

Week 3: From correlates to causal models:

- (a) Finish self-report & victim data (Wk 2)**
- (b) Age, Careers, Life Course**
- (c) Rational Choice and Deterrence**

1

overcoming pessimism

- **“Prevention projects don’t work and they waste money, violate the rights of juveniles and their families, inspire bizarre suggestions and programs, and fail to affect the known correlates of urban delinquency” -Lundman 1993:245**
- **Need a theory, or set of related ideas about causes of delinquency, to prevent or control it**
- **More optimism about “what works”**

chris uggan - soc 4141

2

Preventing Crime, What Works, What Doesn’t, What’s Promising

- **Where did this report come from? Who did it?**
- **What works?**
 - E.g. Perry preschool (1962); Nurse home visits ('90s)
- **Not working?**
 - E.g., gun buybacks, DARE, ISP, boot camps
- **Promising?**
 - e.g., family counseling; esp. multi-systemic therapy (MST) for serious and chronic offenders; voc-ed
- **why do some programs persist without any evidence that they reduce crime?**
- **are there common features or principles of more effective programs?**

chris uggan - soc 4141

3

Rios 2: Dreams Deferred

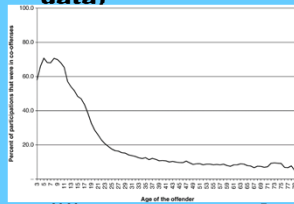
- **Methods**
 - "shadowing" 40 young men (20 Latino/ 20 Af. Am.) for 3 years
 - 30 had been arrested; snowball sampling
 - Not an "O.G." or "gang leader"
 - Biases?
- **Themes**
 - Marginality, masculinity, defiance, resistance
 - What is "criminalization" & how is it "embedded in the fabric of everyday life"?
 - What is the "moral panic" around youth?

chris uggan - soc 4141

4

Delinquency as group behavior

- Some crimes often involve groups: drug/alcohol, burglary, trespass, vandalism, especially in youth
- Other crimes more likely to be solo (assault, robbery), especially as adults
- Co-offending by age (Carrington 2018, Canadian data)



chris uggan - soc 4141

5

individual treatment

- "We don't need no stinking theories..."
- **1915 Chicago: Healy's individualized treatment**
 - Early identification, classification, and treatment
 - **Prevention: The Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study (1937-1945) for at-risk youth**
 - Assigned well-meaning adult counselors to help kids any way they could
 - No difference in school, personality & family functioning
 - No diff in delinquency (29% experimental versus 28% control at follow-up)

chris uggan - soc 4141

6

theory


- **Why not skip all the boring theories and just deal with the real?**
 - Movies or documentaries about delinquency
 - "War stories"
 - Journalistic/descriptive accounts
- **What are the criteria for good theories?**
 - Logical consistency
 - Generality
 - Testability
 - Empirical Validity
 - Parsimony
 - Usefulness!

chris uggan - soc 4141 7

levels

- **What are we trying to explain?**
- **Which level of analysis is most important?**
 - Individual
 - Group
 - Society
 - Time
 - Situation or event
- **Basic criteria for establishing causality?**
 - Association (correlation)
 - Temporal order (cause precedes effect)
 - Lack of spuriousness (or 3rd factor)
 - Other?

chris uggan - soc 4141 8



biology and psychology

- **Origins: Biological positivism and Cesare Lombroso's 1870 finding (1905)**
 - Quote from Parmelee's 1908 text
 - Darwin's *Origins* (1859) and *Descent* (1871)
 - Criminals resemble '*primitive races*'
 - overt racism in early criminology & sociology
- **Today: twin studies and interactions between heredity and environment**
 - biology yes, racism no, but concerns linger
 - perception, maturation, and neuropsychology (Cohen et al. 2016)

chris uggan - soc 4141 9

age, cognition and “prefrontal circuitry” (2016)

**When Is an Adolescent an Adult?
Assessing Cognitive Control in Emotional
and Nonemotional Contexts**

Alexandra O. Cohen¹, Katelyn Breiderl², Laurence Steinberg³,
Richard J. Shing⁴, Elizabeth S. Scott⁵, Adam A. Taylor-Thompson⁶,
Marc D. Rudolph⁷, Jason Cheek⁸, Jennifer A. Richeson⁹,
Aaron S. Heller¹⁰, Melissa R. Silverman¹¹, Danielle V. Dellacore¹²,
Damien A. Fair¹³, Adriana Galván¹⁴, and D. J. Casey¹⁵

Cognitive performance under stress – 13-18; 18-21; 22+

chris uggan - soc 4141 10

Moffitt's insight: a 2-group view of the age-crime curve

chris uggan - soc 4141 11

Terrie Moffitt's (1993) Typology


- **“Life-course persistent” (LCP) vs “adolescent-limited” (AL)**
 - Delinquency is *normative* in adolescence
- **Onset of LCP is (way) earlier**
 - tie to deficit disorder, learning problems
 - neuropsychology + environment
- **AL follow age-crime curve**
 - Fewer deficits, more opportunities
- **Complicated picture today**
 - Antisocial Personality Disorder in DSM-5

chris uggan - soc 4141 12

Taking Stock (CWB)

- **Author reviews decade of tests**
 - Lots of studies (“string” citations)
 - P. 278 “nutshell” summary
- **H1: early neuro-developmental and family adversity -> LCP**
 - 3rd group: low-level chronics?
 - 4th group: adult onset? (<4%)
- **H2: “maturity gap” and social mimicry -> AL**
- **H3: abstainers are rare (<10%)**
- **H4: LCP-> serious offending in adulthood**
- **H5: LCP persist and AL desist (fig 10.1)**
 - Sampson & Laub critique (all desist eventually)

