

Staying Out of Trouble:  
What Counts for Young Male Offenders?

**Lynda Clarke, MSc**  
Senior Lecturer  
Centre for Population Studies  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine  
49-51 Bedford Square  
London WC1B 3DP.  
Tel: 020 7299 4636/ 4614  
Fax: 020 7299 4637  
[Lynda.Clarke@lshtm.ac.uk](mailto:Lynda.Clarke@lshtm.ac.uk)

**Renata Forste, PhD**  
Professor  
Department of Sociology  
2008C JFSB  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah 84602  
(801) 422-3146  
(801) 422-0625 fax  
[renata\\_forste@byu.edu](mailto:renata_forste@byu.edu)

**Stephen Bahr, PhD**  
Professor  
Department of Sociology  
2031 JFSB  
Brigham Young University  
Provo, Utah 84602  
(801) 422-6710  
(801) 422-0625 fax  
[stephen\\_bahr@byu.edu](mailto:stephen_bahr@byu.edu)

Staying Out of Trouble: What Counts for Young Male Offenders?

Abstract

During fall of 2005 we interviewed a sample of young men imprisoned at a young offender's prison in England to investigate prisoners' reports of their likelihood of reoffending following release from prison. Intentions to stay out of trouble were most strongly associated with the number of delinquent friends, but were also significantly associated with the specificity of post-release plans, life control, and self-efficacy, net of peer influences. Offenders' feelings of life control were stronger among those who took vocational courses while in prison and among those who had more frequent contacts from family members and friends. Specific policies consistent with our findings include vocational courses that develop skills and encouragement of contact with family members and friends. In addition, interventions that help offenders make specific plans and increase feelings of control and self-efficacy have promise in helping released offenders successfully complete the transition from prison to the community.

An increasing prison population is a concern for many countries, especially given the young age profile of the majority of inmates (James, 2004). England and Wales has the highest proportion of its population in prison in Western Europe (Prison Reform Trust, 2008) and between 1992 and 2002 the young adult male prison population increased by 54 percent (Home Office, 2003). Government efforts and criminal justice policies focused more on the under 18 population than young adult offenders, and efforts to reduce recidivism among young adult offenders appear to have been ineffective. Reconviction rates among young adult males released in 1999 and in 2004 were extremely high with about 75 percent returning to prison within two years of release (Home Office, 2003; Prison Reform Trust, 2008); the latest figures confirm that even within one year, one half of 18 to 20 year old inmates released in 2005 reoffended within a year (Ministry of Justice, 2008). HM Chief Inspector of Prisons said in her annual report for 2005/6: “Young adults remain a group whose needs have not been systematically addressed over the last five years, in spite of their evident needs and their high reoffending rates” (Prison Reform Trust, 2008:21).

Although there has been extensive research on recidivism, there has been much less study of the process inmates go through when they are released from prison and their efforts to not reoffend (Petersilia, 2003; Steen & Opsal, 2007; Visher & Travis, 2003). Recently researchers have begun to study reentry more extensively (Maruna, 2001; Terry, 2003) but more research is needed to understand the process of desistance from the perspective of the offenders (Laub & Sampson, 2001; Shover & Thompson, 1992; Travis & Visher, 2005; Visher, 2006). To further our understanding of reentry from the view of inmates themselves, we examine background and incarceration factors associated with expectations to reoffend among male young adult offenders

interviewed in England in 2005. In particular, we consider how peers, self-efficacy and life plans are related to intentions to stay out of trouble following release.

### **Planned Behavior**

In our consideration of expectations of reoffending, we draw upon the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1988). Ajzen (1991) underscores that intentions to perform a behavior are central. Cherrington and Cherrington (2000) maintain that without specific behavioral intentions, the correspondence between attitudes and behavior is not strong. Intentions are assumed to show how hard someone is willing to try to perform a behavior, and behavioral intention is the immediate antecedent to behavior. In this study, we examine how hard inmates think it would be to *not* perform a particular behavior – that is to stay out of trouble. The theory of planned behavior proposes that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control determine behavioral intentions. Attitudes measure a person's disposition toward a behavior, subjective norms include attributes of a person's social environment, and perceived behavioral control addresses variation in a person's ability to control the performance of a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

Ajzen (1991) argues that attitudes gauge a person's evaluation of that behavior and depend upon an individual's beliefs about the consequences resulting from the behavior, as well as his or her affective response. Subjective norms indicate the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behavior. Such norms are a function of how reference groups or important peers are perceived to evaluate the behavior and the person's desire to conform. Behavioral control measures how easy or difficult a person perceives the performance of a behavior and includes measures of self-efficacy. The focus in the theory of planned behavior is on the *perception* of behavioral control, rather than actual control as a predictor of intentions

(Ajzen, 1991). As attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control become more favorable, the intent to perform a behavior increases.

