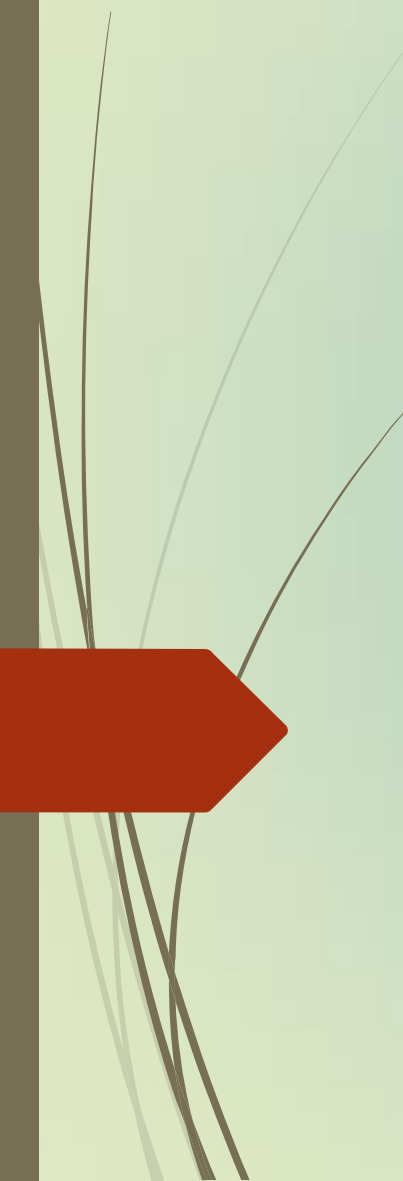




Lecture 4: Juvenile offenders and gangs.



Overview

Childhood is the starting point for criminality in many offenders. Whilst some crimes originate in adulthood, many offences are rooted in childhood, associated with conduct disorder and specific risk factors.

Whilst we acknowledge the risk factors, it is more difficult to identify precisely the causes of those risk factors.

Strong evidence is available that early social interventions can assist children who are at risk. Educational programmes aimed at nursery children have produced some positive results.

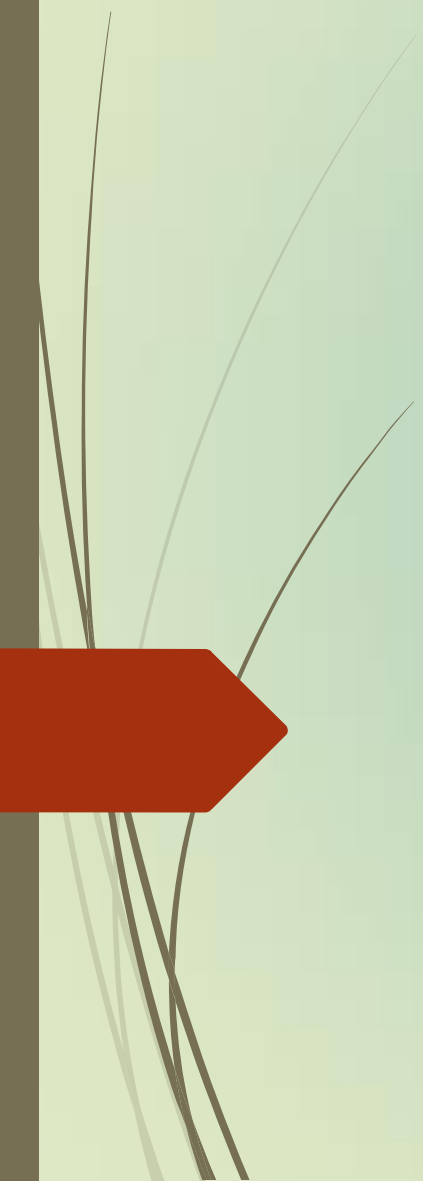
A high proportion of sex offenders are in their late teenage years. A third of the rapists of adult women are under the age of 18 years.

Delinquents justify their actions using less mature levels of moral reasoning.



Overview

- Parents using violent methods of dealing with situations tend to pass this onto their children.
- A number of mechanisms underlying cycles of abuse have been proposed leading to violent methods of dealing with important relationships.
- It is difficult to research the patterns of criminal careers despite the importance of this field.
- There are real differences in life and temporary offenders.



The case of Rick...

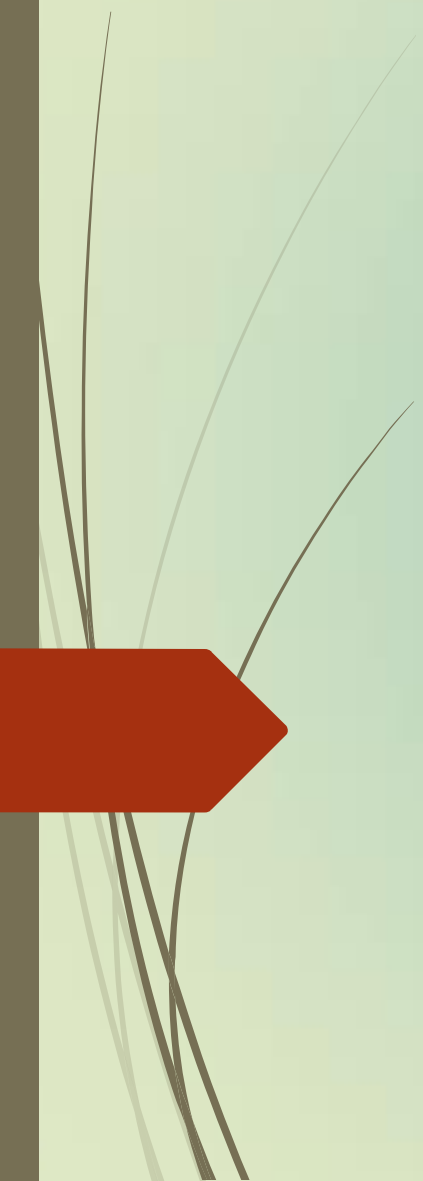
Juvenile offenders.

