



Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70

John H. Laub, Robert J. Sampson

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This book analyzes newly collected data on crime and social development up to age 70 for 500 men who were remanded to reform school in the 1940s. Born in Boston in the late 1920s and early 1930s, these men were the subjects of the classic study *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1950). Updating their lives at the close of the twentieth century, and connecting their adult experiences to childhood, this book is arguably the longest longitudinal study of age, crime, and the life course to date.

John Laub and Robert Sampson's long-term data, combined with in-depth interviews, defy the conventional wisdom that links individual traits such as poor verbal skills, limited self-control, and difficult temperament to long-term trajectories of offending. The authors reject the idea of categorizing offenders to reveal etiologies of offending--rather, they connect variability in behavior to social context. They find that men who desisted from crime were rooted in structural routines and had strong social ties to family and community.

By uniting life-history narratives with rigorous data analysis, the authors shed new light on long-term trajectories of crime and current policies of crime control.

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