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SPEAKERS

Jose Sanchez, Jenn Tostlebe, Erin Tinney

Jose Sanchez 00:14

Hi everyone, my name is Jose Sanchez.

Jenn Tostlebe 00:16

And I'm Jenn Tostlebe

Jose Sanchez 00:17

And we're the hosts of The Criminology Academy podcast where we are criminally academic. In today's episode we're speaking with doctoral candidate Erin Tinney. About her work on police contact labeling theory and paper she authored on the stickiness of stigma for adolescents.

Jenn Tostlebe 00:34

Erin Tinney is a doctoral candidate at the University of Maryland-College Park. Her primary research interests are in labeling theory, the intersection of the education and legal systems, consequences of adolescent contact with the criminal legal system, and queer criminology. Her dissertation investigates the impacts of juvenile justice system contact on educational outcomes for youth in Maryland. During your free time she enjoys reading, playing cornhole, and trying new restaurants in DC.

Jose Sanchez 01:03

Thank you so much for joining us today, Erin, we're excited to have you and to talk to you about your work.

Erin Tinney 01:09

Thank you so much for having me. I really appreciate the opportunity.

Jenn Tostlebe 01:13

All right. So let's get started with the most basic but also the broadest question that we can, in true Criminology Academy style, Erin, what is labeling theory?

Erin Tinney 01:26

So this might be as controversial as an academic tape can be but a slightly controversial take, in that I often really think of labeling not so much as a theory but as an umbrella or kind of a framework through which you study criminology and deviance and criminological processes. But if we think about labeling theory kind of as it's poor conception of what most people think about, we think about Tannenbaum, and Lamere, and Becker, which really focuses on these internal processes of responses to punishment. So when we are labeled by the system, that's often called like a formal label, it means we're justice involved in some way. And as Lamere explains, so an adolescent will commit some form of primary deviance, generally thought of as delinquency, but it could be being deviant in some other way. And I'll touch upon that in a second. But essentially, primary deviance, then one becomes justice involved because of this primary deviance, and is labeled as deviant or delinquent by the system. They internalize this label and through a prospect called symbolic interactionism, essentially, they internalize this label and act accordingly. So again, as criminologists, as usual, we borrow in quote unquote, from other fields. So when we talk about symbolic interactionism, we act according to the way in which we believe other people will perceive us. So if we believe that other people view us as delinquent, we're going to internalize that label and act accordingly. And that leads to secondary deviance. And, as we can see, this is very hard to study. And so kind of labeling theory is often critiqued in that way. It's like, how can you study this, this is very internal processes that could be subconscious. Most people aren't thinking, I am deviant, therefore, I'm going to act this way, like people don't generally think like that. And so that's at its core concept of what the origins of labeling theory are. But then if we look more in recent decades, particularly starting, I believe, with Patternoster and Iovanni in 1989 really see this resurgence of labeling theory as not just looking at this very specific primary deviance to labeling to secondary deviance pathway, but also looking at the impact of status characteristics on the likelihood of becoming involved in the system. So how do racialized systems impact one's likelihood of being involved in the justice system? And here we see the influences of conflict theory on to labeling theory. So how do these systems of power that created the criminal legal system influence how and why certain people become involved in the justice system, and some people do not, despite perhaps similar levels of certain types of behaviors? And so I think this is really the crux of labeling theory and why I think of it as an umbrella term, because it's less about explaining why an individual conducts delinquent behavior. That's part of it, certainly, but it's more really about responses to behavior and responses to punishment that I think sets apart labeling theory from other criminological theories as really more within kind of conflict tradition, then so much is necessarily a theory of criminality or deviance.

Jenn Tostlebe 05:07

That's great. And I will say I've heard of it discussed as more of a perspective or umbrella term. So I don't know how actual controversial that idea is. But...

Erin Tinney 05:16

Okay, cool.

Jose Sanchez 05:18

Yeah, I was gonna say I'm like, so glad you said that. Because, yeah, and I think Jenn is on this boat too but we've always maintained, yeah, it's more of a perspective than a full blown theory, and maybe something that you can slot in with another theory. And, you know, we did have a colleague that tried to

do that, because one of the criticisms of labeling is no one ever really kind of bothered to tell you how we get to primary deviance, they just kind of assume that primary deviance has to happen. And so we did know someone that tried to kind of bridge that gap. And like, well, let's kind of explain how we get there. And then we'll let labeling theory kind of take over from that point on, and move forward. So yeah, I really don't know how controversial, if it is at least know that you'll have Jenn and I in your corner. But Jenn and Jenn and me.

