

Criminal Careers and Incapacitation

- I. Incapacitation vs. Selective Incapacitation**
- II. Criminal Careers Research**
 - A. Delinquency in a Birth Cohort.
 - B. Participation vs. Frequency.
 - C. Substantive Implications.
- III. Predicting the High Rate Offender**
 - A. RAND Studies.
 - B. Problems of Actuarial Prediction.
 - C. Conclusions.

Notes:

Learning Objectives

1. Know the difference between incapacitation and selective Incapacitation.
2. Understand the relationship between criminal career research and policies of selective incapacitation.
3. Understand the implications of participation vs. frequency rates for selective incapacitation.
4. Be able to link prediction studies to the policy of selective incapacitation.
5. Understand the RAND prediction studies and their conclusions.
6. Be aware of criticisms of the RAND studies.

Notes:

Incapacitation vs. Selective Incapacitation

- Incapacitation: Segregate criminals by imprisonment to prevent future crimes.
 - Incapacitation vs. deterrence.
 - Modest effect.
 - Costly.
- Selective incapacitation: Selectively imprison high rate offenders.
 - How effective would this be?
 - Problem of prediction.

Notes:

Delinquency in a Birth Cohort

- Philadelphia 1945 birth cohort (Wolfgang, Figlio, Sellin)
 - Of 9,945 boys, 35% had a police record by age 18.
 - Chronic offenders (5 or more arrests) make up 6% of cohort but commit 50% of the crimes.
- Philadelphia 1958 cohort.
 - Of 28,000 males and females, high rate offenders (5 or more arrests) make up 7.5% of cohort, commit 61% of crimes.
- Racine, WI: Shannon found that 25% accounted for 80% of arrests.
- Idea of selective incapacitation: lock up this 6% and cut the crime rate in half.

Notes:

Blumstein & Cohen: Criminal Careers

- Decompose the crime rate into participation rate and frequency rate
 - Participation rate: Proportion of population arrested.
 - Frequency (lambda λ): Average number of arrests for those arrested

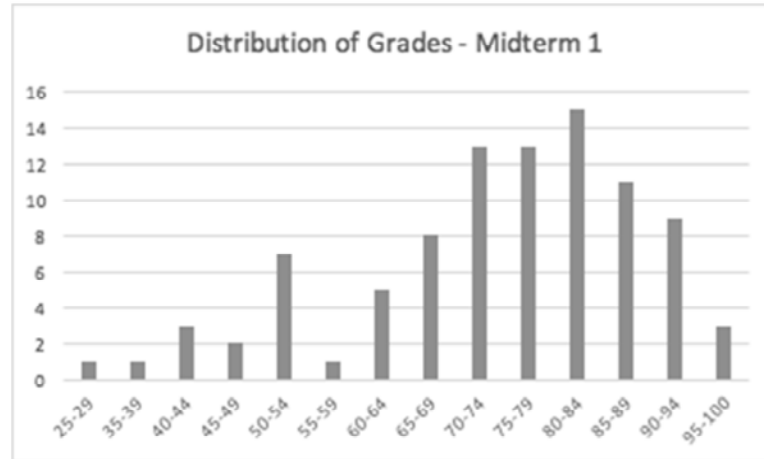
$$\text{Crime Rate} = \text{Participation Rate} \times \text{Frequency Rate}$$
$$\frac{\text{No. Arrests}}{100,000} = \frac{\text{Arrested Persons}}{100,000} \times \frac{\text{No. Arrests}}{\text{Arrested persons}}$$

*technically, this is computed per unit of time.

- Implications
 - If participation is high and frequency is low, selective incapacitation won't work well.
 - If participation is low and frequency is high, selective incapacitation has great potential.