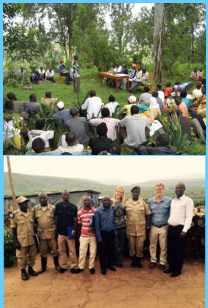
chris uggan - soc 4141 13



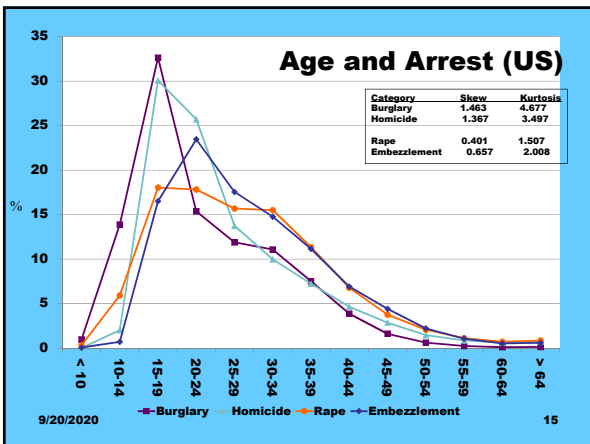
Rwanda & genocide as crime

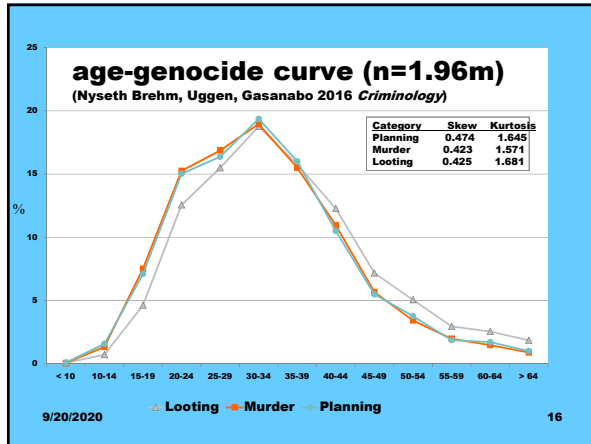
(Nyseth Brehm/Gasanabo; JCCJ, Criminology)

- **~800,000 killed in 1994**
 - Murder rate went from ~5/100k to ~9600/100k (+1900%)
 - survivor, perpetrator, rescuer
- **crim Qs: who commits and how to punish?**
 - 61K plan (25-30)
 - 577K kill (10-15+cs)
 - 1.3M loot (fine, TIG)
- **restorative/punitive**
 - *gacaca* courts
 - 10,000 courts, 2 million cases



9/20/2020 14





genocide in the life course

- **desistance and adult status**
 - Genocidal crime as conformity to adult role expectations?
 - Youth militias and adult officials

chris uggen - soc 4141

sex comparison & “invariance”

- **A general, but not “invariant” relation**
 - age
 - sex
- **Context and situation matter:**
 - Murder, rape, looting exploded over 100 days
 - Homicide rate of 4.5 today (US=4.9)

9/20/2020 18

restorative sanctions for 1.3m property



- **87% fines**
 - median 7,100 RWF (\$11 US), to victim or family
- **9% "agreement" (Ubwumvikane)**
 - negotiated settlement between family and perpetrator
- **2% exemption (Gusonerwa)**
 - perpetrator asks forgiveness, exempted from fine if victim agrees
- **1% restitution**
 - return or pay back goods (wood, cow, shoes, beans, clothes, pans, etc.)
- **>1% forgiveness, daily work, building house...**

9/20/2020 University of Georgia 19

Lecture 3b:

rational choice and deterrence

chris uggan - soc 4141 20

 **rational choice** 

I. Background

- "classical school" of Beccaria & Bentham
- Enlightenment era, social contract

II. Assumptions

- Individuals have free will and are rational
- Crime is natural and not learned (we would if we dared)
- Society is held together by a social contract
- General (normative) consensus -- shared morality

chris uggan - soc 4141 21

conceptual tools

- **Specific Deterrence**- experience of being caught and punished makes one less likely to try it again
- **General Deterrence** - others learn of threat
- **Example:** (P = probability of success, not busted)
 - What kind of rewards? Costs?
 - Rewards: Money, thrills, status
 - Costs: Fines, punishment, family, friends, stigma

$Y = P*(Reward\$) - ((1-P)*(Costs\$))$
 $Y = .8(\$500) - .2(\$1000) = \$400 - \$200 = + 200$
 So? Do you do it?

Taking stock (CWB) meta-analysis by Pratt et al.

1. **certainty** > "severity" but small effects
 - aim: highest probability of least possible punishment
2. effect **reduced** by statistical controls
 - e.g., peers, self-control
3. sensitivity to **method**
 - e.g., college v. non; small effects in better studies
4. certainty best for **white-collar**, not juv. del.
 - "middle-class window" of shaming
5. **informal/non-legal sanctions** are big deterrent
 - e.g., effect of prostitution or DWI on jobs, partners
6. sensitivity to **age**: juv. v. 18-25 v. 26+

critique

1. **Magnitude** of deterrent effect
2. Decisions are **moral**, normative, not just rational
 - rational planning is exception, not rule
 - how might a crowd change the calculus?
3. Impossible to **control** delinquency through deterrence
 - 100,000 officers over 3.8m square miles
4. Many "rewards" not affected by deterrence
 - e.g. masculinity
5. Weaker version of social learning (DA)
 - (unfair) RC not deterministic
