

LIFE COURSE CRIMINOLOGY: OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE STUDY OF CRIME, PUNISHMENT, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT USING LINKED ADMINISTRATIVE AND DECENTNIAL CENSUS DATA

John H. Laub
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Maryland, College Park

William J. Sabol
Westat
Rockville, MD

A presentation at the Workshop on “The Potential for Research
Using Linked Census, Survey, and Administrative Data to Assess
the Longer Term Effects of Policy,” National Academies of
Science, Washington, DC, May 9, 2016

LIFE COURSE CRIMINOLOGY: THE STORY OF THE GLUECK PROJECT

- Since 1987, a long-term research project examining continuity and change in offending from childhood through old age.
- A unique longitudinal data set that used administrative records across a wide range of domains. Note: the original investigators were not subject to human subject review boards.

UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY (1950)

500 Delinquents

500 Nondelinquents

Matched Case-by-Case on:

- 1) Age (mean = 14.5)
- 2) Ethnicity
- 3) IQ
- 4) Neighborhood poverty

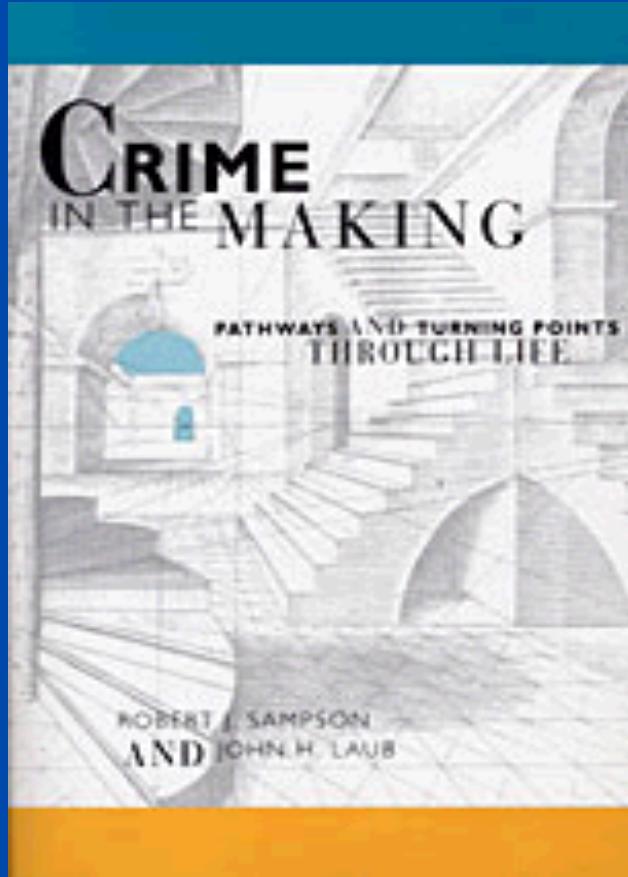
LONGITUDINAL INQUIRY

The two samples were followed up at age **25** and again at age **32**

Wave II Retention: 93% Wave III Retention: 88%

DATA SOURCES INCLUDE

- 1) Interviews with Subjects, Parents, Teachers, Employers, Spouses, Friends, Community Members, Social Workers, Probation Officers, Parole Officers, Psychiatrists, etc.
- 2) Criminal Record Histories
- 3) Record Checks with Multiple Social Service Agencies



Study of continuity and change in the lives of the 1,000 “Glueck men,” childhood to age 32

KEY THEMES

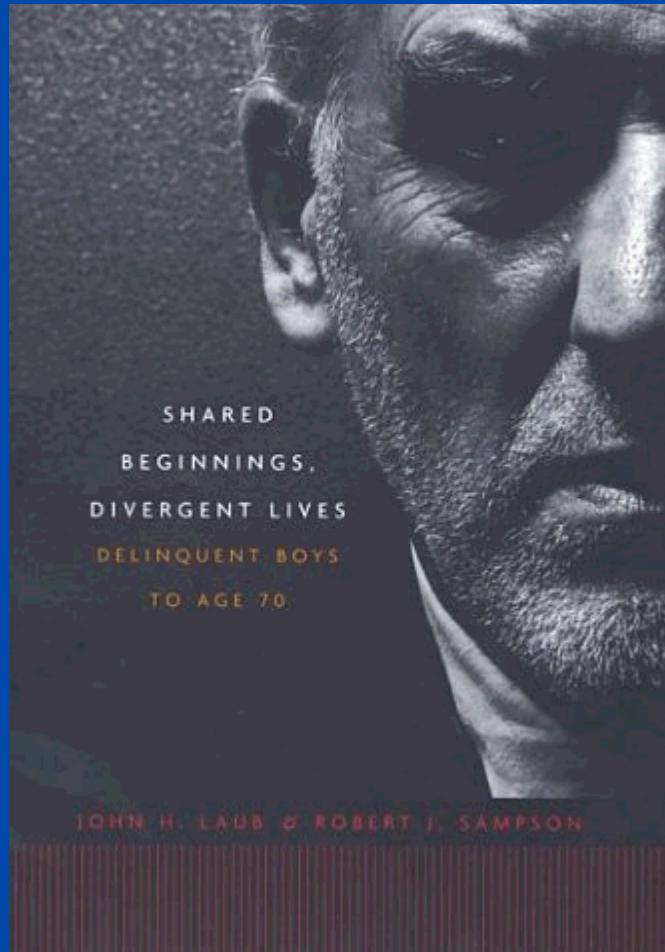
- **Age-graded theory of informal social control;** integrating background factors and mediating social processes
- **Continuity** in crime and deviant behavior
- Change matters: “**turning points**” – marriage, employment, and military service

LAUB AND SAMPSON FOLLOW-UP

475 of the 500 delinquents survived to age 32 and were last contacted circa 1960. Our project used:

- 1. CRIMINAL RECORDS SEARCH**
- 2. DEATH RECORDS SEARCH**
- 3. LOCATE AND INTERVIEW ORIGINAL DELINQUENT SUBJECTS**

- Life history interviews with a stratified sample of 52 men



A 50-year update of the Glueck men's lives and
“criminal careers” at the close of the 20th century

KEY THEMES

- Over the full life course, there is enormous variability in the patterns of offending for this sample of serious, persistent offenders
- Within-individual changes are large, often greater than between-individual

KEY THEMES

- Trajectories of crime are influenced but not determined by prior childhood differences
- Desistance is a *process* and occurs even for those at highest risk -- the predicted life-course-persistent offenders

KEY THEMES

- Crime and Incarceration are important independent variables, not just outcome variables
- Cumulative disadvantage – spillover effects into other life domains forestalling desistance from crime
- Criminal Justice/Social Interventions may be potential turning points in the life course

LIMITATIONS OF THE GLUECK DATA

- Small Sample Size
- Single Site
- All White Males
- No systematic data on programmatic involvement
- Long Term Longitudinal Data by Definition are Old!

ERA TWO

The 1970s to the Present

“The life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime” (Elder, 1998: 3)

Life course transitions and developmental change are bound by historical context, thereby necessitating longitudinal data over long periods of time. The American Opportunity Study presents this potential.

KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF CRIME AND MASS INCARCERATION

- What are the effects of growing up in an era of ubiquitous criminal records and mass incarceration?
- What are the effects of crime and mass incarceration at the individual level on:
 - Labor market outcomes (e.g., employment and earnings);
 - Physical and mental health outcomes;
 - Family formation and dissolution;
 - Family outcomes (income, public assistance, housing, children's outcomes);
 - Victimization risk (to the family) and persistent criminal involvement?

KEY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EFFECTS OF CRIME AND MASS INCARCERATION

- Given the concentration of crime and mass incarceration (both geographically and socially), at the community level, what are the effects on:
 - The social organization of communities;
 - The relationship between formal and informal social control;
 - The spatial foundations of compounded deprivation?
- What is the role of involvement in crime and the criminal justice system in the pursuit of the American Dream across generations?
- Is there evidence of a legacy of disadvantage?

ILLUSTRATION #1

LINKING ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS ON CRIME/INCARCERATION TO SURVEYS

- The Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study
- The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth
- The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health
- The National Crime Victimization Survey
- The Panel Study of Income Dynamics
- The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

ILLUSTRATION #2

LINKING DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

- Criminal Justice data linked to Child Protective Services, Unemployment Insurance, public health, education, public housing, zoning, and land use data at the city, county, and state level
- Bureau of Justice Statistics Data
 - Criminal History Records
 - National Corrections Reporting Program
 - Surveys of Prison Inmates

ILLUSTRATION #3

LINKING CRIME AND INCARCERATION DATA TO THE AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY STUDY

- Criminal History Records, the National Corrections Reporting Program, including state sentencing, release, and supervision practices, and the National Crime Victimization Data to data on:
 - Earnings/Income
 - Employment
 - Education
 - Residential Relocation

CHALLENGES REGARDING DATA ON CRIME AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- Define criminal justice involvement? Stop, Question, and Frisk to Parole and everything in between. How do we capture what matters most?
- Can juvenile and adult records be linked? This is key for a life course study.
- Can we distinguish jails from prisons?
- How do we take into account heterogeneity in the incarceration experience (e.g., security level, size, treatment options, etc.)?
- Lots of Missing data, aliases, multiple SSN's, etc.

MORE CHALLENGING ISSUES

- Data Access
- Disclosure/Data Security
- Privacy/Confidentiality
- Data Quality
- Data Sharing and Archiving

Thank You.

Questions?

jlaub@umd.edu

WilliamSabol@westat.com