

AN INTRODUCTION TO

LIFE-COURSE CRIMINOLOGY

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LIFE-COURSE THEORIES OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

In the early stages of criminal career research, the field was dominated by a focus on empirical findings and their policy implications. Theoretical developments of crime and the life course lagged behind. From the early 1990s and onward, however, this changed considerably as a breadth of life-course theories of crime and deviance emerged in the field, incorporating various elements from the traditions of developmental psychology, life-course sociology, and criminological theory. Today, these criminological theories are among the most influential theories within the discipline as a whole. In this chapter we go through a number of these theories and we do so in some detail. Instead of giving a schematic, brief description of each theory (as is often done) we aim to go through each theory step by step, to give the reader a closer account of how each theory attempts to explain criminal careers, crime, and the life course. We then revisit the different steps of each theory in the subsequent chapters as we specifically deal with elements of the criminal career (persistence, intermittency, desistance, etc.). Theories can be difficult to learn and understand, and the repetition is useful.

A theory is a proposed explanation of a given phenomenon (Merton, 1945; Swedberg, 2012). If we are to understand and be able to use a given theory, we first have to understand what that theory is attempting to explain. Some criminological theories – such as Sutherland’s theory of differential association, or Gottfredson and Hirschi’s self-control theory – are ‘general’, basically meaning that they claim to be able to explain all crimes committed by all people in all places, at all times. Other theories are much more modest in their claims. Farrington’s Integrated Cognitive Antisocial Potential (ICAP) Theory, for example,

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only claims to be able to explain 'everyday crimes' such as interpersonal violence, theft, vandalism, robbery, and illegal drug-use and drug-dealing committed by working-class men in big cities, such as Philadelphia, Boston, London, Copenhagen, and Stockholm (Farrington, 2005). Here and there in our below discussion, we point out these issues to the reader.

Before we get going, however, it is important to remind ourselves of the specific, over-arching research problem that life-course theories of crime try to address and explain. We have already introduced this problem in Chapter 1. The basic issue seemingly takes the form of an empirical paradox. Crime and (other) anti-social behavior show impressive *continuity* over age, but, at the same time, their prevalence *changes* dramatically with age. In other words, the best 'predictor' for future criminal activity is past criminal activity (continuity). However, in any given population, the number of active offenders (prevalence) decreases with age. The two empirical findings seem to be contradictory. How can these two findings be reconciled and integrated in the same, theoretical framework? In other words, what makes some people persist in crime, and what is it that makes most offenders quit? This question has given rise to a number of related, more specific questions, which we also address below.

We distinguish the life-course criminological explanations of continuity and change in criminal careers according to two very broad themes: *static* and *dynamic* theories. The distinction is to be taken not literally but more as a guideline, suggesting that theories differ and imply different implications. As Piquero et al. (2007) note, the content, shapes and pathways the criminal career takes in any given case is likely a result of *both* static and dynamic processes.

Because the field of life-course criminology is so large – and still growing, possibly more than ever – we have limited this chapter's review to five theories: two 'static' (Gottfredson and Hirschi's, and Moffitt's theories), and three 'dynamic' (Sampson and Laub's, Giordano et al.'s, and Farrington's theories). We have chosen them for several reasons: partly, because they are among the most influential and most tested; and partly, because they give a quite good overview of the field, including the more sociologically oriented approaches (Gottfredson and Hirschi, Sampson and Laub, and Giordano et al.) as well as the more discipline-integrated ones (Moffitt and Farrington).

Static Theories of Criminal Careers

Static theories of crime and the life course are sometimes referred to as ontogenetic theories, or theories of population heterogeneity (Nagin and Paternoster, 2000). This concept aims to capture an allegedly empirical phenomena; that people's propensity to engage in crime differ within a given population. Simply put, some individuals more than others are prone to do crime. Human development,

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moreover, is seen as a normative process of 'maturational unfolding' so that behavior tends to emerge in the same sequence and at the same age for the vast majority of individuals. Such theories of crime tend to share at least three features.

First, the basic causes of criminal behavior (including changes in criminal offending over time) are found at the individual level of features, traits, and endowments, all established early in life. These features differ between individuals so, for example, for Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) some people have low self-control, while others have high. Those with low self-control are then more prone to offending and this propensity will be stable over time. Second, these features result in inter-individual stability in behavior, so that people who have a higher level of offending in adolescence are also expected to have a higher level of offending in adulthood. Third, changes in within-individual offending over time are products of normative changes that occur as people age.

As we noted above, considering the breadth of life-course criminology, a complete review of all static theories is impossible for us to present here. Instead of briefly sketching the outlines of a bulk of theories, we choose to limit ourselves to two theories and go through them in greater detail, step by step, to give the reader a more comprehensive view of how these theories – and their creators – see crime and the life course, and attempt to explain their relationship. Those two are the theories of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), and Moffitt (1993).¹

A General Theory of Crime: The Importance of Self-Control

Considering Gottfredson and Hirschi's firm rejection of the life-course criminological enterprise, as we saw in Chapter 1, it may seem strange to include them here. However, somewhat ironically, their theory of self-control is one of the most discussed, empirically tested (more or less validly, we should add) theories in the field. It is therefore an important piece of the story we tell in this book.

Note the word 'general' in the title of their book, *A General Theory of Crime*. The word implies considerable boldness: a general theory of crime can explain all crimes, at all times, by all persons. It might be fruitful for the reader to keep in mind that, using this theory, we should be able to explain 'everyday crimes' such as violence and theft, as well as complicated finance crimes, committed by young or old, women or men, today or 50 or a 100 years ago.

Gottfredson and Hirschi begin at the beginning: with a conception of crime and human nature. The genesis of their approach is found in the Classical School of Beccaria, Bentham, and Hobbes: 'all human conduct can be understood

¹ Other theories include those of Glueck and Glueck (1950), Mednick (1977), and Wilson and Herrnstein (1985).

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as the self-interested pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain. By definition, therefore, crimes too are merely acts designed to satisfy some combination of these basic tendencies' (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990: 5). Crimes, as they define them, are 'acts of force or fraud undertaken in self-interest' (p. 15). Where classical theory – and social control theory – fail, they argue, is in their inability to account for the empirical finding that 'people also differ in the extent to which they are vulnerable to the temptations of the moment' (p. 87).