As a partial test of the theory of planned behavior, Kiriakidis (2006) studied attitudes toward offending in the future, subjective norms of future offending, and perceived behavioral control to stop future offending as determinants of intentions to reoffend for a sample of young male offenders. Parental child-rearing practices were modeled, in addition to beliefs of the young offenders, as antecedents to the decision to commit antisocial acts. Kiriakidis (2006) found that intentions to reoffend in the future were predicted by attitudes toward offending and perceived behavioral control of future offending. In contrast, parental variables were found to be redundant; any effects of parental variables on behavioral intentions were mediated by the young offenders' attitudes toward offending.

Related to Ajzen's theory is Bandura's (1977, 1982) theory of self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as individual judgments of how well one can execute courses of action. In the context of criminal desistance, self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to comply with parole agreements and remain crime free. Individuals low on self-efficacy will put little effort into complying with parole agreements, particularly when faced with obstacles. They will give up and stop trying if they doubt that they can succeed (Bandura, 1977, 1982). Thus, self efficacy may have a significant influence on a parolee's belief that he can stay out of trouble.

Another relevant theory for understanding perceptions of an inmate's ability to stay out of trouble is the theory of cognitive transformation developed by Giordano and colleagues (2002). They identified four elements in the change process. First, individuals develop a "general cognitive openness to change." Unless there is some recognition that they want to change or can change, it is unlikely that change will occur. We would expect that inmates who are open to

change will have greater feelings of self-efficacy and more specific plans, and that these in turn will be associated with intentions to stay out of trouble.

Second, Giordano and colleagues (2002) proposed that there are key turning points or "hooks for change" which help in the desistance process. Examples of key turning points evident among our sample are completing a vocational course, obtaining employment, or obtaining a partner or girlfriend. Thus, we would expect those who take vocational courses would have greater feelings of control and be more likely to feel that it will be easy to stay out of trouble.

Third, Giordano and colleagues (2002) hypothesized that actors develop an appealing and conventional "replacement self." For example, involvement with a partner or family members may help individuals see themselves differently and may help constrain them from participating in illegal activities. In this way, family or work involvement may help individuals develop different self conceptions that can replace former conceptions as drug users and law violators. Thus, we would expect that inmates with greater family contact would have more conventional self concepts and be more likely to say that they will be able to stay out of trouble.

Finally, Giordano and colleagues (2002) stated that there is a transformation in the way the actor views deviant behavior. Behavior such as theft or drug use may be perceived as unappealing and harmful rather than something that is viewed with acceptance and fondness. The intention to stay out of trouble is one indication that previous illegal behavior may have become less appealing.

Drawing upon the theories of planned behavior, self-efficacy, and cognitive transformation, we examine the influence of attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control on the intentions of young offenders to reoffend. In particular, we model the influence of attitudes regarding their preparation or plan following release, their sense of control over life and

self-efficacy, as well as the delinquency level of their peer group on their intentions to stay out of trouble in the future. In addition, we considered the influence of more distal factors such as activities in prison and background factors prior to imprisonment. We examine how these factors influence intentions to reoffend as mediated by attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control.

Various factors both during and previous to imprisonment are expected to influence intentions to reoffend. Previous studies have noted the importance of social support in and outside prison in coping with incarceration (Biggam & Power, 1997). Family ties and relationships prior to imprisonment, as well as contact while in prison influence delinquency among young offenders. For example, one of the most powerful predictors of delinquency among family-related variables is parental rejection (Simons et al., 1989; Seydlitz & Jenkins, 1998). Participation in rehabilitative programs while in prison can also influence recidivism among young offenders (Lipsey, 1999). Job skills and employment opportunities can reduce reoffending depending upon the age of the offender (Uggen, 2000). We therefore examine the influence of vocational training and contacts with friends and family while in prison on intentions to reoffend as mediated by attitudes, behavioral control, and subjective norms. In addition, we considered the influence of education, age, employment, and family ties prior to imprisonment on participation in vocational courses and contacts with family and friends while in prison (see Figure 1).

