

**Laub, John H., and Robert J. Sampson. 2003. *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to age 70*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 6-10.**

### **Chapter 6: Why Some Offenders Stop**

The lives of three nonviolent men were analyzed. All the men had some point in their lives that made them desist from being criminally active. Each man pointed out three main turning points as they were interviewed. Leon's was his marriage, Henry's was his military experience, and Bruno's turning point was his experience he had at the Lyman School. Another Factor that can affect criminals from desisting away from crime is employment. Desistance can also occur, the term used by Laub and Sampson "Unnaturally"; meaning without any institutional or personal intervention that changes a criminal pathway (p.139). Laub and Sampson gave examples such as Death or physical injury. The authors also suggested a missing link in desistance, which they called Human Agency or Choice. The example given was of Micheal who went into Military because he had no choice. Whether Micheal consider that choice to be bad, the alternative choices were to go back out to the streets etc.

### **Chapter 7: Why Some Offenders Persist**

The authors used two types of persistent offenders. The first group consisted of men who were arrested as Juvies (aged 7-17), young adults (aged 17-32) and older adults (aged 32-70) for crimes of violence (p. 150). The second consisted of men who were arrested as juveniles, young adults, and older adults, including arrests for violence in at least two of the three phases of the life course (p.150). They start out with the life of Boston Billy. Billy's life story was very intriguing because, his parents were supportive and dealt punishment or rewards for Billy. Both parents were relatively "good." Billy started committing crimes at age 15, was arrested 8 times between the ages of 17-25, and also arrested 8 times after the age of 32. Laub and Sampson used the desisting factors in Billy's case and found that he really never had any turning points. The authors go on to list a few factors (Personal Agency, Resentment of Authority etc.) contributing to Billy's Criminal career.

### **Chapter 8: Zigzag Criminal Careers**

The authors studied a group of men (19) whom of which, the authors were not able to categorize in either the desisting or persisting group. Laub and Sampson divided the group into two. There were 7 that desisted from crime in their late twenties to their thirties, which the authors called "late desisters." This chapter describes the history of 5 men and than the authors turn to the late desisters and hybrid offenders that exhibit zigzag patterns of offending over the life course (p.198-204). Some of the emerging themes that were being told by the interviewees were such as marriage, employment etc., which are more or less like the factors in chapter 6. The life history of Patrick, tells of erratic offending, at times he seems like a desister and other times more like a persister.

Alcohol, was found to play an important part in the men that reflected zigzag patterns. Laub and Sampson found out that it was difficult to try to piece out the arrests records of the subjects and also to consider what was really a crime and not a crime. One of the bigger surprise they talked about was how the subjects committed crime base on the same factors as when they were juveniles.

### **Chapter 9: Modeling Change in Crime**

Laub and Sampson talk about their analysis of the subjects and data. This chapter they use marriage as a factor in determining it as a turning point in a man's life. They coded 52 men starting from age 17 (p.251). Two levels were used:

Between-individual level- risk factors

Within-individual level- Stable person level in marriages

Laub and Sampson also used the Hierarchical Statistical Model also. The model was changed to incorporate three important features of the data. The first is the conception of crime, the second is the unexplained variation between individuals and their offending rate, and the third is that there is variation across time/individuals in incarceration (p.253). Which explains that there is a decline at both offending types but a later age for alcohol/drug offenses (p.258). The authors also ran tests on different crime type patterns, showing that the quadratic age shows a positive curvature for predatory crimes and a negative for alcohol/drugs. Laub and Sampson discovers three important things:

- 1- vast majority of men experience changes (eg. Marriages, military etc.)
- 2- general pattern of age and desistance is strong
- 3- significant individual heterogeneity in the rate of desistance indicated by formal tests

Marriage was estimated to be a 40 percent reduction in the rate of criminal offending (p.272).

### **Chapter 10: Rethinking Lives in and out of Crime**

The authors go back to talk about the studying of whole lives of the individuals in their tests. How each in-depth interview has given them whole new insights into areas where they had never seen. They discuss desistance by default, where the individuals that desisted from committing crimes pointed out there some turning point in their life that made them desist from a life of crime. Laub and Sampson also talked about the *Human Agency*, choices that were made or not made along the way to adulthood and on. They also go on to talk about Risk-Factor Paradigm and Incarceration and Offender Reentry. In conclusion, Laub and Sampson states their findings push themselves and others to expand their theory of informal social control, to include situated choice as central to understanding of crime from childhood through old age (p.293).

**Questions:**

1. As Laub and Sampson's book comes to an end, what do us as "criminologist" or "students" make of their findings? Are their findings more historical views of criminals or more about crime and offending rates?
2. Is there any race factors involve in these findings? African Americans, Asians etc.?
3. Will their results and findings ever be replicated again? And when might that happen? How?
4. Marriage was one of the biggest factors in desisting from crime. The Hmong culture marriage is also used as a factor for the young adults to desist from crime, why is that so? And does that happen in every culture?