Jenn Tostlebe 06:09

And how you explained it, I think was one of the better ways that I've heard it explained. So kudos. And I also really like you use this term resurgence. And it kind of ties in with our next question, which is also kind of a bigger question. But we've seen as with a lot of criminological theories and perspectives that the popularity of labeling has kind of waxed and waned over time. Why do you think that we're currently seeing or have been seeing a labeling theory of resurgence?

Erin Tinney 06:44

Yeah, absolutely. So I think the initial decline, part of it had to do with the inability to test this like early conceptualization of labeling theory. And I agree with Patternoster and Iovanni, that labeling theory has been criticized much more harshly than most other theories. Jose, as you mentioned, you know, this assumption that primary deviancy is already occurring, I think about routine activities, where it's like the assumption of motivation is already there. And like, it's the same thing, you assume something. But that was part of the decline, but also, we cannot separate criminological theory from political and ideological happenstances that are going on. And so particularly when we get into the 60s and 70s, we're going back towards neoclassical tradition with the rise of conservative politics. I think the Martinsen report that nothing works report in rehabilitation was particularly damning. And so we swing back towards this very tough on crime rhetoric, and so criminological theory, because those studies are being funded to be tested, you know, they want to stop crime, how to be tough on crime. So we switched more to this rational choice, routine activities, type of theories. And so that led to a rise in those types of theories, labeling and other positivist type theories kind of decline. But then as we move into kind of the 90s, we see the rise of mass incarceration, and there's being more political focus on the consequences of criminal legal system involvement. And therefore, we see kind of this interest rising again, and labeling theory. And I think in conjunction with that, more of an empirical side, we have better access to longitudinal data. I think Sampson and Laub's. Like work with the Glueck data is really key here and the rise of kind of life course. And we go again, and see this concept of consequences of legal system involvement and the importance of that more advanced statistical modeling to help with longitudinal data analysis, we see a greater acceptance and legitimacy of qualitative research, particularly ethnographies, longer term, kind of more introspective interviews with people. And I think that has really given us many opportunities to explore labeling theory that we didn't necessarily have a few decades ago. And so it's become more feasible to test labeling theory again. And that kind of combined with the greater political and ideological interest in the consequences of justice and contact as well.

Jose Sanchez 09:37

Alright, so I will say that I like labeling theory. I wouldn't necessarily call myself a labeling theorist, like my understanding of it is fairly basic. And so just kind of to the way that I've always sort of understood it or know that I've learned it is you know, so we'll take someone that's never committed a crime for

example, at least as far as we know they've never committed a crime, then, and we'll say this person's not a teenager, just kind of your run of the mill teenager, and they shoplift for the first time ever, then we would consider that like the primary deviance, right, then they come in contact with some type of authority figure either in the Mall Cop or an actual cop. And then the label gets applied. Say, in this case, it's that this kid is a criminal. The label gets internalized. And then we see the self fulfilling prophecy where they engage in more delinquent behavior. Right. So that's like, my very basic understanding of it. However, something that kind of started to read, as I was reading your paper, and that we wanted to ask you about was, can you describe to us, you know, the stigma that comes from actually being associated with someone that's, you know, engaged in delinquency and how that comes into play with the person that they're associating with being labeled, even though they may not have engaged in that behavior themselves?

Erin Tinney 11:05

Yeah, absolutely. So I talked about this in terms of I call it guilt by association. But really, this comes from Erving Goffman's work in the 50s, regarding stigma transfer, kind of describing the same thing. But essentially, if someone is associated with a stigmatized group, so that could be they're a member of a family, they're friends with somebody, as I talk about, no matter how they're associated with that individual, other people may assume that they're going to possess similar characteristics and behavior. So if I'm friends with people who are engaging in delinquency, it may then be assumed that I'm also engaged in delinquency, or at the very least, they would kind of imbue negative feelings or stigmatizing feelings about that group onto that person. And then that would impact their behavior or attitudes toward that individual. And in Goffman's book, he actually uses a rest as an example of this. So someone who isn't associated with someone who has been arrested, maybe also viewed as deviant or a criminal because they choose to be associated with this individual. And this really speaks to the consequences of vicarious police contact or police contact that happens to another individual, that research has really been blossoming in the past, I would say decade. And we know that police contact is not just negatively influential on the individual, but also on the people around them. So I know Jose, you do gang research, so, I'm sure you know, much more than I do about gang databases. But I think that's a very concrete example of the police monitoring, or at least being interested in people who are affiliated with those who are known to be gang members, even if it's unclear whether that individual is in a gang themselves. And we can also see that even if you just look at a group of peers, what we know, as academics, as I'm sure law enforcement does as well is that peer delinquency is common. You know, as I just said, if I'm friends with a bunch of youth engaged in delinquency, it is kind of likely that I'm also engaged in delinquency, just we know that from a ton of prior research, it's one of the almost few established facts in criminology. And so it could be that an officer then kind of reacts accordingly. If they see one adolescent engaged in delinquency within a group, it's probably going to click in their head that the rest of them, even if they're not currently witnessing a behavior is like, oh, they're probably also up to something as well. And so that kind of subtly puts that label on that person, even if the individual doesn't really do anything to kind of warrant the label itself. It could just be those circumstances that lead to the label. Yeah.

Jose Sanchez 14:07

So like, gang database. This was one of the very first things that came to my mind as soon as I started reading your paper, because yeah, I think that is one of the more concrete examples that we have of

this, you know, so for people that don't know, a lot of police departments, or law states have legislation that allows police departments to have a database where they track what are supposed to be known gang members. But one of the biggest controversial things about it is how someone gets entered into the database can be pretty sus. Sometimes they'll outline like these requirements, and it'll be like, hangs out or is associated with known gang members. Right. So just hanging, and there's been a lot of people that like, I'm not a gang member. I've never been a gang member, but I'm in this database, because I was seen hanging out with gang members, but that's like the people that I grew up like, well, I don't know what you want me to do, right? Like these are just, these are the people I grew up with, like, these are my friends. So it was pretty interesting to kind of make that connection, this guilty by association. Right. So, back in episode 60, we spoke with Bianca Bersani. And we know for that episode, we talked about the life-course impacts that early arrests can have on adolescence. But the one thing we wanted to ask you was if you can tell us about what the impact of an adolescent getting arrested, can have on their peers or their social network, like, even though, like, so we talked about how someone that hangs out with someone that maybe gets arrested, can then become guilty by association. But then how does this friend of the person that got arrested, react to all of this?

Erin Tinney 15:46

Yeah, absolutely. So I think a lot of the research into vicarious please contact often focuses on family members, particularly children of incarcerated parents. So we know that vicarious, please contact can have impacts on one's health youth who frequently see, particularly when the police perpetuate violence in their neighborhood, or particularly aggressive in their neighborhood, express PTSD symptoms, like inability to sleep, we also know that it has impacts on educational attainment, in view of the police, you may be less likely to view the police as legitimate if you have some sort of vicarious police contact. So I'll shout out and I'll shout him out a couple of times in this, but my advisor Wade Jacobson does a lot of research kind of tangentially in this area. And so one of his recent papers was regarding how youth of incarcerated parents are more likely to be suspended in school. And I think this also speaks to kind of this stigma transfer and how it impacts punishment. And so changes in behavior. So having kind of expressing more behavioral problems, and bonds to school explained some of the relationship. But there's this kind of gap that isn't really explained by any of these measurable variables. And so one way he speculates that the likelihood of suspension is higher for these youth is that teachers may be stigmatizing them, they, perhaps subconsciously, but thinking, Okay, this child is acting out. And I know their father is incarcerated. Therefore, I might think they're more likely to be deviant in the future. Or I may view their behavior as inherently more deviant or more criminal, quote, unquote, because these are pretty young kids, but more deviant because they are associated in my mind with someone who is incarcerated. And so I think that speaks to some of this idea of stigma transfer, and how people who are surrounded by those who have been incarcerated are viewed by others. But we also see some really interesting work. If you look qualitatively, like Paul Hirschfield's work who he has a study, I believe it's from 2008, that I could be wrong on that year, in which he's interviewing youth who were in heavily over policed neighborhoods or neighborhoods that are both over policed, and under policed, and how there isn't as high of stigma from criminal legal system contact in those neighborhoods, because it's so common. And so if I'm in a neighborhood that is so heavily policed, then yeah, I'm probably going to know several people who have been involved in legal system. And I might not view that as fair or legitimate. And so that doesn't impact my view of that person as much. And so we see that this really heavily depends on context as well, kind of the social context. So it

could be that for some individuals, knowing someone who has been incarcerated, or being associated with them is going to be highly stigmatizing. Versus in some contexts, it's not going to be as stigmatizing.

Jose Sanchez 19:01

That makes a lot of sense. And so how do the people or like the friends, generally do we know how that people generally reacts? So say, like, you know, there's the video of us, Jenn, sorry, you're gonna take the fall for this. But Jenn gets arrested. So, like, what are the chances that then you and I say, ooh, I don't know about Jenn anymore? Or will we generally go? Jenn's pretty cool, like, we should double down and like spend more time with Jenn.

Jenn Tostlebe 19:29

Obviously, the second one right?

Erin Tinney 19:34

Well, of course, it's gonna depend on our relationship. I think Jenn is lovely. So always gonna choose to spend time with Jenn. But I think this really gets into something that seems on the surface slightly contradictory, but actually like, to me makes a lot of sense. But so there's a difference between general outcomes or perceptions of youth of other youth who are engaged in delinquency and youth who have been punished. And so we see in some of us goods work that alcohol use or other types of substance use in particular may actually be popularizing. And so youth who drink who get drunk, this was also in the 90s. You get drinking, you know who drink and get drunk, often report having more friends nominate them as friends. So more people wish to be their friends, or say that they're friends. But when we look at Wade Jacobson's work, we can actually see once we move towards someone being actually punished for their delinquency, then that popularizing effect kind of goes away. So a lot of Jacobson's work, talks about rejection and withdrawal. And so if Jenn has been arrested, she may be less likely in the next year to nominate new friends. So when I talk about nominate, in the PROSPER study that I use for this paper, you are allowed to nominate up to seven friends. So you wrote down their names. So Jenn may be more likely to withdraw or put fewer people as friends. And that could be due to anticipated stigma. So if she thinks that Jose and I are going to reject her, then she might kind of get ahead of it and be like, you know what, they're not my friends anyway. Or they might just be no longer interested in friends who are not engaged in delinquency, there could be all sorts of reasons for that. And we might be more likely to reject her, we might be less likely ourselves to nominate her. And so overall, we see this decrease in friendships following an arrest that may not necessarily occur with just delinquency. And so this kind of transitions into the paper a little bit. But essentially, I am looking at whether avoiding stigma could be a possible reason. That's not exactly what the paper tests, but that's kind of a theory that's being put forth is that a possible reason for removing these friendship ties is the avoidance of further stigma. So there's kind of variation and how peers could react to an adolescent being arrested. But the research so far seems that it's more of an isolating than a popularizing effect.

Jenn Tostlebe 22:16

I think that makes sense. Yeah. Because they're like fun until they get punished. Yeah.

Jose Sanchez 22:28

Yeah, exactly.

Jenn Tostlebe 22:29

All right. Well, then, let's jump into the papers, since you kind of helped set us up there. This paper was authored by our guest, Erin Tinney. That's how you say your last name, right? Yep. Tinney. Yeah. Published in criminology in 2023. It's titled "the stickiness of stigma: Guilt by association after a friend's arrest." And just to give a quick summary, in this paper, Aaron expands on labeling theory and the concept of the stickiness of stigma. She uses data from the Promoting School University Community Partnerships to Enhance Resilience or PROSPER study, and a sample of just over 46,000 observations and just over 13,000 adolescents to examine the likelihood of someone's first arrest based on the arrest of one of their friends. So our first question to kind of help set up the paper a little bit more is just can you give us a quick summary on the background and kind of the goals and motivation of the paper?

Erin Tinney 23:31

Yeah, absolutely. So it's, it's been a long paper coming. This was originally my master's thesis. And I defended that in 2020, so this was a long time coming. And as I very passionately talked about labeling theory, I've always been more interested in kind of the consequences of adolescent contact with then theories of delinquency, I would always say, I don't care why the kids shoplifted. I just care what happened to them after they got caught. And so I was reading my advisors papers on friendship and adolescence and thinking about friendship dissolution as a consequence of arrest. And I actually kind of came to the second research question first, I was thinking about, well, is this even effective? And kind of, if I move away from friends who have been arrested, does that even work in terms of, you know, preventing me from being arrested? And so the kind of the first question kind of fell into place because of that. And it became one of those things where I was like, well, guilt by association just makes sense. You know, I hear about gang databases, and I hear about rural and community policing and how they're just watching individuals. And I'm like, it just makes sense. But it was one of those things that we observed in the real world that wasn't really studied that much in criminology. And I was motivated a little by frustration, but not been studied yet, which is, you know, a very good motivation for doing a papers frustration. So my goal was to kind of build on this concept of stigma and guilt by association and find a way to test it. And seeing kind of all the reactions to labeling theory prior, it became a little puzzle to me, you're like, Okay, how do I at least try to get close to testing this? It's not going to be perfect. It's not going to be causal. But how do I even kind of attempt to solve this puzzle? And so I was really thinking about this increase in the likelihood of arrest, independent of one's behavior, or while accounting for one's behavior, because of a friend's arrest and thinking about how I could do that quantitatively, and kind of going into the concept of stickiness, which I don't know why they capitalized it the time. So that was not my decision. I thought it was like,

Jose Sanchez 26:02

okay, that's because yeah, when I first thought I was like, she really emphasized stickiness.

Erin Tinney 26:08

I don't know why they did that. But it's a very funny word to have been my like, first major publication, like a in the title. But I had found these desperate, I had found different kinds of stickiness in the

literature. And I thought it was an interesting thing to also apply to my concept of guilt by association. So that's kind of the background of the paper.

