk and there is a higher prevalence

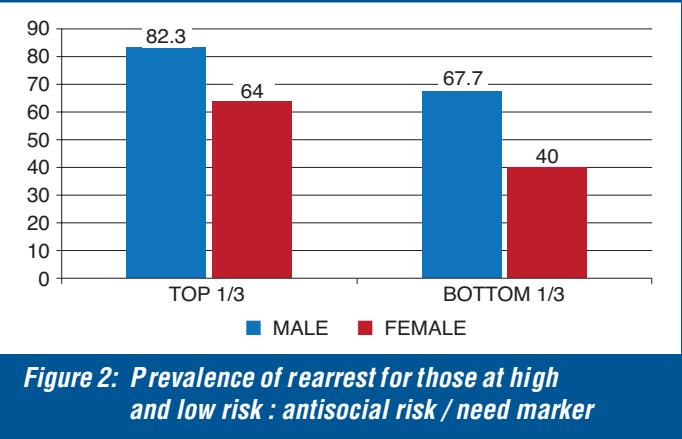


Figure 2: Prevalence of rearrest for those at high and low risk : antisocial risk / need marker

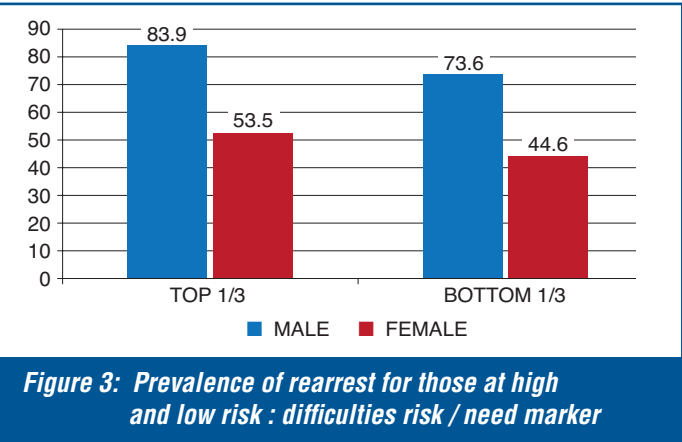


Figure 3: Prevalence of rearrest for those at high and low risk : difficulties risk / need marker

of re-arrest in the group at higher risk (the top 1/3) compared to those at lower risk level. Males with the higher levels of antisocial history have a 14% higher prevalence for arrest than those with the lowest scores.

How serious were the crimes for which these youth were re-arrested and did this change over time?

As we mentioned above, each charge appearing on a re-arrest was assigned a seriousness ranking category between 1 and 9 (although no re-arrest charges for this sample fell at level 1). As illustrated in Figure 4, we were able to use this coding to plot

Pathways Study Baseline Risk Markers	
Risk Marker	Indicators
Antisocial History	Age at first arrest Number of Prior Court petitions Self-reported offending (aggressive and income offending)
Antisocial Attitudes	Moral disengagement Consideration of others Legal cynicism
Parent deviance	Mother/Father arrested or jailed Mother –drug or alcohol problem
Association with antisocial peers	Antisocial peer behavior Antisocial peer influence Proportion of friends arrested/jailed
School difficulties	Expelled/dropped out/skipped classes Caught cheating/disrupting class
Mood/anxiety problems	Past year diagnosis for select mood disorder Impairment from depressive symptoms History of PTSD diagnosis Significant anxiety problems
Substance use problems	Past year diagnosis of substance use disorder Past year diagnosis of substance use disorder Significant social consequences from substance use Significant dependence symptoms from substance use

the most common seriousness level of the re-arrest crimes in each month of the seven-year follow-up period. It is interesting to note that, like rate of re-arrest, the average seriousness of crimes committed appears to decrease over time. Consistently after about 36 months, half of the re-arrest crimes are less serious than drug possession and misdemeanors and half are more serious.

What was the most common level of seriousness for each person?

The previous glimpses of the seriousness level for re-arrests over time considered all study participants arrested within a particular month. While this is useful for observing sample-wide trends over time, we were also interested in examining the seriousness level of arresting charges within each subject. In other words, looking across all of the re-arrests for each person, what is the most serious crime that each person committed?