Notes:

Distribution of the First Exam



Notes:

Criminal Career Research: Results for Participation and Frequency

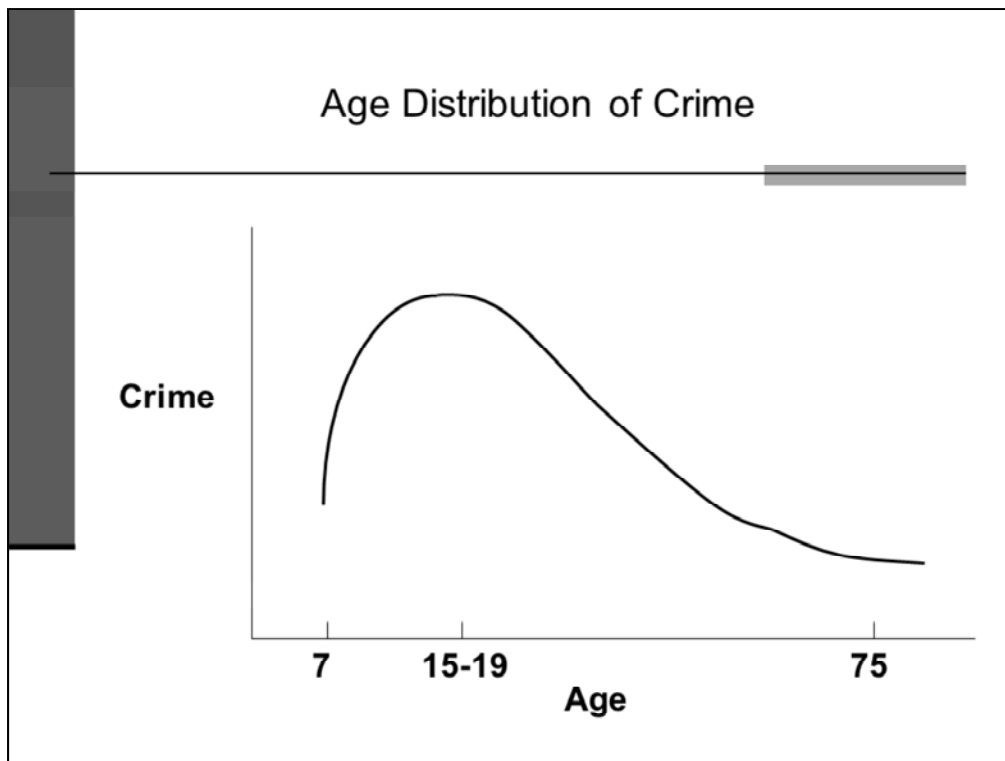
- Participation rates.
 - For all offenses, 50-60% (urban) males are arrested in their lifetime.
 - For Index Crimes 25% lifetime (14% whites; 50% blacks)
 - Recidivism: 85-95%
- Frequency rates (Lambda) for active offenders (arrests in Washington DC & Detroit):
 - Aggravated assault: 2-3 arrests per year.
 - Robbery: 3-5 arrests per year.
 - Property offenses: more than 5 per year.
 - Auto theft: 3 in DC; 9 in Detroit.