Jenn Tostlebe 26:31

Well, congrats for getting your master's thesis out and publishing Crim, of all places.

Erin Tinney 26:37

Thank you. I'm glad to never read it again. That is, yeah, I was like, when I got accepted. I was like, I don't need to read this again main feeling.

Jenn Tostlebe 26:47

And now you're back here talking about it. And I'm talking.

Erin Tinney 26:52

It's been enough time.

Jose Sanchez 26:54

Yeah, Jen. And I know that feeling too. Like we have what's known as like a third year paper in our department, which can turn into people's like Master's project or thesis. And Jenn and I both, how long was it like three years before we got ours published? Also, not together. But like, I know, mine took three years to get published.

Jenn Tostlebe 27:14

Or three or four? Yeah, yeah. And just

Jose Sanchez 27:17

by the end of it, we were both like, I hate this paper. And I don't want to see this paper ever again. I'm so tired of it. And I've unfortunately had to reopen mine a couple of times, because I have had to, like, because it's tied into my dissertation as well. So I have had to go back and like, what did I say in this?

Jenn Tostlebe 27:36

I was even talking about? Yeah, how

Jose Sanchez 27:39

did I talk about whatever. But I guess, you know, like Jenn mentioned in the summary, one of the things that you're trying to do is like sort of expand on labeling theory. And you know, you've given us a basic rundown of labeling theory. So maybe tell us a little bit more of how you were expanding on labeling theory. I know you kind of gave us a little bit of this also. But just to maybe reiterate how you were expanding on labeling theory with this paper?

Erin Tinney 28:06

Yeah, absolutely. So I think I kind of build upon labeling theory more in the labeling impacts or stigmatizing impacts of vicarious police contact. A lot of the stigmatizing effects of criminal legal system research often focuses on one's own individual involvement in the system, which is obviously going to

be the most stigmatizing. So I really wanted to focus on this vicarious police contact and these wider implications of criminal legal system involvement in adolescents lives, for kind of the community and for individuals who are not yet legal system involved. And kind of building off of my advisors work to talking about how particularly relationships are impacted by the criminal legal system, and how that kind of comes back to more legal system involvement by more individuals kind of this ripple effect of it. And I will say in this was told by me many times by the reviewers, I could not definitively or causally test guilt by association or labeling. But I do think I provide some evidence of like a tangible consequence of vicarious justice system contact. And it also I least, I would hope so it provides a foundation for kind of more researchers to talk about and study guilt by association in a more definitive manner, rather than just kind of be like, oh, yeah, we observed this thing in the world and it makes sense and I see it, but hopefully encouraging more people to actually get out and test it.

Jenn Tostlebe 29:45

Okay, so you mentioned this term, your all caps concept of stickiness in the paper. Can you tell us exactly what you mean by stickiness?

Erin Tinney 29:57

Yeah, absolutely. So I'm so sorry, it's going to be one of those words that absolutely loses meaning. Like you'll say it too many times. But as I talked about, I'd seen this term used in a couple of places. So the more well known as Warr's concept of sticky friends. So essentially, Warr talks about how youth who have friends who are engaged in delinquency are more likely to continue having friends who are engaged in delinquency. An interesting point about that is it's not necessarily the same friendships, it's just you're more likely to continue to have friendships with youth who are engaged in delinquency, which I thought was an interesting point. And the second one is in Chris Uggen's, work talking about the stigma of criminal legal system contact, and that talks more to temporality. Or if I've been involved in the criminal legal system, particularly if I've been incarcerated, I am going to feel those stigmatizing effects for a long time after it's not just going to be when I initially leave the prison, it's going to be happening for years after, I'm going to continue having this stigma. And so I was thinking about this. And I'm like, Oh, what a coincidence it's the same word. But in terms of stigma, I think it's really interesting to think about, not only stigma kind of, quote, unquote, sticking from one individual to another, so you've been arrested and now I have stigma because of it, your stigma is kind of stuck on to me. But also thinking about whether it's going to stay with an individual for a period of time, or stay with an individual, even if they make efforts to kind of lose that stigma, like, no longer associating with that person, is that stigma that's still gonna stay with me for a long time. So that was kind of the basis of stickiness as I thought about it in the context of this type of stigma.

Jenn Tostlebe 31:54

All right, so one other thing we want to ask about was other potential theoretical explanations for first arrest. So how would you address an argument that a control perspective, like low self control is what explains the arrest outcome? And that peer association is spurious, or birds of a feather flock together versus this idea of a label leading to the arrest after your friend is arrested?

Erin Tinney 32:26

Yeah, absolutely. So this was something that came up with reviewers. I very much anticipated this comment coming back. It was something else I brought up in the thesis defense. And I don't want to say that my paper looks to, like disprove that or say that it doesn't exist. I think it does. I think stigma is just one piece of the puzzle here. So I also think that since I'm looking more at a rest, so it's more of a law enforcement decision than necessarily youth behavior, it's going to look a little bit more towards that stigma than if I was looking at delinquency, if delinquency was the outcome, absolutely. Self control, or learning or a combination of both, would be most likely at play here. And that's why I in the models control for both one's individual level of delinquency and their peer delinquency. So hopefully, I account for that, at least a little. But of course, that and of course, both of those things are still significant in the models, it's, you know, peer delinquency is still going to impact your likelihood of arrest. But even when accounting for those things, I still see some relationship between just the arrest of a friend and one's future likelihood of arrest. So I think that's absolutely part of it. I think, control theories, learning theories, even strain. Any other type of theory of delinquency could also be at play here. But I think that doesn't necessarily negate the existence of stigma in there as well. There's not just going to be one theory that's explaining delinquency or arrest decisions or any other type of outcome that we study in criminology. Yeah.

Jenn Tostlebe 34:23

I like how you're pulling out this kind of more self report measurement of delinquency versus what you're doing, which is more the official report what happens with the police? I think that's a smarter way to think about it too. Good way to go about it.

Jose Sanchez 34:38

Alright, let's start to actually get into like the meat and potatoes of your paper. And so your first research question was, whether a friend's arrest will impact someone's likelihood of arrest. What did you find regarding this research question?

Erin Tinney 34:54

Yes. So I found that there was a significant and positive association between having at least one friend arrested the prior year and one's own likelihood of arrest in the current year, even when accounting for things like current delinquent behavior, demographic characteristics and social bonds, like bonds to school and to parents. And of course, many of these factors are still relevant and significant, as you might imagine, by it suggests that something about a friend's police contact could be guilty by association, could honestly be something I'm not even capturing. I'm arguing guilty by association, of course. But something about that friends police contact on its own is impacting one's likelihood of arrest. And I won't get into the nitty gritty of the models. But since I use a mixed effects model, I'm able to compare an individual to themselves. So basically their own intrinsic likelihood of arrest, and between other youth. And I find that it appears as though the stronger association is within the individual. So having a friend who's arrested increases my own likelihood of arrest compared to what it would have been had I not had a friend arrested, which is like a very, I've struggled to find a concise way of explaining that. But it's it's jargony. And weirdly, weirdly worded but yeah, those were primarily when I found for the first research question.

Jenn Tostlebe 36:28

Alright, so getting into your second research question, or the one you actually thought of first, which is whether ending a friendship with someone that's been arrested can actually lower their own likelihood of arrest? What did you find? Does this actually matter? Does cutting yourself off from them lower this likelihood.

Erin Tinney 36:50

So this is kind of one of those rare sort of happy cases where having a null result is supportive of the theory. And so I found I kind of tested this in two different ways. So first, I looked among youth who had a friend arrested, I looked at the relationship between dropping your arrested friends and arrest in the next year. And I didn't find a significant result there. And then I also compared via testing, or comparing coefficients, whether youth who dropped their arrested friends, compared to youth who didn't have friends arrested, and youth who did drop their arrested friends and youth who did not have friends arrested, whether one of those two groups had a stronger impact of having a friend arrested. And while the association appears to be very peers to be slightly stronger for youth who did not drop their friends. So for youth who kept those friendships, there might be a slightly stronger impact of having those friends arrested on one's own likelihood of arrest. But when I actually tested those coefficients together, there was no significant difference. So overall, with all that jumble of words, it appears as though dissolving one's friendship with arrested friends does not really significantly impact that likelihood of arrest. So you're gonna have this increase in the likelihood of arrest, and dropping those friends may not really necessarily mitigate that.

Jenn Tostlebe 38:20

The stickiness maybe that's why it's capitalized. Very key. Yeah, sticks around. Yeah, that's, I mean, you would hope for the other. I, you know, the other outcome. But yeah, the rare case where this outcome is actually supportive of your theory or theoretical argument. So that's really interesting. So hopefully, you just don't have friends that are getting arrested. I guess.

Erin Tinney 38:49

It's a difficulty in what we study. And we're like, well, it's significant this was good for me professionally, and you're like, Oh, this is bad for people. Yes. Yeah. Yeah.

Jose Sanchez 39:01

Yeah. But at least now you have evidence, right? Yeah. So yeah, so moral of the story is, Jenn, don't get arrested. Okay. So you also ran some additional analyses that we thought were interesting. The first was looking at, so kind of the rank of the friend that's getting arrested. So was it a best friend or just like a close friend? Did this have any impact on the likelihood of arrest for the participant, whether the person that got arrested was their BFF, or just a close friend?