To unpack this vulnerability, they go to the characteristics of criminal acts. The basic cause of crime, they argue, can 'be derived directly from the nature of criminal acts' (p. 88). Criminal acts, then, provide immediate, easy, and/or simple gratification of desires, are exciting, risky, or thrilling, require little or no skill or planning, and provide meager long-term benefits. Other things being equal, some individuals are more prone to choose to commit crime than are others and the reason behind that is a latent trait they term self-control. Gottfredson and Hirschi (p. 90) explain this term as people who are impulsive, insensitive, physical, risk-taking, short-sighted and nonverbal and will therefore tend to engage in criminal acts such as smoking, drinking, drug use, etc.

Now, Gottfredson and Hirschi caution that crime is not a necessary consequence of having low self-control. Crime can be counteracted by 'situational conditions or other properties of the individual' (p. 89) but, that being said, those who possess a high degree of self-control 'will be substantially less likely at all periods of life to engage in criminal acts'. In other words, when combined with appropriate opportunities and attractive targets, low self-control leads to crime.

Self-control is spread on a continuous scale. What, then, makes somebody develop a higher or lower degree of self-control? Because the road toward or away from crime starts early in an individual's life, Gottfredson and Hirschi know that the origins of an individual's level of self-control must be laid even earlier (otherwise, it would not be a cause of crime). The origin of our self-control is quite complex:

The first [source] is the variation among children in the degree to which they manifest such traits to begin with. The second is the variation among caretakers in the degree to which they recognize low self-control and its consequences and the degree to which they are willing and able to correct it. (p. 96)

They do *not* argue that criminal behavior is inherited, or that some people are 'born criminals'; in fact, they explicitly reject that notion. However, individual differences can impact on the prospects for effective socialization. Effective socialization is, moreover, always possible, whatever the individual's original disposition. In other words, when an individual is born there is always an indeterminate quality to his or her future level of self-control (and thus the probability that he or she will engage in crime).

In short, a very large portion of our self-control comes from early family experiences and the way we are brought up. That is, the situation in the family and the

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quality of parenting during a child's early years is crucial. Many characteristics associated with low self-control, Gottfredson and Hirschi argue, 'show themselves in the absence of nurturance, discipline, or training' (p. 95). Child-rearing is thus a basic tenet of an individual's future self-control: the child's behavior must be monitored, deviant acts (when they occur) must be recognized, and punished.

If the family, for one reason or another, is unwilling or incapable of exercising this power over the child, it does not mean that the individual by definition develops a low self-control. On the contrary, there is one other powerful institution that affects the child during his or her early years:

Those not socialized sufficiently by the family may eventually learn self-control through the operation of other sanctioning systems or institutions. The institution given principal responsibility for this task in modern society is the school. (p. 105)

In the school, the child learns 'to better appreciate the advantages and opportunities associated with self-control' and becomes more socialized, regardless of family experiences and upbringing (p. 106). Around age 8, an individual's level of self-control is set and then stable throughout life: in the subsequent individual's development, there is 'little or no movement from high self-control to low self-control' (p. 107).

Here is where Gottfredson and Hirschi present a famous and debated argument. We know the shape of the age/crime curve: a steep rise in adolescence with a peak at around age 17, followed by an almost as steep decline during the following years. In other words, say we have a group of 100 boys. At age 10, 20 of those boys are engaged in crime. At age 17, the number of boys actively engaged in crime has increased to 90. At age 20, it has decreased to 50. At age 29, the number has decreased even more to, say, 10. That is to say, the prevalence of offenders within the group changes dramatically. However, since low self-control is stable after age 8, it cannot be changes in individuals' self-control that cause the shape of the curve; it must be something else. It is, simply, age. Offenders basically 'age out' of crime. Studying various age-crime curves, Gottfredson and Hirschi find the same shape of the curve everywhere they look, regardless of historical period, gender, or ethnicity. Thus, their famous argument that the 'age-crime relation is invariant' (p. 126). Turning to the notion of desistance, Gottfredson and Hirschi return to Matza (see Chapter 2), and state that desistance is nothing but maturational reform, and 'maturational reform is just that, change in behavior that comes with maturation' (p. 136).

Since socialization does not end in adolescence but continues through life, Gottfredson and Hirschi reach the conclusion that 'the proportion of the population in the potential offender pool should tend to decline as cohorts age' (p. 107). 'Developmental' variables, such as relationship formation, employment, and association with delinquent peers, exert no *causal* influences on criminal behavior and the timing of desistance; instead, age is the fundamental factor and all others merely 'spurious' (Thornberry et al., 2012: 53).

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Since this decline [of crime with age] cannot be explained by change in the person or by his exposure to anticriminal institutions, we are left with the conclusion that it is due to the inexorable aging of the organism. (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990: 141)

Now, in this extract there is an important, somewhat hidden dimension: that of the stability postulate. Although crime declines with age for everybody, regardless of their level of self-control, individual differences remain stable: those with low self-control will always offend, the theory predicts, at a higher rate than those with high self-control. In other words, as we follow two groups, one with low and one with high self-control, through time, the offending rates should (1) follow the age/crime curve, but (2) the low self-control group should always offend at a higher level than the high self-control group.

As a result of this, Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that cross-sectional research, which compares different individuals at the same time, is enough to study crime and criminal careers. It follows logically from their theoretical position as self-control, the cause of criminal offending, is established early in life. Gottfredson and Hirschi's position is one of considerable boldness and attractiveness. We now move on to a brief evaluative discussion on the theory.

The Merits and Problems of A General Theory of Crime

Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory has the scientific beauty of simplicity: an individual's self-control and his or her movement along the age continuum explains his or her criminal offending. This is a great merit of the theory. However, being a general theory of crime, there are some important issues inherent in it.

For example, the fact that low self-control is positively correlated with crime is hard to dispute: a breadth of possible indicators of self-control (what some term risk factors, such as impulsivity) have been closely correlated with crime in various studies (Farrington, 2003), and the notion that there are between-individual differences when these indicators are measured is well-known: some people simply tend to be more impulsive or risk-taking than are others. However, it is one thing to argue that there is a correlation between low self-control and crime, that is, people who score low on self-control indicators tend to score high on criminal offending. It is a very different thing to claim that there is a *causal relationship* at work, where it is the low level of self-control that causes the individual to engage in crime. In their work, Gottfredson and Hirschi have trouble proving this claim, since it is an empirical question but the main inference they use to support it is theoretical. To actually test the claim would, in effect, entail using a methodology Gottfredson and Hirschi are against; longitudinal research, where the sequencing of events can be controlled for. There is a related issue in the proposition that self-control is stable after age 8; to actually test the stability of self-control would require longitudinal data.