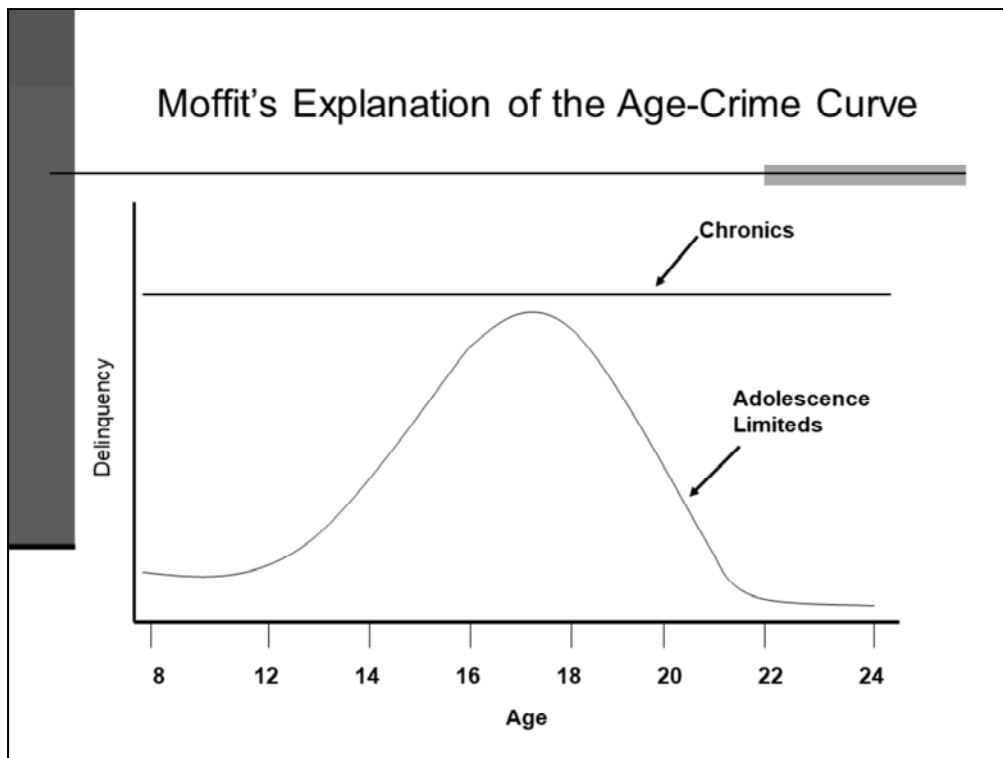
Notes:

Criminal Career Results: Self-Report Frequency

- Inmate self-reports before incarceration (Rand):
 - Robbery:
50% of robbers commit fewer than 4 per year
but 10% commit more than 70 per year.
 - Burglary:
50% of burglars commit fewer than 5 per year
but 10% commit more than 195 per year.
- Career length is short: average is less than 6 years
for serious offenses.

Notes:





Notes:

Life Course Persistent Offenders

- Individuals with cognitive deficits, attention deficit disorder, psychopathy
- Early maturation, physical size
- Cumulative disadvantage
- Temper tantrums in late adulthood lead to poor jobs, marriages

Notes:

Adolescence-Limited Offenders

- "Normal" adolescents
- Learn deviance from peers (partying, fighting, minor vandalism and theft)
- Learn from life-course persistents
- Age out of crime due to life course transitions

Notes:

Substantive Interpretations: Gottfredson and Hirschi

- Ignore this research.
 - Merely reflects unmeaningful statistical variation.
 - We cannot identify the career criminal before the fact.
 - Identify career criminal by 5 or more offenses, but by then ceases to be career criminal due to age.
- Analogy: For heart attacks prevention is better.
- Question: Can we predict the chronic offender?

Notes:

Predicting the High Rate Offender (Greenwood)

- Interviewed inmates in California using self-reports of robberies and burglaries (RAND).
- Seven-Point Prediction scale:
 - Incarceration for more than a 2-year period.
 - Prior conviction for robbery and burglary.
 - Juvenile conviction before age of 16.
 - Commitment to a juvenile institution.
 - Heroin or barbiturate use as a juvenile.
 - Heroin or barbiturate use 2-year period before arrest.
 - Employed less than half time in 2-year period before arrest.

Notes:

Sentencing Rule & Simulations (Greenwood)

- Sentencing rule: high rate offender gets 8 years in prison, all other 1 year (simulation).
 - Result: Reduce robbery rate by 15% and reduce imprisoned robbers by 5%.
 - False positive rate 60%. Problem of false negatives.
- RAND study: prediction scale (high, medium, low rate offender). After 24 months, did 5-10% better than pure chance; not significant.

Notes:

Potential Problems

- Changes sentencing from doing justice to crime control
- Used unemployment as a predictor (blaming the victim)
- Assumes that individuals will behave like the average member of their classification group (high rate offender)
- Ignores agency, reform

Notes: