

Criminal Justice Involvement and Later Life Health Disparities: Methodological Challenges, Data Needs, and Emerging Issues

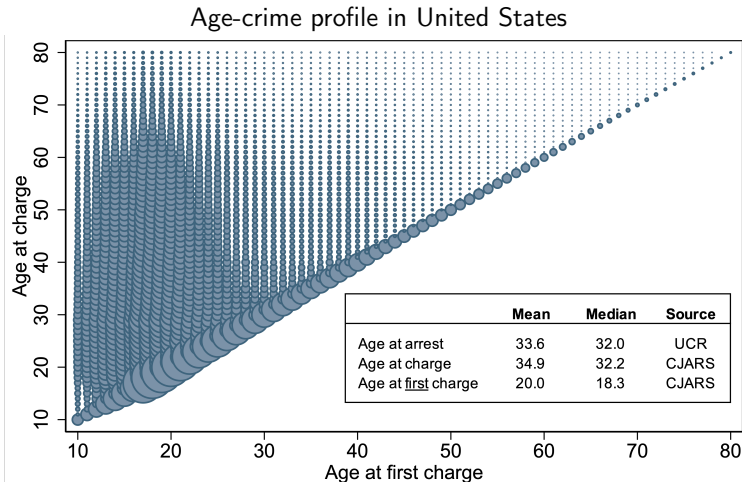
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Justice involvement and old age?

- Crime is typically a young person's game
- Sharp declines in justice-involvement in 30s
- Rare that elderly population remains engaged in justice system



Source: Mueller-Smith, Pyle, and Walker (2023).

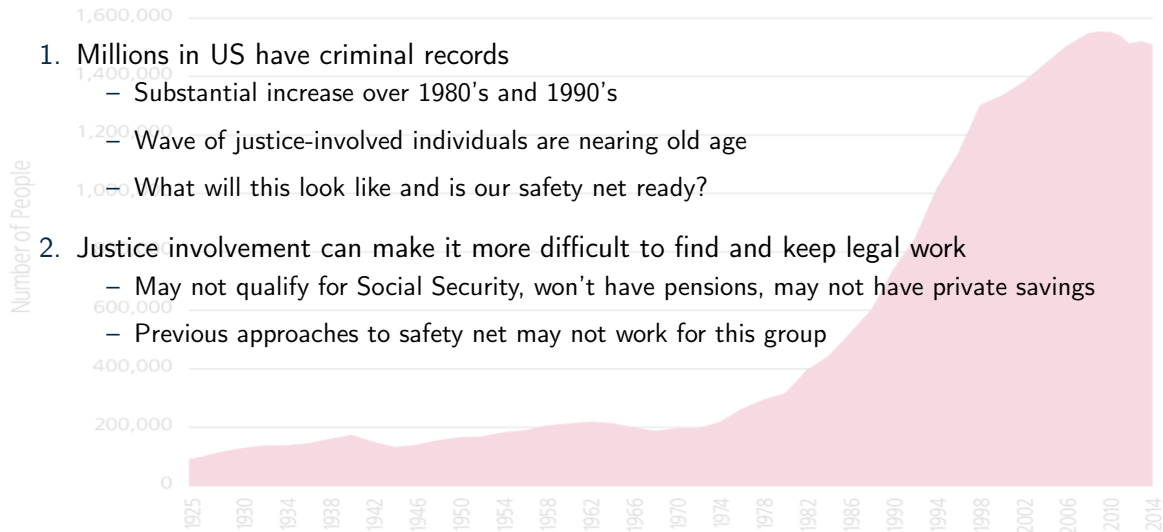
Justice involvement and old age?