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Another issue concerns the word 'general'. Can the theory account for white-collar crime? Despite a specific focus on this (see Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990, Ch. 9) their argument is problematic on logical grounds.² People who engage in white-collar crime and do so from a relatively high position in a business hierarchy have, in the majority of cases, demonstrated that they are capable of delaying gratification and rewards, and focusing on long-term goals, since they have gone through years of higher education. Being able to delay gratification and rewards is an indicator of *high* self-control, not low.

Additionally, there is the problem of the so-called stability postulate. On the one hand, as demonstrated by Paternoster et al. (2001) among many others, individual differences do seem to matter. However, there is 'little empirical support' for the core notion of relative stability over time (Thornberry et al., 2012: 57): those with a lower level of self-control do not constantly offend at a rate above those with a higher level of self-control.

Finally, there is the problematic claim that the age/crime curve is universal. There are multiple issues with this claim, here we only highlight the perhaps most central of them. It is a question of methodology. Remember, the age/crime curve is an aggregate. As such, it may 'hide' individual, alternative age/crime curves that disappear when hundreds, sometimes thousands of individuals' criminal offending (as construed by some measure or other) are lumped together in one curve. There may, for example, be individuals who consistently commit crimes throughout their lives, and do so at a non-decreasing, or even increasing rate. In that case, Gottfredson and Hirschi's age/crime argument stands on very shaky ground. This possibility, that the age/crime curve may hide several distinct types of offending patterns, is in fact a central thesis of the theory we turn to now.

Moffitt's Dual Developmental Taxonomy

Terrie E. Moffitt's (1993) explanation of crime and the life course is one of the earliest and most famous theories in the field. According to Farrington (2010: 254) 'there has been more empirical research on this theory than on any others'. Her theory is partly based on previous research but, most importantly, also leans heavily on results from one of the famous longitudinal studies, the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study. It is a prospective, longitudinal cohort study, consisting of all children born at the only maternity hospital in Dunedin, New Zealand, between April 1, 1972, and March 31, 1973 who were still residing in Dunedin when the study began three years later, in 1975; a total of 1,037 participants. New data – consisting of psychological, medical, and sociological measures, as well as official record data – has been collected every two years.

² The following remark is adopted from Soothill et al. (2009: 26).

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In her attempt at unpacking the riddles of crime and the life course, she begins in a way very similar to how we began this book in Chapter 1. The task she sets herself is to 'reconcile two incongruous facts about antisocial behavior: (a) It shows impressive continuity over age, but (b) its prevalence changes dramatically over age, increasing almost ten-fold temporarily during adolescence' (Moffitt, 1993: 674). Moffitt's solution to this problem is similar to self-control theory in several respects but differs in one crucial way. While self-control is distributed on a continuous scale, Moffitt presents an offender dichotomy, or dual taxonomy: life-course persistent offenders (LCP), and adolescence-limited offenders (AL).

The age/crime curve thus 'conceals two qualitatively distinct categories of individuals, each in need of its own distinct theoretical explanation' (p. 674). The typical search for 'general' theories of crime, Moffitt argues, is an analytical mistake. Instead, crime can be explained by two distinct causal mechanisms.

The Life-Course Persistent Offenders

Let us begin with the LCP offenders, who are very small in number. Here, continuity in behavior is the hallmark:

Across the life course, these individuals exhibit changing manifestations of antisocial behavior: biting and hitting at age 4, shoplifting and truancy at age 10, selling drugs and stealing cars at age 16, robbery and rape at age 22, and fraud and child abuse at age 30; the underlying disposition remains the same, but its expression changes form as new social opportunities arise at different points in development. (p. 679)

This continuity in behavior, moreover, is not only consistent over time but also across situations. So, LCP offenders may lie at home, cheat in school or steal from work, fight in bars in their spare time, and so on.

The origins of the LCP offender's criminal actions are to be found in the neuropsychological makeup of the individual. By neuropsychological factors, Moffitt refers to 'the extent to which anatomical structures and physiological processes within the nervous system influence psychological characteristics such as temperament, behavior development, cognitive abilities, or all three' (p. 681). These deficits, as Moffitt calls them, lead to low IQ, impaired verbal and cognitive skills, clumsiness, awkwardness, inattentiveness, irritability, impulsiveness, and a low level of self-control. Early signs of acting out, such as in the form of aggression, are thus also a sign of this deficit.

This is the beginning of the story. Up until now, Moffitt has argued as if environment was held constant. Unfortunately,

children with cognitive and temperamental disadvantages are not generally born into supportive environments, nor do they even get a fair chance of being randomly assigned to good or bad environments ... Vulnerable infants are disproportionately found in environments that will not be ameliorative because many sources of neural maldevelopment co-occur with family disadvantage or deviance. (p. 681)

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What is going on here, are two things: first, the child's disadvantages are often not countered by a stable, safe family environment. On the contrary, those disadvantages tend to be amplified because such children are often born into families with members who themselves have a history of disadvantages and deviance. Second, what takes place is an interaction between the child and the family, as 'personality and behavior are shaped in large measure by interactions between the person and the environment' (p. 682). So there is a form of transactional dialectic at work, where the child acts, the family reacts, the child reacts, the family reacts again, and so on:

the juxtaposition of a vulnerable and difficult infant with an adverse rearing context initiates risk for the life-course-persistent pattern of antisocial behavior. The ensuing process is a *transactional one* in which the challenge of coping with a difficult child evokes a chain of failed parent-child encounters. (p. 682, emphasis added)

This combination – of neurological deficits and an 'adverse rearing context' for the child – forms a process of development characterized by an early onset of various problem behaviors both in the home and the school:

If the child who 'steps off on the wrong foot' remains on an ill-starred path, subsequent stepping-stone experiences may culminate in life-course-persistent antisocial behavior. For lifecourse-persistent antisocial individuals, deviant behavior patterns later in life may thus reflect early individual differences that are perpetuated or exacerbated by interactions with the social environment: first at home, and later at school. (p. 682)

So far, Moffitt claims to have presented an explanation for the development and onset of antisocial behavior, including onset of crime. Now she has as her next task to explain the important life-course criminological topic of why these individuals continue, or persist, in crime beyond childhood, into adolescence and adulthood.

In doing so, she essentially uses two distinct, but related forms of continuity: those of *cumulative continuity*, and *contemporary continuity*. By contemporary continuity, Moffitt aims to capture the direct link between the original childhood problems, and adult problems. So, for example, children who are ill-tempered in childhood tend to be hot-tempered as adults as well, causing problems for them at work. In other words, the 'traits' that originally got the child into trouble in childhood, such as impulsivity, irritability, and poor self-control, persist into adulthood and cause problems in adulthood as well.