(Figure 1 about here)

### **Method**

The sample includes men imprisoned at a young offender's prison in England during fall 2005. The prison housed about 300 inmates aged 18 to 21. Approximately one-third of the

prison population was interviewed giving a total sample of 103 young men. The majority of the inmates interviewed were incarcerated for theft (41 percent), and the second most common offense was fighting or assault (30 percent). One third of the young men interviewed were on remand and the average sentence among those not on remand was 27 months. The average time served at interview was 5.3 months. Half of the respondents (52 percent) had a previous custodial sentence with a median of two prior sentences. Most of the young men interviewed were white (81 percent) and the average age of respondents was 19.

Permission was obtained from prison authorities and interviews were held in classrooms or intake rooms inside the prison. Respondents were interviewed by young adults similar in age, some of whom were female. Interviewers were carefully trained prior to conducting interviews and given additional background information and instruction from prison staff. Prison staff directed inmates to the interview rooms and interviews were logged to avoid any duplication. The purpose of the study was explained to inmates and their written consent was obtained prior to being interviewed.

The interview included a structured questionnaire as well as genograms to map family relationships. Survey questions were read and responses coded by the interviewer based on responses from the inmate. Questions included information on offence and sentencing, education and employment prior to incarceration, as well as courses taken and employment during incarceration. Information on family background, including family structure and peers, was also obtained. In particular, inmates were asked about plans following release and future family expectations. Attitudinal measures included questions about life control, self-efficacy, and gender ideology. Questions were asked about family and friend visits during the past week, including letters and phone calls. Finally, the survey included questions about general health.



Genograms were used to identify family relationships and to indicate violence, alcohol, or drug problems, as well as prior imprisonment of parents, siblings, or partners. Closeness to family members or conflict with family members was also recorded. Responses to the questionnaires, as well as the genograms, were coded and entered by case identification number into a database for analysis. Confidentiality was maintained and only aggregate data were shared with prison staff following the conclusion of the study.

The primary outcome measure in this study is intentions to reoffend. Inmates were asked, "After release from prison, how easy do you think it will be to stay out of trouble?" Responses were on a four point scale anchored with the following categories: very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat hard or difficult, very hard or difficult.

Primary explanatory factors include measures of attitudes, behavioral control, and subjective norms. Inmates were asked about whether or not they had a plan as to what they would do following release. Consistent with cognitive transformation theory, we assume that inmates with a favorable attitude towards staying out of trouble would have a plan for what they would do following release. In contrast, those inmates not intending to stay out of trouble would not have developed a plan.

Attitudes about what to do following release were measured by responses to the following question: "Do you have a plan for what you will do after you are released, and if yes, what is it?" Inmate responses were recorded without being prompted about options. Multiple responses could be given and each was coded and ultimately summed to form a scale. Responses fell into the following primary categories: no plan, find a job, get more schooling, build family relationships, stay away from drugs/alcohol, find different place to live, get an apprenticeship. Not having a plan was coded as zero and all other responses were coded one.

Categories mentioned were summed to produce a scale that ranged from 0 to 4 – with zero indicating no plan following release and four indicating a more detailed plan (four of the above categories mentioned).

Behavioral control is based upon two scaled measures. The first measure indicates a sense of control in life and is based on agreement (1= agree a lot to 4 = disagree a lot) with the following statements: (1) “Sometimes I don’t feel I have enough control over the direction my life is taking,” (2) “There are times when I haven’t been very sure that my life would work out the way I wanted it to,” and (3) “It is not wise to plan too far ahead – many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad luck anyway.” Responses to these statements were averaged across the three questions to create a measure of life control ranging from 1 (low control) to 4 (high control). The second behavioral control variable measured self-efficacy. It indicates agreement with the following two statements: (1) “On the whole I am satisfied with myself,” and (2) “I feel I have much to be proud of.” Again, responses were averaged to produce a scaled measure from 1 (high self-efficacy) to 4 (low self-efficacy).

Subjective norms are measured by the delinquency of inmates’ friends. The expectation is that the more delinquent their peer group, the more social support young men will have to reoffend. This measure is an average across four questions: (1) “Before Prison, about how many of your mates (friends) used drugs?” (2) “Before prison, had any of your mates fathered a child without being married?” (3) “Before prison, about how many of your mates were unemployed and not in school?” and (4) “About how many of your mates have been in prison?” Each item is scaled from 1=none of them to 5=all of them, and the final averaged measure was coded similarly with 1 indicating low number of delinquent peers and 5 indicating high numbers.