1. Millions in US have criminal records

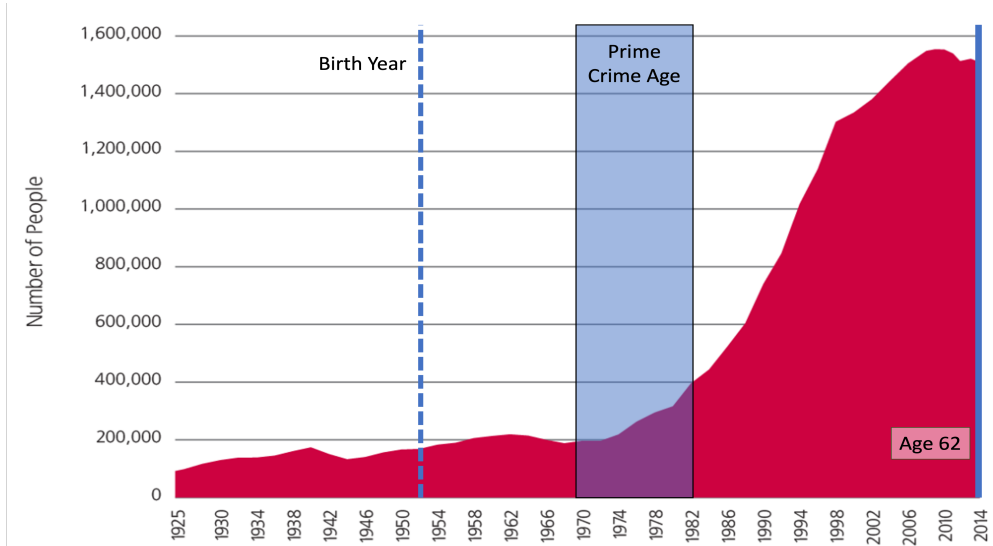
- Substantial increase over 1980's and 1990's
- Wave of justice-involved individuals are nearing old age
- What will this look like and is our safety net ready?

2. Justice involvement can make it more difficult to find and keep legal work

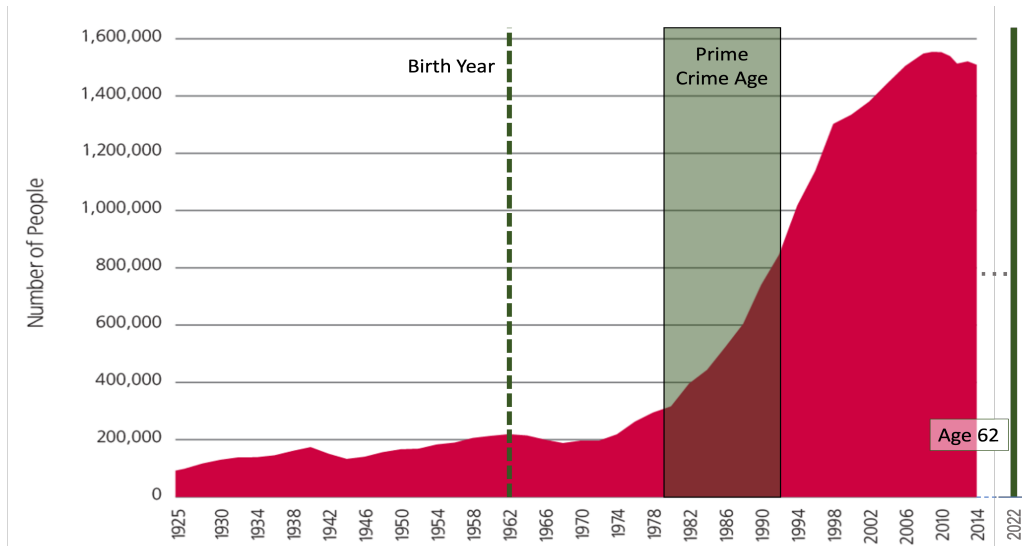
- May not qualify for Social Security, won't have pensions, may not have private savings
- Previous approaches to safety net may not work for this group



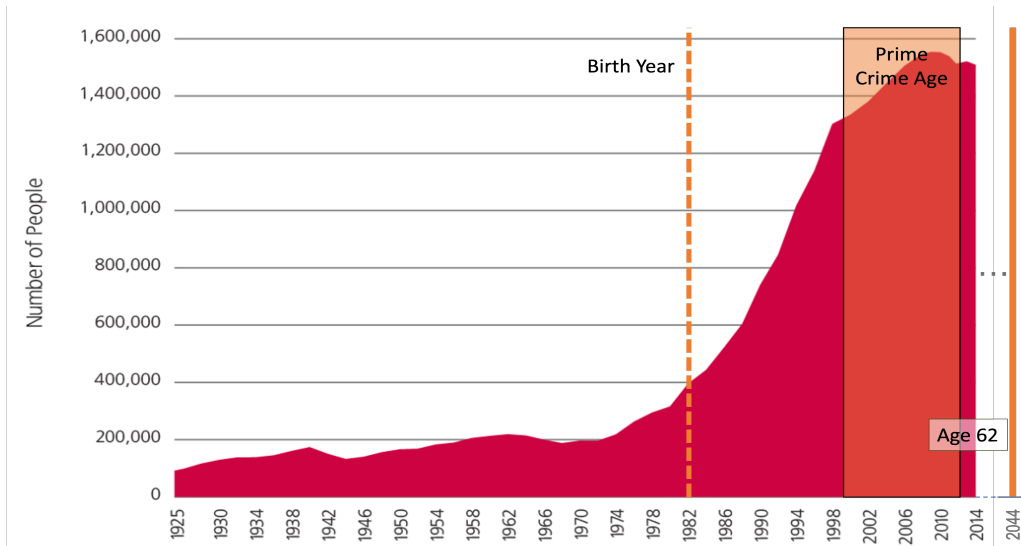
A lagged impact on the retiring population



A lagged impact on the retiring population



A lagged impact on the retiring population



What we need to study long-run impact

1. Records of early life contact with justice system
 - Retrospective survey questions may invite social desirability bias
 - Panel surveys may suffer from differential attrition
2. Measurement of well-being in later life
 - Potentially 40+ years since justice involvement
3. Capacity to identify critical heterogeneity components
 - Changes across birth cohorts
 - Differences across local jurisdictions and geographies
 - Disparities across racial and ethnic groups
 - Spillovers onto other household members

Statistical efforts in the U.S.

		Characteristics						Coverage					
		A	P	L	S	I	R	Of	Ar	Jl	Cr	Pr	Co
Federal Statistical Series and Data Collections:													
BJS	National Crime Victimization Survey		x		x		x	x					
	Uniform Crime Reporting Program	x	x				x	x	x				
	National Incident-Based Reporting System		x				x	x	x				
	Censuses of Jails	x	x				x			x			
	State Court Processing Series	x	x				x				x		
	Censuses of State/Fed. Adult Corr. Facilities	x	x				x					x	
	National Corrections Reporting Program		x	x			x					x	
	Survey of Inmates in State/Fed. Corr. Facilities		x		x	x	x	x				x	
	National Inmate Survey		x		x		x	x				x	
	Annual Probation, Parole Surveys	x	x				x						x

Characteristics

- A - Geographically aggregated statistics
- P - Population-level coverage
- L - Longitudinal
- S - Based on self-reported information
- I - Integrated with non-crime data
- R - Researcher access mechanism

Coverage

- Of - Offenses
- Ar - Arrest records
- Jl - Jail records
- Cr - Court records
- Pr - Prison records
- Co - Community supervision records

CJARS may help solve current shortcomings

CJARS, founded in 2016, is a joint data infrastructure project between University of Michigan and the U.S. Census Bureau