By cumulative continuity, however, Moffitt aims to capture the *indirect* link between the original problems and the adult outcome: 'early individual differences may set in motion a downhill snowball of cumulative continuities' (p. 683). So, for example, early tantrums are predictive of lower educational attainment. Educational attainment, in turn, is predictive of lower occupational status. To continue our example of tantrums – or being ill-tempered in childhood – having tantrums in childhood is predictive of lower stability when it comes to social

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relations in adolescence, which, in turn, are predictive of having lower stability in social relations in adulthood. Now, being able to acquire work and develop stable, conventional social relations are two important reasons as to why individuals are able to desist from crime (we return and explore this issue in more detail later). 'Life-course persistent persons', however, 'miss out on opportunities to acquire prosocial alternatives at each stage of development' (p. 683).

At this stage, Moffitt has come halfway through solving the riddle of continuity and change in crime; she has explained the first by arguing that the LCP offenders from a very young age are consistently engaged in various problem behaviors over time, unable to leave this path even if they eventually want to do so. Now, she has to account for the latter; change. She does this by introducing the other category in her taxonomy; the adolescence-limited offender (AL).

The Adolescence-Limited Offender

This offender category is by far the most common one. That is, most people who engage in crime belong to this category: 'adolescent-limited delinquency', Moffitt notes, 'is ubiquitous' (p. 685). It is so common for young people to engage in crime, in fact, that it is statistically unusual to *not* have committed a crime during adolescence. There are mainly two features of the AL offender that are different from the LCPs'.

First, whereas the LCP offenders consistently engage in antisocial behavior across different contexts – i.e. they are rule-breakers in school, on the street, in their homes – the AL offender's behavior is characterized by discontinuity. That is, he or she may engage in crime on his or her spare time, but in school the same person is a good student and at home he or she is a good, well-behaved adolescent.

Second, and crucially for Moffitt's argument, the AL offender has no history of antisocial behavior. Whereas the LCP offender has been engaged in all kinds of problematic behaviors since he or she was a small child, the AL offender has not. When the AL offender enters adolescence, criminal behavior simply tends to pop up. The AL offender often persists for a short while, and then ceases.

It is against this background that Moffitt formulates the questions her theory of adolescent-limited delinquency must be able to answer:

A theory of adolescence-limited delinquency must account for several empirical observations: modal onset in early adolescence, recovery by young adulthood, widespread prevalence, and lack of continuity. Why do youngsters with no history of behavior problems in childhood suddenly become antisocial in adolescence? Why do they develop antisocial problems rather than other difficulties? Why is delinquency so common among teens? How are they able to spontaneously recover from an antisocial life-style within a few short years? (p. 686)

Whereas the origins of the LCP offender had to be sought in the early, even pre-natal development of the child, Moffitt now goes to the stage of development where delinquency peaks: the adolescent years, when puberty tends to kick in.

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Why do so many adolescents engage in delinquency? Here, Moffitt introduces the notion of *social mimicry*; something she borrows from the canon of social learning theory in psychology. A similar argument, however, can be found in the criminological classics of Akers (1985) and Sutherland (1947). Mimicry is a term taken from studies of ethology. Mimicry occurs when two (or more) species want access to the same, desired resource. Seeing that one form of behavior is rewarding and gives access to the desired resource (such as food or water), the other species 'picks up' this behavior to also access that resource.

Moffitt thus suggests that the AL offender begins to mimic the behavior of the LCP offender. However, if social mimicry is to explain the onset of delinquency for so many adolescents, it must mean that engaging in crime gives access to a resource considered desirable by them. Indeed, Moffitt says, 'I suggest that the resource is mature status, with its consequent power and privilege' (Moffitt, 1993: 686).

At this stage, Moffitt makes a brief excursion that is fundamental to her explanation. It also touches upon a crucial life-course theme: the transition to adulthood, and the way it has changed with the modernization of the world. In modern society, she notes, the phase of adolescence has been stretched out, in the social sense: young people leave their parental home later than they used to, their entry into the labor market has been delayed, they form their own families later than people did in the past, and so on. The social, adult status has thus been postponed, but people's biological maturity has not. In fact, the development of improved health and nutrition has decreased the age of biological maturity. This tension causes problems:

The ensuing gap leaves modern teenagers in a 5- to 10-year role vacuum ... They are biologically capable and compelled to be sexual beings, yet they are asked to delay most of the positive aspects of adult life ... They remain financially and socially dependent on their families of origin and are allowed few decisions of any real import. Yet they want desperately to establish intimate bonds with the opposite sex, to accrue material belongings, to make their own decisions, and to be regarded as consequential by adults ... Contemporary adolescents are thus trapped in a *maturity gap*, chronological hostages of a time warp between biological age and social age. (p. 686f)

This phenomenon begins to color life for most teenagers as they enter high school, and it affects their self-images, confidence, and self-perceptions of autonomy. Now, these 'healthy adolescents' (p. 687) notice something: their life-course persistent peers (of which Moffitt says there are about one to two in every classroom) seems to suffer less from this maturity gap. At this stage in their lives, the LCP offenders are able to obtain desirable objects such as cars, clothes, and drugs through the practices of theft or vice, they tend to be more sexually experienced, appear to be relatively free from their parents' grip, and seem to go their own way, making their own rules as they go along. Their actions, moreover, are consequential and reverberate into the adult world, as

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evidenced by the presence of social workers, probation officers, and so on, in their lives. As a result, 'antisocial behavior becomes a valuable technique that is demonstrated by life-course-persistents and imitated carefully by adolescence-limiteds' (p. 687).

So, now Moffitt has explained the onset of delinquency for that vast portion of young people who live law-abiding lives and then sporadically engage in crime during adolescence. Next, her task is to explain their desistance from crime. Following the same logic she has applied before, she argues that as the adolescent eventually approaches and makes the transition into adulthood, criminal behavior ceases to be rewarding and instead becomes incompatible with the conventional, adult role. Further, they manage to cease their offending because they do not have the history of persistent problematic behavior that the LCP offender has: 'without a lifelong history of antisocial behavior, the forces of cumulative continuity have had fewer years in which to gather the momentum of a downhill snowball' (p. 690). Thus, when criminal behavior is no longer a needed or even possible source of status (on the contrary, it becomes a form of stigma), the AL offender desists from crime.