Factors while in prison include participation in vocational courses and family and friend contact during the past week. Initially we included a measure of employment while in prison, but this variable had no significant influence on attitudes, behavioral control, or subjective norms so it was dropped for reasons of parsimony. Inmates were asked if they had taken any classes while in prison including academic courses, vocational courses, drug or health courses, or key (life skills) courses. Only participation in vocational courses was found to be predictive of factors related to planned behavior and are included in the model. This variable is a dichotomous measure coded 1 if the inmate reported participating in vocational courses while in prison and 0 otherwise. The second variable indicates the total number of contacts the inmate reported from family and friends during the past week. Contacts include the number of visits, phone calls and letters from parents (mom or dad), siblings, grandparents, partners or girlfriends, own children, other relatives, mates or friends, or others during the past week. The total contact scale ranges from 0 (no contact from family or friends) to 62 (total contacts from multiple family and friends).

Background characteristics from before incarceration include education, age, employment, and family measures. Education prior to incarceration indicates the highest level of schooling the inmate reported. Options include no qualifications (48 percent of the young men interviewed), vocational training (14 percent), General Certificate of Secondary Education (first stage of secondary education, usually ages 15 to 17, 35 percent of inmates interviewed), and A levels (college preparation courses in secondary school system, 4 percent of inmates). In initial analyses, we found that having any qualifications (vocational, GSCE, or A levels) was predictive of vocational training in prison. Therefore, we measure educational qualifications as a

dichotomous measure coded 1 if they had any qualifications and 0 otherwise. Age of the respondent is measured in years and ranges from 18 to 21.

Employment prior to incarceration is measured as a dichotomous variable coded 1 if they reported ever having regular employment (as opposed to just casual jobs) outside of prison, and 0 otherwise. In initial analyses, we considered family structure at age 14 in the inmates household, as well as prior to incarceration, as predictors of activities in prison. However, measures of family structure were not significant, with the exception of having a girlfriend, and were thus dropped for reasons of parsimony. Having a girlfriend is measured by a dichotomous variable coded 1 if they reported in the genogram having a girlfriend and 0 otherwise. In addition, closeness to family members is measured by summing dummy variables each coded 1 if the inmate reported being close to: either parent, any sibling, girlfriend, other relative. The closeness to family scale ranges from 0 (not close to any family or partner) to 4 (close to parents, siblings, partner, and other relatives).

The estimation procedure followed two steps. First, OLS regression was used to determine the influence of background characteristics on activities in prison (vocation classes and total contacts). Second, the influence of prison activities on planned behavior factors (attitudes, behavioral controls, and subjective norms) was examined using regression models. Then, the influence of planned behavior on expectations to stay out of trouble was estimated using regression models. These initial models (Figure 1) were used to eliminate non-significant effects, resulting in the model presented in Figure 2. Structural equation modeling was then utilized to allow for the estimation of error terms, as well as to estimate a path model linking background characteristics, prison activities, planned behavior, and intentions to reoffend together in one model.

(Figure 2 about here)

### **Results**

Descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1. Almost half of the young offenders (45 percent) indicated that they thought it would be very easy for them to stay out of trouble after their release from prison. In contrast, one fifth of the young men reported that it would be very hard. In terms of planned behavior, 18 percent of the inmates indicated that they had no plan for what they would do following release from prison. On average, inmates mentioned at least one thing they planned to do following release, and of those indicating any plan, the average was two categories mentioned. Most young offenders indicated finding a job as part of their plan (72 percent), followed by getting a better place to live (21 percent) and building or repairing family relationships (19 percent). The categories least mentioned were getting more schooling (13 percent), staying away from drugs and alcohol (10 percent), and getting an apprenticeship (7 percent).

(Table 1 about here)

Measures of behavioral control included life control and self-efficacy. The average score for life control (range from 1=low to 4=high) was 2.0 or a moderate to low sense of control in life. The mean score for self-efficacy (1=high to 4=low) was 2.1 or moderate to high self-efficacy. Subjective norms, as measured by delinquency of friends indicate that on average, inmates reported that a few to half of their friends were engaged in delinquent behavior (mean 2.8, range from 1=none, to 5=all).