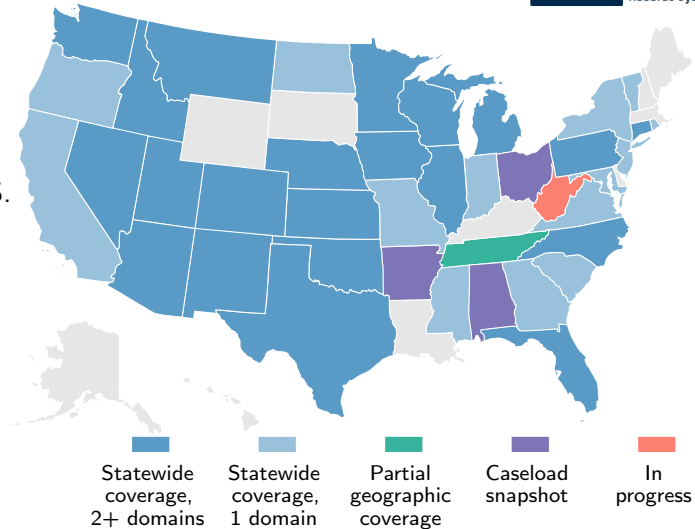
Building a novel data platform to modernize research and statistical reporting on the U.S. criminal justice system, including:

- Event-level criminal justice data with nationwide scope
- Tracking across key milestones in the justice system
- Capacity to link with individual-level survey and administrative data at the U.S. Census Bureau

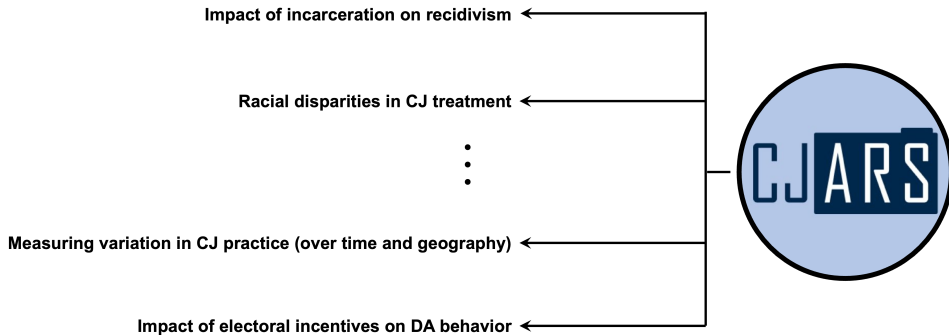
Financial support from the NSF, Gates Foundation, Arnold Ventures, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Annie E Casey Foundation, the University of Michigan, and the Census Bureau

CJARS data coverage

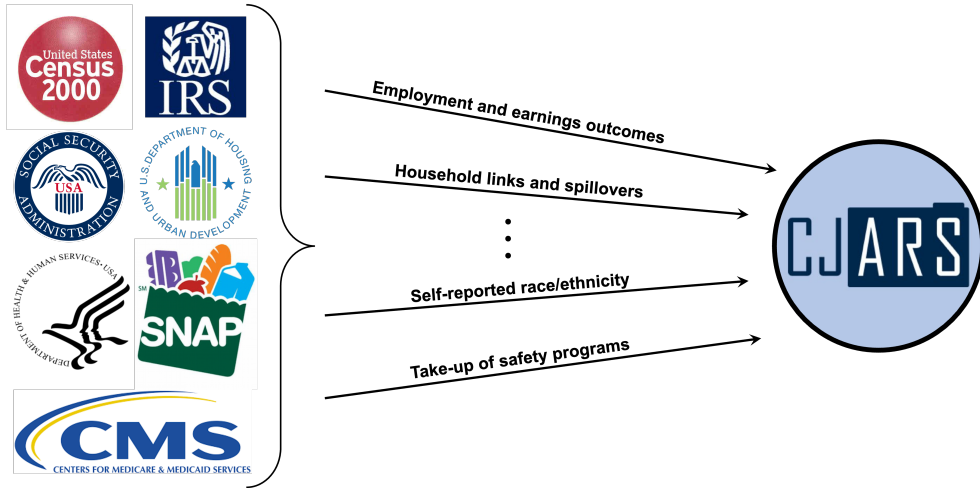
- Data from >2,500 counties
- States with coverage of state court, state DOC, and/or state repository represent >84% of U.S. population
- 3.5b records
- 215m CJ events
- 44m unique individuals
- Some jurisdictional data extends back >40 years



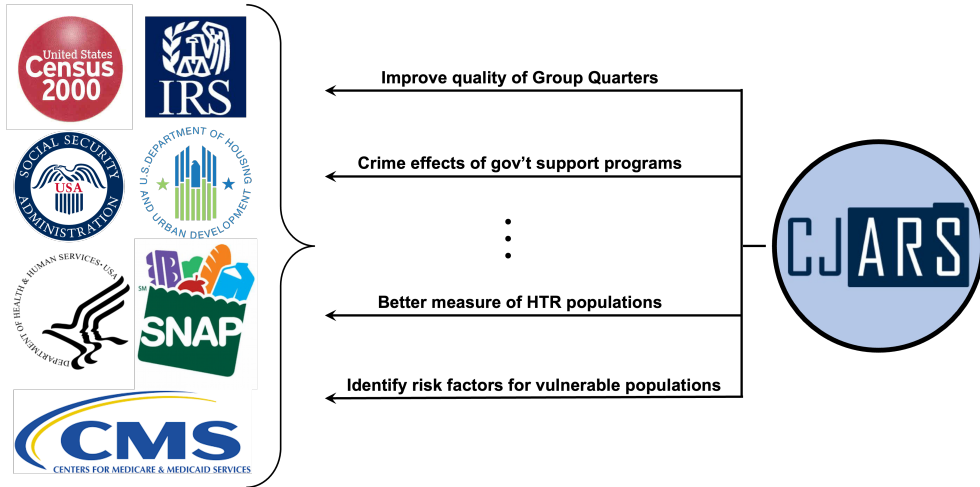
Value of an integrated data ecosystem



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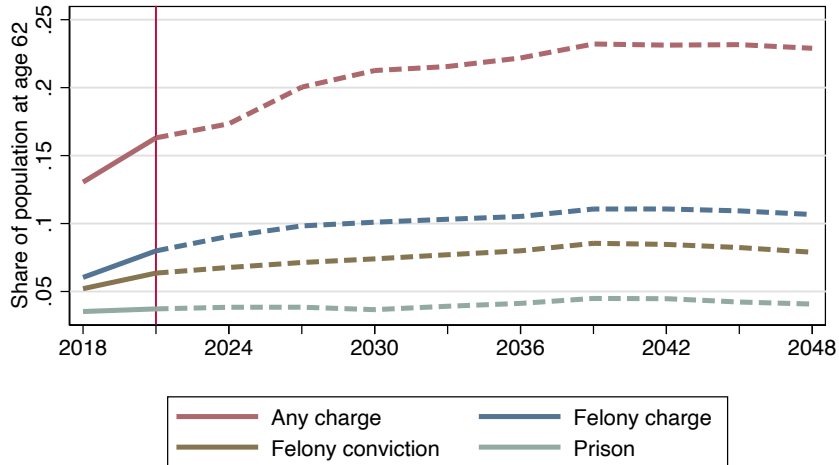
“Criminal Justice Involvement & Well-Being in Old Age” (joint with Jennifer Doleac, Jonathan Eggleston, William Gale, and Briana Sullivan)

Two things we do in the paper:

1. Integrate CJARS, Census, and SSA microdata to describe old age for those with criminal histories
 - Limited evidence exists for those without contemporaneous or recent justice-involvement
2. Forecast grow rate in share of retirement-age population with criminal histories
 - Fairly reliable for next 30 years given bulk of justice initiation occurs during teens and 20s