Erin Tinney 39:38

So I guess there's some background on the manager for this use each year could dominate up to two best friends and five additional close friends. They don't really specify what exactly that means. So it's up to the youth's interpretation of how they would do that. So not all youth nominated best friends, some nominated you know, one. So that really varies, but I was still a little surprised that I didn't really see that big of a difference in the impact of the rank of the friendships. So for just best friend or just

close friends, the effect size was about the same. And I think this is really interesting. There's another measure in the PROSPER survey that other researchers have looked at that show that PROSPER youth tend to spend more time with their best friends, and unstructured socializing. And so I thought with that, oh, that effect might be stronger for best friends, because you're more likely to be seen out with them. But that didn't really appear to be the case. So I'm still not quite sure why exactly that's the case. I think it's interesting, again, an interesting semi null result, there was still a significant impact, even with the close friends. So regardless of the rank of the friendship, it still mattered. But it seems this best versus close distinction isn't really there in this particular outcome.

Jose Sanchez 41:06

Yeah, I was wondering, like, if having like, best friend and close friend, like if they're both up there enough to where like, you're, like how much time you spend with those two groups is close enough. As opposed to if you had like, best friend, close friend, acquaintance. So even then, I'm guessing you didn't, couldn't really get that deep with it. But so you know, I thought that was interesting. But so the other thing that you looked at, was whether the number of friends that had been arrested impact that one's likelihood of arrest. What did you find with that analysis?

Erin Tinney 41:45

I also really didn't find much significant here, though. This one I'm honestly not really surprised about, I think this might be more of a statistical artifact than really speaking to anything about the mechanism, having more than one friend arrested among the PROSPER youth within a given year was very rare. I believe on average, I don't have the number in front of me, but it was like on average youth had like one point, any youth who had friends arrested had like 1.2, something like that, that was the average number. So I think this may have just been like a low power issue in terms of having more than one friend arrested, I wouldn't be surprised at all, if in a different sample that perhaps is more heavily involved in the criminal legal system, or at least you have many more friends who have been arrested that there might be something here, because this to me speaks to kind of visibility. If I'm with a group of five people who have been arrested, I'm probably more on the police's radar by just pure consequence of that, rather than if I just had one friend arrested. So not really in my sample, but that could be a statistical thing, and not really, about the mechanism.

Jenn Tostlebe 42:56

Sure, yeah, it would be interesting to see with more of a delinquent sample is yeah, not only visibility, but also just even if you're hanging out with one or two of them at a time, you know, you're going to always be with someone then versus like, as Jose was saying, if you're with an acquaintance, or close friend, best friend, and only one of them is, and then larger group size, too. So that could also be part of it. Alright, so based off of everything that we've discussed, what would you say are some of the key implications of your study for future research? And then policy and practice?

Erin Tinney 43:36

Yeah, I think there's absolutely way more that this paper could lead to in terms of research, I think of this more as kind of an exploratory type of paper, I think it would be really important to bring in more qualitative scholars in this area, particularly if they could get reliable information from police officers on how they make their decisions. I don't think an officer's just gonna willingly admit that they're like, yeah,

I totally judge you based on not their behavior, but their friend, right. I mean, they might I don't know. But that might be difficult, but also talking to teachers and youth and other community members about whether they feel stigmatized, you know, do my parents bring up that I'm hanging out with the wrong crowd, quote, unquote, do my teachers bring it up? Do they, you know, treat me differently, even if it's not a formal punishment, I think that would really speak to this idea of guilt by association. And I think also replicating it, and we've touched upon this a couple minutes ago, but with kind of a more diverse samples. The prosper study, while being in a rural locality is a really great setting to look at this because of the very specific dynamics of rural policing that I think may lend itself to guilt by association pretty heavily, having a more diverse sample, and more heavily over policed communities, I think is going to be really important for looking at whether guilt by association may be a rural phenomenon it may be, or it's going to apply everywhere. And I think, especially as community policing continues to be a very attractive option for a lot of police agencies, you know, police are told to get to know their community and know these networks, will guilt by association still even spread to like more urban heavily populated areas. And in terms of policy and practice, I think this is just adding more to the continuing evidence of the rippling and widespread impacts of adolescent police contact, and how it negatively impacts the community and youth who may not even be yet involved in the system. I think it would be very difficult to tell police to stop judging you based on the people around them. If we could wave a magic wand to do that, I think we could just solve all bias in policing. So that's obviously not going to happen overnight. But I think it's more going to speak to intentionality on who we bring into the system. At what point should it become a very last resort because of these potentially widespread impacts and bringing any adolescent into the system on other youth in that community as well?