Just over a third (38 percent) of the young offenders were enrolled in vocation courses while in prison. The median number of contacts per week from family or friends, including visits, phone calls, and letters, was nine. Only one percent of the inmates reported not having

any contact with family or friends during the previous week. About half of the young men interviewed had some type of education qualifications and about half had been employed regularly prior to imprisonment. Over half (56 percent) reported having a girlfriend and on average, they reported being close to their mothers and siblings.

The standardized coefficients from the structural equation analysis are presented in Figure 3. Our measures of planned behavior all significantly influence intentions to stay out of trouble following release from prison. In terms of attitudes towards reoffending, the more detailed the inmates plan following release, the easier he reported it would be to not reoffend. Estimates of behavior control are also in the hypothesized direction. The greater his sense of control in life, the easier the young offender reported it would be to stay out of trouble, and the higher his sense of self-efficacy, the easier he reported it would be to not reoffend. In contrast, having delinquent friends is associated with the expectation to reoffend. The more delinquent friends inmates reported having, the harder they thought it would be to stay out of trouble following release. Delinquent peers and having a plan following release are the strongest predictors of expectations to stay of out trouble. Over twenty percent of the variation in intentions to reoffend is accounted for by our measures of attitudes, behavioral control, and subjective norms.

(Figure 3 about here)

The only planned behavior associated with activities in prison was behavioral control as measured by life control. Contacts with family and friends and participating in vocational training both increased reports of life control. Only 14 percent of the variation in life control was accounted for by these two prison activities.

Older age and especially having educational qualifications were associated with enrollment in vocational courses while in prison, accounting for almost 20 percent of the variation in vocational enrollment. Having had regular employment prior to imprisonment was associated with increased contacts with family and friends while in prison. In addition, inmates reporting a girlfriend had more outside contacts while in prison. Being close to family members was also associated with more contacts with family and friends. Almost one fourth of the variation in contacts was accounted for by these background factors.

### **Discussion**

The transition from prison to the community is a vulnerable time when individuals may be susceptible to the influences of deviant peers. It is well established that criminal behavior is associated with the criminality of one's friends (Agnew, 2005). Recent research on desistance confirms that a shift away from friendships with people who are involved in crime is one key element in the desistance process (Byrne & Trew, 2008). Consistent with this, we found that the delinquency of one's friends was associated with perceptions of how easy it would be to stay out of trouble. With fewer friends to encourage and reward deviant behavior, motivation for committing crime may diminish (Maruna & Toch, 2005; Schroeder, Giordano, & Cernkovich, 2008; Warr, 2002).

An important question is whether other variables are related to criminal attitudes and behavior, after peer influences are taken into account. We found that specific plans, perceptions of control, and self-efficacy were all associated with intentions to stay out of trouble, net of the influence of deviant peers. These findings are consistent with Bandura's (1977, 1982) theory of self-efficacy.

The findings are also consistent with the theory of cognitive transformation mentioned earlier (Giordano et al., 2002). Our findings that specific plans and self-efficacy are related to intentions to stay out of trouble may be an indication of openness to change. Giordano and colleagues (2002) also proposed that there are key turning points or "hooks for change" which help in the desistance process. Family contacts and taking vocational courses are examples of hooks for change that were associated with greater feelings of control. Finally, intentions to stay out of trouble is one indication that previous illegal behavior may have become less appealing, which is another aspect of the cognitive transformation process (Giordano et al., 2002).

Although age is one of the most consistent correlates of desistance, there is debate about how age is associated with desistance (Healy & O'Donnell, 2008; Stolzenberg & D'Alessio, 2008; Blokland & Nieuwbeerta, 2005; Steen & Opsal, 2007). We found that even within the narrow age range from 18 to 21, those who were older were more likely to indicate that it would be easy to stay out of trouble. Our model helps explain how age may be related to criminal attitudes and behavior. Those who were older were more likely to have taken a vocational course in prison, those who took a vocational course scored higher on life control, and those who were higher on life control were more likely to say it would be easy to stay out of trouble. Thus, greater skills and feelings of life control appear to help explain why those who are older are more likely to desist from crime.

A limitation of the findings is that we measured only intentions to stay out of trouble rather than actual behavior. Future research should explore more fully the correspondence between intentions and actual behavior. However, the work of Bandura (1977, 1982) indicated that self-efficacy is more important than skills in achieving behavioral change. Furthermore, as



noted earlier, Cherrington and Cherrington (2000) demonstrated that without specific behavioral intentions, attitudes are only weakly associated with behavior.