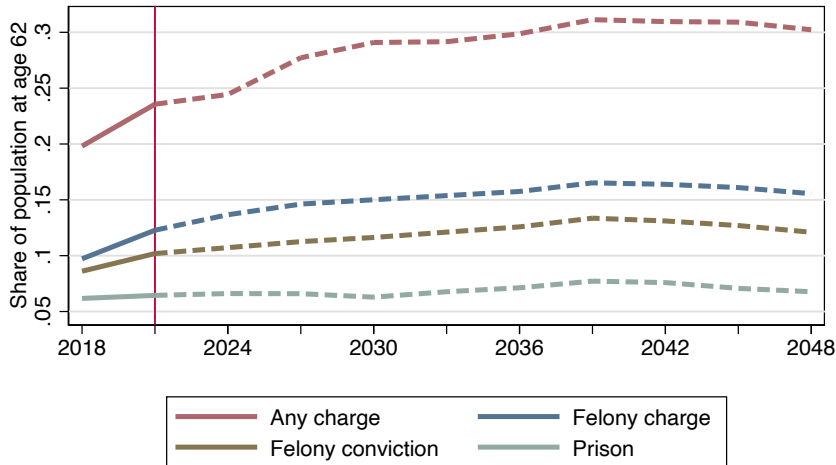
Forecasting ↑ share with criminal records

All race/ethnicity groups, all gender groups



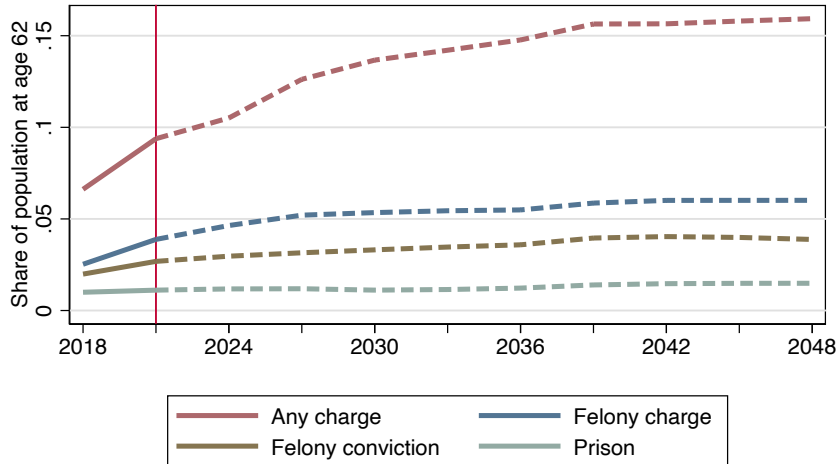
Forecasting ↑ share with criminal records

All race/ethnicity groups, Men



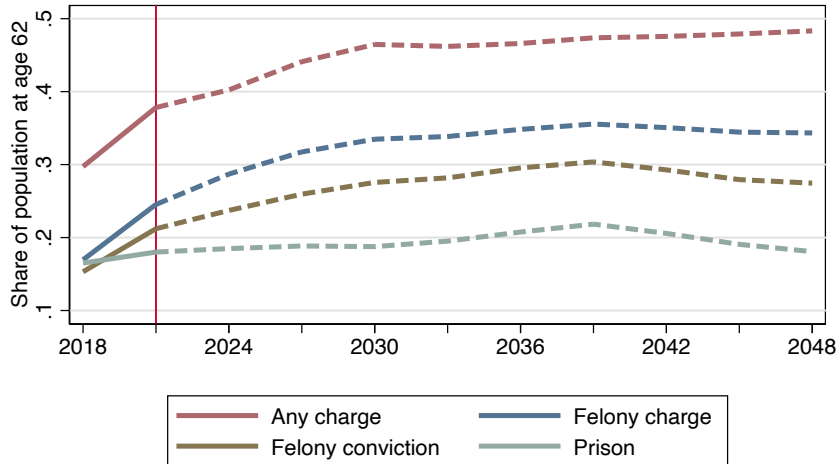
Forecasting ↑ share with criminal records