Later Developments of the Taxonomy

Moffitt's theory of crime and the life course has resulted in a lot of debate, and critique has been raised against it, aimed at both the empirical adequacy of it, as well as against its conceptual blurriness (e.g. Sampson and Laub, 1993; Skardhamar, 2009). As a result, Moffitt has revisited her original outline of the theory several times, continuously revising it. Here, we briefly highlight the important critical aspects of her theory, as well as her subsequent adjustments.

First of all, there is the conceptual question of what Moffitt means by 'offender types'. Although Moffitt uses the term, Skardhamar (2009) notes in his critical review of the taxonomy, it is not clear how literal the types and how distinct their patterns of behavior are. In the social sciences, 'types' can mean anything from a kind of 'ideal type' – that is, constructs we use to make sense of social life without assuming that the types are as distinct in reality as they are in theory – to a form of Lombrosian, ontologically distinct subtype of human. Most likely, Moffitt considers her offender types as being, conceptually, somewhere in between these two. That is, although she does refer to them as 'hypothetical prototypes' (Moffitt, 2006: 700) she also tends to treat them quite literally.

Second, there is the question of how many offender groups there are. Moffitt, as we know, originally suggested only two: the LCP and the AL offenders. However, using a statistical method called semi-parametric group-based modeling, researchers subsequently have found the need to add additional offender groups to the theory, since the inclusion of additional groups better explains the variation in many data sets. In particular, Moffitt has addressed the proposition of incorporating both a third and fourth group of offenders. The third group

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would be one called 'childhood-limited', or 'low-level chronics', because they exhibit 'extreme, pervasive, and persistent antisocial behavior during childhood' but 'surprisingly engaged in only low to moderate delinquency ... from the age of 15 to 18' (Moffitt, 2007: 53f). Additionally, the fourth group would entail those offenders called 'adult-onset offenders', that is, those who do not engage in crime until after the normative peak of onset (i.e. after the teenage years). This one is a bit more uncertain, however, because although many studies have shown that a significant number of offenders seem to have an adult onset, this may be an 'artifact of official measurement' (Moffitt, 2007: 55). If we rely on official measurements of onset, she notes, we are likely to approximate it to three or five years after actual onset has occurred. 'These so-called adult onset offenders', she concludes, 'can probably be accommodated by the adolescence-limited theory because ... the alleged adult-onset group has not differed from ordinary adolescent offenders' (Moffitt, 2007: 56).

Whether the number of offender groups is two, three, or four, studies show a great diversity in the number of offender groups they find. Some find four or five (D'Unger et al., 1998; Piquero et al., 2007), others find three (Nagin and Land, 1993), six (Ezell and Cohen, 2005), or seven (Bushway et al., 2003). This debate on offender types is still very much alive more than 20 years after Moffitt originally formulated her theory. It is an important one, because it has clear implications for policy. For example, it is common to combine the idea of offender types (especially the LCP, or 'chronic' offender) to specific forms of selective incapacitation strategies (Blumstein, et al., 1986; Skardhamar, 2009).

Dynamic Theories of Criminal Careers

In contrast to static theories, dynamic theories of crime and the life course assume that human behavior is never set or established. Our present can never be reduced to early traits or endowments, although they may be important facets of it. The self is not static 'but rather changes as those we interact with change, either by being replaced by others or by themselves acting differently, presumably in response to still other changes in those they interact with' (Becker, 1970: 292). The self is thus processual and always in a stage of becoming (which is not to say that there is no continuity). While early experiences may be important, the primary explanation for continuity and change in criminal offending is to be found in the changing social situations and circumstances people encounter as they move along the life course. Dynamic theories tend to devote a substantial amount of attention to the importance of aging, just like Gottfredson and Hirschi do. Here, however, age is not seen as invariant, but rather as a kind of *proxy*:

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most experts who study age-related change believe that age is essentially a proxy for some unmeasured developmental process. That is, developmental theory posits that various aspects of human functioning (like antisocial behavior) change with age, but that there must be an underlying, if not always easily identified, mechanism that accounts for the change. (Sweeten et al., 2013: 934)

We limit our discussion to three influential theories: first, we explore Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory of informal social control. Within our description of Sampson and Laub's theory we also discuss Giordano, Cernkovich, and Rudolph's theory of cognitive transformations. The reason behind this is that they criticize and develop their theory on important points. Finally, we turn to Farrington's integrated cognitive antisocial potential (ICAP) theory.³ As we go along, we should point out that several of these theories incorporate elements from the static theories, and our review of each theory is therefore not as lengthy as of the static ones. The dynamic theories also have many similarities among each other.

Sampson, Laub and Social Control, Revisited

In the 1980s, Sampson and Laub found the famous *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* data, stored away in boxes at the Harvard Law School Library. The original data was collected in the 1940s and 1950s by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. It consists of 1,000 males, 500 delinquent and 500 non-delinquent boys who were similar on other important variables, such as age and class. In their 1993 book, *Crime In The Making: Pathways And Turning Points Through Life*, where Sampson and Laub present their theory, they have re-analyzed all the original data, following the males up to 32 years of age.

Interestingly, Sampson and Laub published their seminal work the same year as Moffitt originally formulated her developmental taxonomy (1993). They too attempt to solve the same riddle Moffitt takes on, but they do so in a very different way. Consider their basic thesis (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 7, our emphasis):

The basic thesis we develop is threefold in nature: (1) structural context mediated by informal family and school social controls explains delinquency in childhood and adolescence; (2) in turn, there is continuity in antisocial behavior from childhood to adulthood in a variety of life domains; and (3) informal social controls in adulthood to family and employment explain changes in criminality over the life span *despite* early childhood propensities.

Note the final part of the thesis, and the word 'despite'. Already at the outset, Sampson and Laub make clear that while they do not consider an individual's

³ Other well-known theories include those of Catalano et al. (2005), LeBlanc (1997), Thornberry (1987), and Wikström (2005).

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early crime propensity unimportant, to understand why criminal behavior changes over the life span we must study the changes that occur in informal social control as the individual moves along the life course.

What, then, is social control? Its sociological history is long and was perhaps made most famous by Hirschi, in his first attempt to explain crime in *Causes of Delinquency* (1969). For Sampson and Laub, social control means 'the capacity of a social group to regulate itself according to desired principles and values, and hence to make norms and rules effective' (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 18). The central idea of social control theory, therefore, is that 'crime and deviance result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken' (p. 18). Now, social control can be formal, as when it is exercised by various government or state agencies, such as the law and its various enforcers through apprehension and punishment, or it can be *informal*, such as when it is exercised through the interpersonal, social bonds that link a society's members to the social institutions of family, school, and work. In line with Hirschi's 1969 formulation, informal social controls, Sampson and Laub argue, hold the key to understanding why individuals engage in crime, why they persist, and why they stop.

However, whereas Hirschi's outline was temporally static – in the sense that he basically only studied the effects of social control on crime in childhood and adolescence – Sampson and Laub explore 'the extent to which social bonds inhibit crime and deviance early in the life course, and the consequences this has for later development' (p. 18). They also study the within-individual changes in informal social controls that occur as people age. To give just one example, the family tends to be a powerful source of informal social control in the early childhood of an individual. As adolescence approaches, however, the family is joined by the school and the individual's peers as important sources of control. In the transition to adulthood, as we move on, the school's social control naturally tends to diminish and give way for another, much more important source: employment. As the individual moves along the life course, he or she is then continuously tied to society through various sources of informal social control.

For Sampson and Laub, the basic cause of crime and deviance early in life is *low*, informal social control within the family and school, and one's attachment to delinquent peers. Now, what about such structural factors as socioeconomic status, parents' employment, or family size? And what about individual difference constructs, such as the onset of early conduct disorders and having persistent tantrums as a child – do these have no influence on the child's engagement in crime at all? Yes, they do. But they do not have an immediate, direct influence on delinquency – instead, these structural and individual factors are mediated by the interpersonal levels of family, school, and peers. So, for example, growing up with low socioeconomic status or having persistent tantrums as a child, have no *direct* effect on whether or

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not you will commit a crime, but if you come from a home with low socioeconomic status or have persistent tantrums you are more likely to perform more poorly in school and have a weaker attachment to that institution. This – poor school performance and weak attachment – has a *direct* effect on whether or not you will commit a crime. The same goes for the family, and your association to delinquent peers: the effect of having a structural- or individual-level ‘risk’ is mediated through the institutions of family, school, and peers.

This argument is quite simple but also has a certain explanatory elegance: first, it explains why people who engage in crime tend to do so during adolescence. It is during this life-course stage that people ‘liberate’ themselves from their family homes and parents, i.e. their social bonds are weakened in many ways. They become free to gravitate toward delinquent peers and thus deviate and experiment with crime. It also explains, however, why some young people engage in crime earlier than do others, do more serious crimes, and offend more frequently. The argument also explains why there are significant between-individual differences among people who engage in crime: they are *mediated* through the institutions of informal social control.

Having explained onset of crime, Sampson and Laub now have to account for the same phenomena we saw Moffitt deal with earlier: why the vast majority ceases to commit crime after only a short period of criminal activity, and why a small subset of offenders persist in crime beyond the transition to adulthood. Let us begin with the first part of the task, and see how Sampson and Laub explain why so many people desist in the transition to adulthood. Here is where they introduce the famous notion of turning points, a concept they continue to refine in subsequent elaborations and developments of their theory (e.g. Laub and Sampson, 2003; Sampson and Laub, 2005).

‘Changes that strengthen social bonds to society in adulthood’, they note, ‘will lead to less crime and deviance’ (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 21). This process is facilitated by the presence of potential ‘turning points’ in the offenders’ lives. These turning points – military service, employment, marriage, and others – have the potential to make the offender (a) ‘knife off’ the past from the present, (b) invest in new relationships that foster social support and growth, (c) be under direct and/or indirect supervision and control, (d) engage in routine activities more centered on conventional life, and/or (e) perform an identity transformation. The strengthening of social bonds through such turning points ‘increase social capital and investment in social relations and institutions’ (Sampson and Laub, 1993: 21). Moreover, the quality, duration, and strength of the social bond are especially important features of those ties. In other words, for Sampson and Laub, it is not the marriage in itself that is important, but rather the strong social control, combined with the emotional bond that develops between the spouses, that a ‘good marriage’ entails. This goes for the institution of work as well.

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Adult social ties are important insofar as they create interdependent systems of obligation and restraint that impose significant costs for translating criminal propensities into action. (p. 141)

Variations in adult criminal offending can thus not be explained by childhood behavior alone. What really matters when it comes to an individual's behavior in adulthood – whether he or she persists or desists from crime – are the more short-term, immediate situational aspects of that individual's life. When informal social control strengthens around an individual, he or she is likely to leave crime behind and, thus, Sampson and Laub have explained why the vast majority desists around the time they leave adolescence behind.

These more immediate, situational aspects can of course be influenced by the individual's past life. That brings us to persistence, or why a small subset of all offenders continues to engage in crime and develop lengthy, serious criminal careers. Here you will see a clear connection to Moffitt's theory. Moffitt accounts for persistence in offending, remember, by using the notions of *cumulative* and *contemporary continuity*. Cumulative continuity is something Sampson and Laub consider pivotal for understanding why people persist in crime. They call it *cumulative disadvantage*:

we emphasize a developmental model where delinquent behavior has a systematic attenuating effect on the social and institutional bonds linking adults to society ... For example, delinquency may spark failure in school, incarceration, and weak bonds to the labor market, in turn increasing later adult crime ... Serious sanctions in particular lead to the 'knifing off' ... of future opportunities such that labeled offenders have fewer options for a conventional life. (Sampson and Laub, 1997: 144f)

This process of cumulative disadvantage is strongly linked to important social institutions of social control: the family, the school, peers, and state sanctions. As the offender continues to engage in crime, he or she becomes more marginalized from the conventional, institutional fabric of society, which in turn increases the likelihood for still further criminal offending.

Here, you may have noted, is where Sampson and Laub adopt an argument from the labeling perspective (see Chapter 2). The criminal justice system has a considerable role to play in the process of 'knifing off' an individual's life chances. Being an 'ex-prisoner', for example, is likely to decrease one's chances of getting a job, and work, we must remember, is one of the central turning points in the process of desisting from crime.

What about individual differences, then? In contrast to Moffitt, Sampson and Laub disregard the notion of contemporary continuity (that the original problem behavior in childhood persists and causes contemporary problems, leading to persistent offending). This is logical for them, given their position that what matters in explaining adult behavior, is the individual's life situation in adulthood. Nevertheless, early individual differences still do matter, but only in a cumulative fashion:

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To assume that individual differences influence the choices one makes in life (which they certainly do), does not mean that the social mechanisms emerging from those choices can then have no causal significance. Choices generate constraints and opportunities that themselves have effects not solely attributable to individuals. As situational theorists have long pointed out, the same person – with the same attributes and traits – acts very different in different situations. (Sampson and Laub, 1997: 155)

Thus, we are back at the fundamentally dynamic position and perspective on how a human life unfolds, including a person's engagement, persistence in, and desistance from crime.