In summary, we found that intentions to stay out of trouble were most strongly associated with the number of delinquent friends. Intentions to stay out of trouble were also significantly associated with the specificity of post-release plans, life control, and self-efficacy, net of peer influences. Offenders' feelings of life control were stronger among those who took vocational courses while in prison and among those who had more frequent contacts from family members and friends. The findings are consistent with the self-efficacy theories of Bandura (1977) and Ajzen (1991) and provide insights into the process of reentry among offenders. Given the large increases in prison populations and high recidivism rates, the findings have implications for helping offenders reenter society successfully and decreasing recidivism rates. Specific policies that are consistent with our findings are vocational courses and encouragement of contact with family members and friends. In addition, interventions that help offenders make specific plans and increase feelings of control and self-efficacy have promise in helping released offenders successfully complete the transition from prison to the community.

### References

- Agnew, R. (2005). *Why do criminals offend? A general theory of crime and delinquency*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.
- Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality, and behavior*. Chicago, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, 179-211.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84: 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist*, 37: 122-47.
- Biggam, F.H., & Power, K.G. (1997). Social support and psychological distress in a group of incarcerated young offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 41, 213-230.
- Blokland, A. J., & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2005). The effects of life circumstances on longitudinal trajectories of offending. *Criminology*, 43, 1203-40.
- Byrne, C. F., & Trew, K. J. (2008). Pathways through crime: The development of crime and desistance in the accounts of men and women offenders. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 47, 238-58.
- Cherrington, J. O., & Cherrington, D. J. (2000). *Moral leadership and ethical decision making*. Provo, UT: CHS Forecast, Inc.
- Giordano, P. C., Cernkovich, S. A., & Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime, and desistance: Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107, 880-1064.

- Healy, D., & O'Donnell, I. (2008). Calling time on crime: Motivation, generativity and agency in Irish probationers. *Probation Journal*, 55, 25-38.
- Home Office. (2003). *Prison statistics, England and Wales, 2002*. National Statistics, London: The Stationery Office.
- James, D.J. (2004). *Profile of jail inmates, 2002*. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Special Report: U.S. Department of Justice, NCJ 201932.
- Kiriakdis, S.P. (2006). Perceived parental care and supervision: Relations with cognitive representations of future offending in a sample of young offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 50, 187-203.
- Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2001). Understanding desistance from crime. In M. Tonry (Ed.), *Crime and justice: An annual review of research* (pp. 1-69). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lipsey, M.W. (1999). Can intervention rehabilitate serious delinquents? *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 564, 142-166.
- Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.
- Maruna, S., & Toch, H. (2005). The impact of imprisonment on the desistance process. In J. Travis & C. Visser (Eds.), *Prison reentry and crime in America* (pp. 139-178). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ministry of Justice. (2008). Re-offending of adults: New measures of re-offending 2000-2005, England and Wales. *Statistics Bulletin*, 9 May 2008, Table A2. ([www.justice.gov.uk](http://www.justice.gov.uk)).
- Petersilia, J. (2003). *When prisoners come home: Parole and prison reentry*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Prison Reform Trust. (2008). *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile*. London, England.  
([www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk](http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk))
- Schroeder, R. D., Giordano, P. C., & Cernkovich, S.A. (2008). Drug use and desistance processes. *Criminology*, *45*, 191-222.
- Seydlitz, R., & Jenkins, P. (1998). The influence of families, friends, schools, and community on delinquent behaviour. In T.P. Gullotta, G.R. Adams, & R. Montemayor (Eds.), *Delinquent violent youth: Theory, and interventions* (pp. 53-97). London: Sage.
- Shover, N., & Thompson, C.Y. (1992). Age, differential expectations, and crime desistance. *Criminology*, *30*, 89-104.
- Simons, R.L., Robertson, J.F., & Downs, W.R. (1989). The nature of the association between parental rejection and delinquent behavior. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *18*, 297-310.
- Steen, S., & Opsal, T. (2007). Punishment on the installment plan: Individual-level predictors of parole revocation in four states. *Prison Journal*, *87*, 344-66.
- Stolzenberg, L., & D'Alessio, S. J. (2008). Co-offending and the age-crime curve. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, *45*, 65-86.
- Terry, C. M. (2003). *The fellas: Overcoming prison and addiction*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.
- Travis, J., & Visher, C. A. (2005). *Prisoner reentry and crime in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Uggen, C. (2000). Work as a turning point in the life course of criminals: A duration model of age, reemployment, and recidivism. *American Sociological Review*, *67*, 529-546.
- Visher, C. A. (2006). Effective reentry programs. *Criminology and Public Policy*, *5*, 299-302.