All race/ethnicity groups, Women



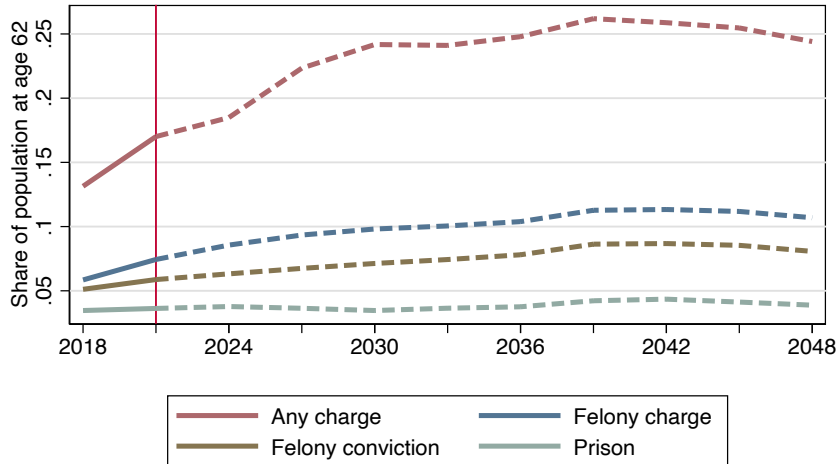
Forecasting ↑ share with criminal records

Black, non-Hispanic Men



Forecasting ↑ share with criminal records

White, non-Hispanic Men



Criminal justice involvement could impact a range of life-cycle outcomes that influence well-being in old age:

1. Employment and earnings (important for OASDI eligibility)
2. Health
3. Family structure and household attachment

But, little work can study this issue because criminal records are formed much earlier in life, often decades before reaching retirement age

To make progress, we link recent responses to American Community Survey to criminal histories from the preceding 3-4 decades

- Improve utility of existing surveys without existing justice questions through data integration

Well-being of older justice-involved individuals

	ACS Respondents, age 50-70		
	Justice-involved	No pre-50 justice event Re-weighted	ACS weights
Demographic Traits			
% Currently married	33.26	61.27	66.08
% Ever married	76.84	85.56	91.41
Avg Household Size	2.33	2.66	2.42
% with at least one minor in household	16.74	21.96	15.6
% with nonrelative in household	19.82	10.64	7.59
Educational Attainment (targeted in re-weighting procedure)			
% with less than HS diploma	24.4	24.4	10.41
% with HS diploma	39.54	39.54	28.79
% with some college	28.03	28.03	30.04
% with at least a Bachelor's	8.03	8.03	30.76

Well-being of older justice-involved individuals

	ACS Respondents, age 50-70		
	Justice-involved	No pre-50 justice event Re-weighted	ACS weights
Health Traits			
% with any HI	73.5	85.58	92.21
% with Private HI	36.36	66.72	74.01
% with Public HI	45.03	28.89	39.23
% with a Disability	36.02	21.61	18.72
% residing in nursing home/health facility	0.48	0.25	0.20
% residing in residential treatment centers	0.31	0.07	0.03
% residing in emergency/transitional shelters	0.40	0.07	0.02

Well-being of older justice-involved individuals

	ACS Respondents, age 50-70		
	Justice-involved	No pre-50 justice event Re-weighted	ACS weights
Economic Traits			
% Living in Poverty	35.81	12.83	8.17
Average HH Income	\$55,690	\$83,020	\$101,300
Average Person-level Income	\$25,200	\$45,010	\$52,510
% with pension income	7.55	12.31	19.35
Criminal Justice Background			
Avg number of pre-age 50 convictions	3.8	-	-
Avg number of pre-age 50 felony convictions	2.4	-	-
Avg number of pre-age 50 years spent in prison	8.5	-	-
% No CJ Contact after age 50	74.1	-	-
Years since last criminal charge pre-age 50	8.2	-	-

Several important limitations worth acknowledging:

- CJARS national data coverage still incomplete
- “Covered” jurisdictions may only have prison or court data
- More resource intensive to acquire historical records older than last two decades

⇒ Not learning as much as we could from the leading edge of this looming retirement crisis

Thank you

Questions, comments, and suggestions welcome.

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Learn more about CJARS by visiting our website:

- <https://cjars.org>