Making Change Understandable: Giordano et al.'s Critique

Sampson and Laub's theory is well-known and tends to generate empirical support in most studies (see Thornberry et al., 2012). However, in the original formulation there are still at least two problematic features when it comes to the process of desistance. Giordano et al. (2002) focus on those features, and attempt to develop them more satisfactorily.

First of all, their theory is based on a sample of only males. It is an impressive sample, consisting of 500 male juvenile delinquents, and 500 male non-delinquents – but no females.

A more conceptual problem with the theory, they argue, is that the initial move toward a conventional life is not accounted for, but rather attributed to chance or luck due to the scaffolding of the environment, as the individual 'happens' to engage in employment or a 'good marriage' (see, for example, Laub et al., 1998). 'Nonetheless', Giordano et al. argue,

individuals themselves must *attend* to these new possibilities, discard old habits, and begin the process of crafting a different way of life. At the point of change, this new lifestyle will necessarily be 'at a distance' or a 'faint' possibility. Therefore, *the individual's subjective stance* is especially important during the early stages of the change process. (2002: 1000, emphases added)

Giordano and her colleagues thus engage in a study of desistance, based on a sample including both males and females. In their analysis they direct attention to the cognitive shifts they see as preceding, accompanying, and following desistance from crime. Their main point is that offenders tend to vary in their 'openness' to change and their receptivity to certain catalysts, or 'hooks for change', such as higher education, employment, or relationship formation. These 'hooks' are important not only as sources of social control but also because they provide blueprints for how to maintain one's change and be able to replace one's former self with a new one (Maruna, 2001). Although social control is a gendered phenomenon, Giordano et al. do find that the main mechanism seems to be valid for both males and females, albeit with some smaller differences (in Chapters 5–8 of this book, we include a section where we highlight the possible, gender-specific dimensions of the criminal career).

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In their later work, Laub and Sampson (2003) revise their theory on several points, but the core of the theory is mainly the same. In particular, they answer Giordano et al. (2002) and stress the importance of human agency. They term it the 'missing link' in persistence and desistance (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 141). Offenders, they note, are 'active participants in constructing their lives' within the constraints of structure and context (Laub and Sampson, 2003: 281). A subjective reconstruction of the self is likely at times of life-course transitions. When it comes to desistance, especially, human agency is an important theoretical concept (Bottoms, 2006), and we revisit it in more detail in Chapter 8.

Farrington's ICAP Theory

Taking over after Donald West, David P. Farrington – a psychologist by trade – has been the director of the well-known Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (CSDD) since 1982. Having published extensively in life-course criminology, it is only relatively recently that he has begun to formulate his own theory of crime and the life course, the Integrated Cognitive Antisocial Potential (ICAP) Theory (he first attempted to formulate it in 1992, but has developed it in writings from 2005 and onward).

In his attempt at explaining continuity and change in crime across the life course, Farrington integrates ideas from several perspectives and theories, including strain, control, learning, and rational choice approaches (Farrington, 2005). Its key construct, however, is *antisocial potential* (AP), which refers to the potential of an individual to commit antisocial acts, such as crime and delinquency, and – thereby – becoming an offender. Because it is so central to his theory we need to devote a considerable amount of attention to it:

The distribution of AP in the population at any age is highly skewed; relatively few people have relatively high levels of AP. People with high AP are more likely to commit many different types of antisocial acts, including different types of offending. (Farrington, 2010: 261)

Now, what makes an individual's antisocial potential high? Here, Farrington introduces a range of important childhood risk factors, including hyperactivity-impulsivity-attention deficit, low intelligence or low school attainment, family criminality, family poverty, large family size, poor child-rearing, and disrupted families. Farrington also includes a central, strain-theoretical theme:

Following strain theory, the main energizing factors that potentially lead to high ... AP are desires for material goods, status among intimates, excitement and sexual satisfaction. However, these motivations only lead to high AP if antisocial methods of satisfying them are habitually chosen. (Farrington, 2005: 79)

Now, similar to all the theories we have discussed so far, Farrington also places a large importance on the family, and the process of socialization and attachment:

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AP will be high if children are not attached to (prosocial) parents, for example if parents are cold and rejecting. Disrupted families (broken homes) may impair both attachment and socialization processes ... AP will also be high if people are exposed to and influenced by antisocial models, such as criminal parents, delinquent siblings, and delinquent peers, for example in high crime schools and neighborhoods. (Farrington, 2005: 79)

As you can see, what Farrington is doing is an integration of central elements from various theories. In Farrington's account of an individual's development of his or her antisocial potential (whether high or low), we see traces from Gottfredson and Hirschi, Moffitt, and Sampson and Laub.

The translation from antisocial potential to antisocial *behavior* depends on 'cognitive ... processes that take account of opportunities and victims' (Farrington, 2010: 260). In other words, the commission of a criminal act depends on the interaction between the individual, with his or her level of antisocial potential, and the social environment:

In general, people tend to make decisions that seem rational to them, but those with low levels of AP will not commit offenses even when (on the basis of subjective expected utilities) it appears rational to do so. Equally, high ... levels of AP ... may induce people to commit offenses when it is not rational for them to do so. (Farrington, 2010: 263)

Now, so far it seems that Farrington is merely putting new words on an argument we already know from Gottfredson and Hirschi, turning *self-control* into *antisocial potential*. Farrington, however, recognizes the more fluid, dynamic nature of life and now introduces a crucial element of antisocial potential:

levels of AP *vary with age*, peaking in the teenage years, because of changes within individuals in the factors that influence ... AP (e.g. from childhood to adolescence, the increasing importance of peers and the decreasing importance of parents) ... Also, *life events affect AP*; it decreases (at least for males) after people get married or move out of high crime areas, and it increases after the separation from a partner. (Farrington, 2010: 261f, emphases added)

In other words, an individual's antisocial potential is never static or fixed; on the contrary, it changes as the individual moves along the life course and responds to changes in his or her environment. It may decrease, as in the case of getting a job, getting married or perhaps making a residential change to a neighborhood with fewer criminal opportunities. It can also increase, as in the case of losing a job, separating from a partner, or moving to a neighborhood where levels of crime are high and criminal opportunities come aplenty.