Jose Sanchez 46:27

Sounds good. Yeah. Some, you know, I always like it when we have these episodes, that gives people marching orders, like people now have an agenda to or the research that they can do. So those are all the main questions we have for you. But we want to ask, about any projects that you have going on any future projects that maybe you're excited to? That are getting off the ground? Need to tell us a little bit more about what you're doing?

Erin Tinney 46:55

Oh, yes, absolutely. So if anyone is interested more in the PROSPER peer study, it's an extremely long acronym as Jenn read out. So yeah, just PROSPER. If anyone's interested in PROSPER peer study, particularly when it comes to friendship networks, I have written a chapter and co-written a chapter with my advisor. And it's a book called "Teen friendship networks development and risky behavior." We just turned in the final proof, I think it's going to be out in early 2024. I believe so I'm so sorry, if that's not, but that's off my hands with coming out soon. And it looks like not even just delinquency, but all types of other types of risky behavior and mental health, and really delve into network analysis. So if anyone's really interested in social networks, it also explains it really easily. I read the chapter that explain social networking. And I was like, Oh, my gosh, I actually understand that now. So I think it'll be a really interesting book for that. And also, for anyone who's interested in rural criminology as well. The next big thing is I gotta write a dissertation. That's I'm studying the impacts of juvenile justice system involvement on educational attainment for youth in Maryland. I'm kind of calling it the reverse school to prison pipeline. So I'm developing that now. And also looking at school absences as a mediating factor. So that's the main thing I'm working on now.

Jenn Tostlebe 48:28

Are you collecting your own data for your dissertation?

Erin Tinney 48:31

Luckily, no, I'm very fortunate to be able to get out of here. I'm very fortunate to have access to the Maryland longitudinal data system. So it connects the education system, the juvenile justice system, child welfare, employment. It's a really wonderful and exciting data source. And I'm very happy I get to use it. Yeah.

Jose Sanchez 48:57

Yeah. Yeah. You know, I will say, you know, once we submit chapters, it's kind of really out of our hands. Like, I have a chapter that I wrote, done almost two years ago. That hasn't been published yet. And, you know, Jenn and I wrote a template together that was supposed to come out, then a couple of months, but I don't think that's happening.

Jenn Tostlebe 49:19

So no, I think the official timeline still says that it is but I don't think it actually is. So who knows your book chapters? Maybe yours will be out next year. Maybe it'll be in four years. Yeah.

Erin Tinney 49:33

Yeah, I mean, the final proof of the book, and I submitted my comments about it, so or about my chapter specifically. So I'm hopeful fingers. That means it is going to be early 2024. But eventually.

Jose Sanchez 49:48

Well, that's all we have for you today. Thank you so much for joining us. It was a real pleasure to talk to you. And I know we just talked about some of the things that you're working on, but is there anything you'd like to plug? Anything that we should be up for?

Erin Tinney 50:04

First, I'll be on the job market this fall. So hire me. I'm looking for both academic and non-academic jobs kind of thing with that there. And then I'm also, if you're an undergraduate at George Washington University, I'll be teaching youth prison in schools in the fall. So if you're interested in the school to prison pipeline, and issues of school and crime and punishment, I'll be teaching that course. I don't know what the course number is, but it's called youth prison or school prisons and youth.

Jose Sanchez 50:43

Yeah. And, you know, I am very confident that you're gonna get a job. And as soon as you do work, claiming it, like we will stay at your job, even if that's absolutely not true. It is now.

Jenn Tostlebe 50:57

Not true.

Jose Sanchez 51:01

We're taking credit for this. In my speaking of which, so where can people find you? You just mentioned Twitter, email, Google Scholar, all the things. Yeah.

Erin Tinney 51:15

So my Twitter, I just say that and I am much more of a lurker. I think other people have said that too. That would probably be my like one post, like a job. And it's Tinney_Erin, I think so just my name reversed. And then my email is etinney@umd.edu. Yes, I have a Google Scholar profile. It has this and my master's thesis. So it's not that much too much to look at there. But that's basically it in terms of contacting me, and happy to answer any emails.

Jenn Tostlebe 51:49

Well, thank you again. It was great having you on and nice to meet you virtually and talk with you.

Erin Tinney 51:58

I will be at ASC in the fall, I will see you there.

Jenn Tostlebe 52:03

Hey, thanks for listening.

Jose Sanchez 52:04

Don't forget to leave us a review on Apple podcasts or iTunes. Or let us know what you think of the episode by leaving us a comment on our website, thecriminologyacademy.com.

Jenn Tostlebe 52:14

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Jose Sanchez 52:25

or email us at thecrimacademy@gmail.com

Jenn Tostlebe 52:30

Til next time!