Visher, C. A., & Travis, J. (2003). Transitions from prison to community: Understanding individual pathways. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 89-113.

Warr, M. 2002. *Companions in crime: The social aspects of criminal conduct*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics for Staying out of Trouble, Planned Behavior, Prison Activities, and Background Characteristics, Young Offenders Aged 18 to 21**

Characteristics	Percents or Means and Standard Deviations
<i>Dependent variable</i>	
Stay out of trouble (1 to 4)	
Very easy	45%
Somewhat easy	14%
Somewhat hard	21%
Very hard	20%
<i>Planned Behavior</i>	
Plan following release (0 to 4)	
Mean	1.0
(Stddev)	(1.0)
Life control (1=low, 4=high)	
Mean	2.0
(Stddev)	(0.7)
Self-efficacy (1=high, 4=low)	
Mean	2.1
(Stddev)	(0.8)
Delinquency of friends (1=none, 5=all)	
Mean	2.8
(Stddev)	(0.8)
<i>Prison Activities</i>	
Vocation classes	
Yes	38%
No	62%
Total contacts with family & friends (0 to 62)	
Mean	13.9
(Stddev)	(13.0)
<i>Background Characteristics</i>	
Educational qualifications	
Yes	48%
No	52%
Age	
Mean	19.3
(Stddev)	(0.8)
Regular employment	
Yes	48%
No	52%
Girlfriend	
Yes	56%
No	44%
Close to family (0=not close, to 4=close to more family)	
Mean	2.1
(Stddev)	(1.1)

Source: Young Offender Study, Reading, England; N=103

Figure 1: Planned Behavior and Intentions to Not Reoffend

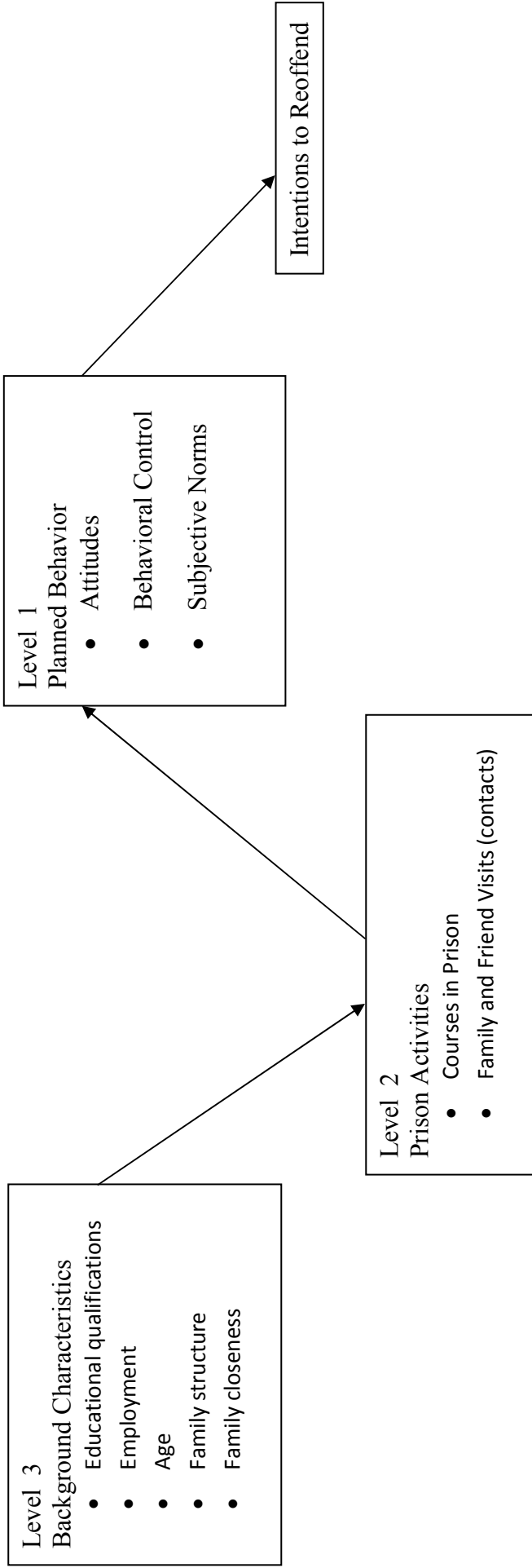


Figure 2: Pathways to Staying Out of Trouble (simplified model)