Another source of changes in an individual's antisocial potential is the consequences of criminal offending for the individual's future. Here we see the learning dimension in Farrington's theory: if the consequences are reinforcing (e.g. the offender gains peer approval or material goods) antisocial potential is

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likely to rise, if they are punishing (e.g. the offender receives a legal sanction or disapproval from an important authority figure, such as a parent) antisocial is likely to decrease. However, if the punishing consequences involve labeling or stigmatization for the offender, this may – in line with classical labeling theory – make it more difficult for him or her to achieve his or her aspired aims legally, contributing to an increase in antisocial potential and continuity (perhaps even escalation) in criminal offending.

This way – through the use of antisocial potential, a feature which is highly skewed in any given population and subject to change as the individual encounters changes in his or her environment – Farrington attempts to address the question of continuity and change in criminal behavior across the life course. As noted above, a central feature of Farrington's approach is the notion of risk and risk factors; a feature we revisit and discuss in detail in Chapter 5.

Some Final Remarks

As we mentioned at the outset, a full review of all existing life-course theories is impossible. Farrington's anthology (2005) gives a pretty good overview of the field as it looked about 10 years ago, but life-course criminology is – like all science – in constant movement. The theories and topics we have covered so far, however, are still among the most fundamental in the field and they are continuously cited, tested, and developed. As we proceed in this book, we also mention and discuss additional theories and research projects to give the reader a more comprehensive overview of the field.

In this chapter, we have gone through a number of the basic building blocks of life-course criminological theorizing, and how they attempt to explain the closely connected phenomena of continuity and change in criminal careers. We have seen that they all subscribe to some basic, fundamental premises of the life-course perspective, but we have also seen that they differ in important respects. Some – Gottfredson and Hirschi, and Sampson and Laub – have adopted a more sociologically oriented approach, whereas Farrington and Moffitt attempt to understand criminal careers from a more psychological one.

Gottfredson and Hirschi, and Sampson and Laub tend to stress the phenomenon of *change* in criminal offending, whereas Moffitt argues that *continuity* is the hallmark for a specific segment of those who engage in crime (the life-course persisters). However, when it comes to the underlying construct that is causing the individual to engage and persist in crime, we see that there are other similarities: Gottfredson and Hirschi, and Moffitt (in the case of the life-course persisters) stress the static, fixed trait of self-control and antisocial behavior. Further, both theories locate this basic cause within the individual (although it

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might be influenced by external forces, such as the family). Farrington, too, locates the crucial construct – antisocial potential – within the individual but, in contrast, sees this construct as dynamic, subject to change as the individual changes and moves along the life course.

Sampson and Laub also see the causal, underlying construct – age-graded informal social control – as dynamic and ever-changing, but they locate the source of this construct in the interpersonal relationships the individual has to his or her surroundings.

What are we to make of these partly similar and partly very different takes on continuity and change in criminal careers? Rather than trying to synthesize the approaches, it seems fruitful to consider the plurality and theoretical versatility of the field. Yes, individual differences – whether it is differences in self-control, antisocial potential, or informal social control – matter, when it comes to the individual's future criminal career. However, it is equally important to remember that an individual's pathway across the life course is never fully set. Life events – such as engaging in higher education, getting a job, forming a family, and so on – may transform one's life and self in important, crime-inhibiting ways. Individual differences may influence the likelihood of those life events occurring in a given person's life, but whether they do occur or not can never be *reduced* to those individual differences. Human and social life is much too complex for that, full as it is with its coincidences, contingencies, and unexpected events.

The theories' differences also imply different implications for criminal policy and intervention. For Moffitt, the most effective intervention would be directed at the would-be life-course persisters and, predominantly, environmental factors. We know that many of the neuropsychological 'deficits' are influenced by factors such as prenatal substance abuse, severe child maltreatment and witnessing family violence. These can all be countered with various forms of early intervention programs. We are also increasingly coming to understand the plasticity of the brain and how interventions can address these issues. In fact, Moffitt argues that one reason why so many interventions fail is that they start too late.

The argument has been made that selective incapacitation is a likely outcome of Moffitt's argument, given that we are already 'too late' in many cases. Life-course persisters are likely to engage in long and serious criminal careers. They will hurt a lot of people (including themselves), and cost society a considerable amount of money. For Gottfredson and Hirschi, lengthy and selective incapacitation is meaningless. Such policies, inevitably, keep people locked up long after their teenage years and thus the peak-age of criminal offending. In other words, even the most serious criminal offenders will desist from crime after having made the transition to adulthood. That does *not* mean that they will not engage in self-destructive or antisocial behavior. Low self-control is static and its expression can take many forms across the life course, including alcohol problems and gambling. Gottfredson and Hirschi's position simply means that

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they will cease to engage in crime in the transition to adulthood, and thus cease to commit acts which are defined as law-breaking.

Sampson and Laub's position is similar here. In fact, they argue that selective incapacitation and lengthy prison/treatment sentences may actually be counter-productive. Why? Because they tend to isolate the individual from the institutional fabric of society and it is the bond between the individual and his or her society that is crucial: if the bond is strong – through such institutions as work and family life – it is likely that the individual will desist from crime. Without these turning points, persistence in crime is a likely outcome, and the implementation of harsh criminal justice policies may thus actually impel continuity in crime due to the process of cumulative disadvantage.

We revisit these and other implications later on, especially in Chapter 5 when we talk about risk factors and prediction, where we also elaborate on Farrington's position in these questions. First, however, we must consider the methodologies of the field (Chapter 4).

Suggestions for Further Reading

Gottfredson, Michael and Hirschi, Travis (1990) *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Despite their aim – to show that life-course- and longitudinal studies of crime are meaningless – Gottfredson and Hirschi's outline of a theory of self-control remains one of the most influential, contested, and tested theories within the field.

Moffitt, Terrie E. (1993) 'Adolescence-limited and life-course persistent antisocial behavior: a developmental taxonomy', *Psychological Review*, 100(4): 674–701. In her 1993 paper, Moffitt presents the dual developmental taxonomy. When discussed in textbooks and by critics, Moffitt's theory is usually described in simplistic terms. Reading her original piece shows the nuance, elegance, and power of her argument.

Sampson, Robert J. and Laub, John H. (1993) *Crime in The Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

This is the original, highly influential statement of an age-graded theory of informal social control. Sampson and Laub re-build and re-analyze the famous Glueck data, following the Boston Boys to age 32.

Loeber, Rolf and Farrington, David P. (eds) (2012) *From Juvenile Delinquency to Adult Crime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

In this relatively new work, Loeber, Farrington, and colleagues assess the empirical status of life-course criminological theories (see, in particular, Chapter 2).