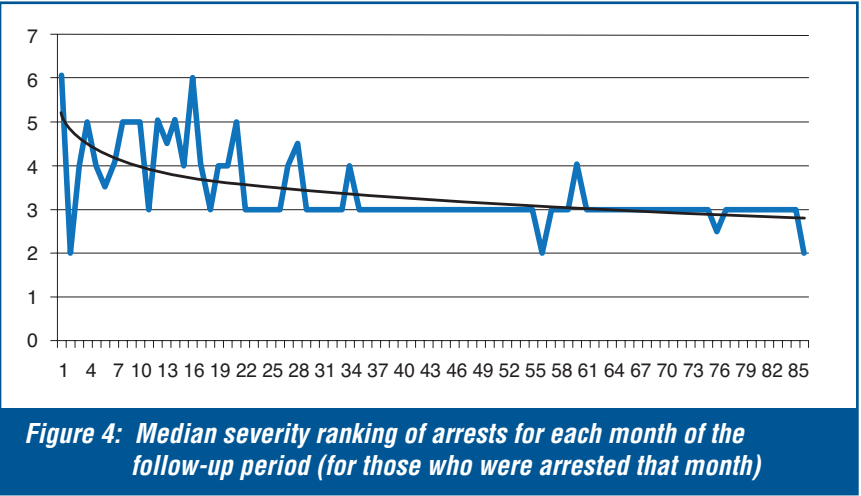


Figure 4: Median severity ranking of arrests for each month of the follow-up period (for those who were arrested that month)

Of those re-arrested, over three quarters of them (78%) were re-arrested for a felony level offense at some point in the seven years. As seen in Figure 5, a felonious assault/felony weapon charge was the most serious crime committed at least one time during the follow-up period for 38.6% of these re-arrestees. For 13.5%, the most serious charge they had for a re-arrest during the follow-up period was a misdemeanor, and for 11.5% it was a drug offenses/second degree

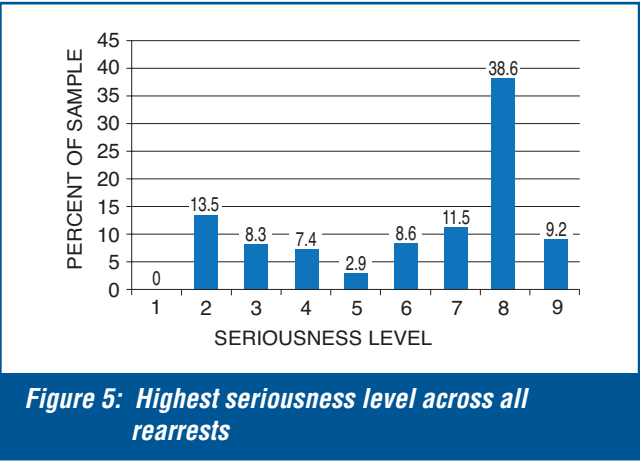


Figure 5: Highest seriousness level across all rearrests

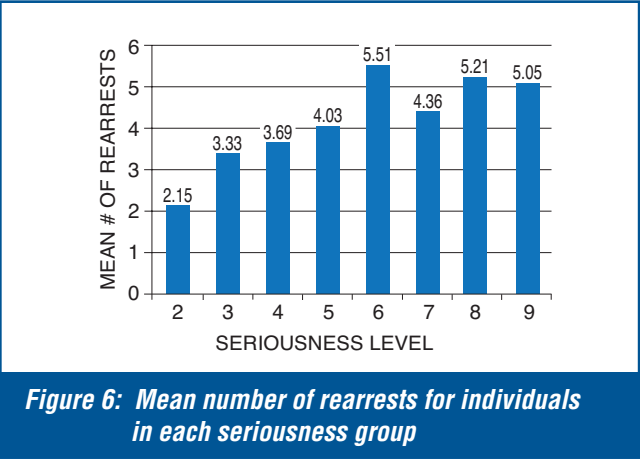


Figure 6: Mean number of rearrests for individuals in each seriousness group



sex offense charge. In addition, it appears that those who were arrested for more serious crimes also got arrested more often (see Figure 6). The group of re-arrestees that had misdemeanors as their most serious charge had fewer re-arrests across the seven years (average = 2), while those with charges of a higher seriousness had more arrests.

Next Steps

As noted at the outset, this newsletter provides an initial, descriptive glimpse at the patterns of re-arrest for the Pathways study participants. A few interesting observations can be made so far

- The majority of the Pathways sample was rearrested at least once during the seven year follow-up period
- Of those re-arrested, a majority had at least one arrest for a felony-level charge
- Higher risk at baseline in the areas of antisocial history and school problems and being male were related to the chances of being re-arrested over the subsequent seven years
- As these youth make the transition into early adulthood, it looks like there is a decline in their rate of arrest and in the seriousness of the offenses for which they are re-arrested

These broad observations point to areas ripe for more in-depth examination. Are there sub-groups based on arrest similar to those identified with self-reported antisocial activity? Are the 21.8% who are re-arrested less frequently and for less serious crimes different on particular baseline risk factors or life events? What, if any,