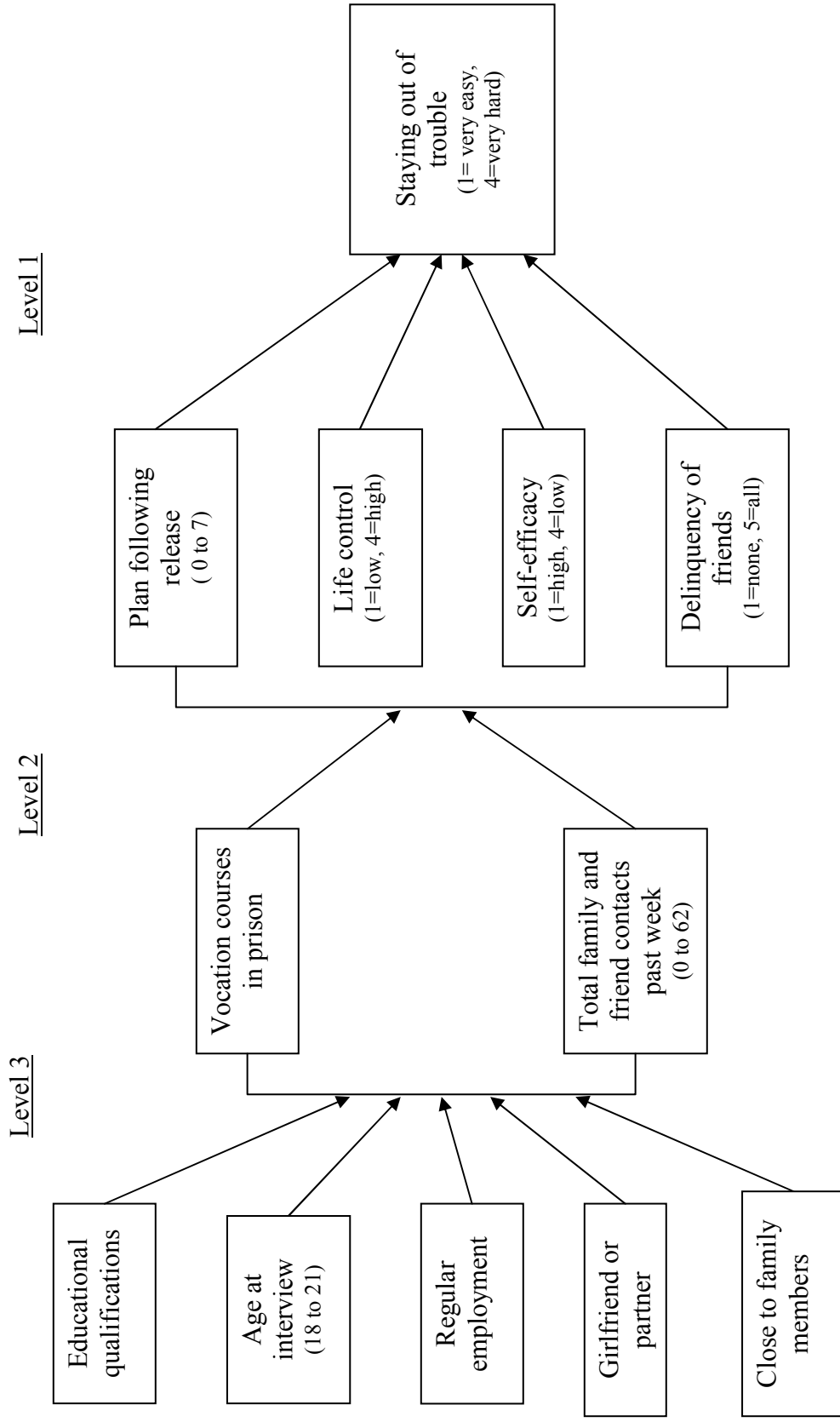




Figure 3: Pathways to Staying Out of Trouble (standardized coefficients)