Is involvement in crime common among adolescents: are most youths delinquent? Maybe Rick was just an unfortunate kid who got caught.

- Are Rick's offenses fairly typical of the types of offences in which youths are involved?
- Will Rick "grow out" of delinquent behaviour?
- Is Rick's pattern of offending much the same as those of other delinquent youths?
- Do most delinquent youths begin with status offenses and then persist and escalate into serious, repetitive offending?
- *(Status offenses are acts, such as truancy and running away, that are considered offenses when committed by juveniles but are not considered crimes if committed by adults).*

- 
- Is there a rational component to Rick's delinquency so that punishment by the juvenile court would deter further delinquency?
 - Did the fact that Rick was adopted have anything to do with his involvement in delinquency? Might something about Rick's genetic makeup and his biological family lend some insight into his behaviour?
 - What role did Rick's use of alcohol play in his delinquency?
 - Are there family factors that might relate to Rick's involvement in delinquency?
 - Were there aspects of Rick's school experiences that might be related to his delinquency?

- 
- What role did Rick's friend play in his delinquent behaviour?
 - Did the youth court's formal adjudication of Rick as a "delinquent youth" two years earlier label him and make him more likely to continue in delinquent behaviour?
 - Should the juvenile court retain jurisdiction for serious, repeat offenders like Rick?
 - What should the juvenile court try to do with Rick: punish, deter, or rehabilitate him?
 - Should the juvenile court hold Rick less responsible for his acts than an adult because he has not fully matured?



Adolescent crime and the family

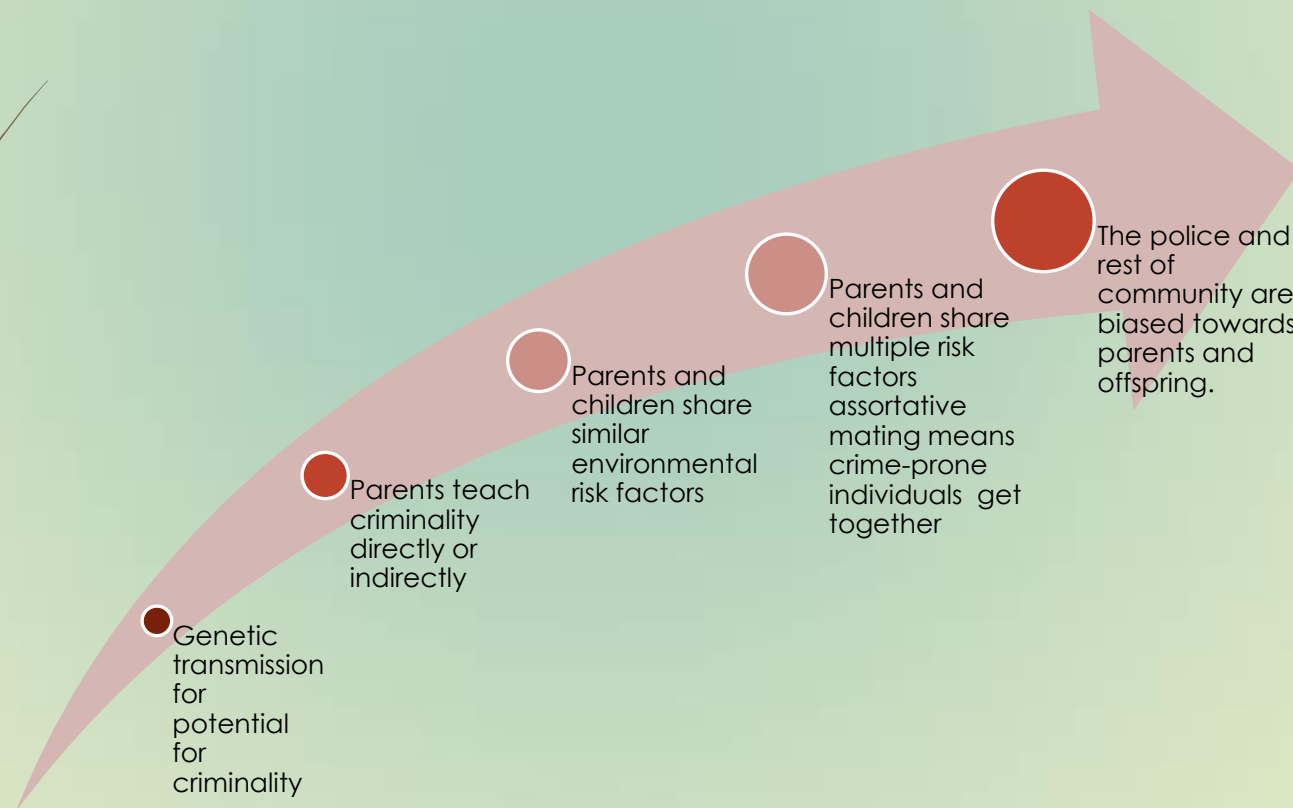
Some statistics: (Burfeind & Bartusch, 2016)



Crime runs in families and is concentrated in a small number of these.	• Over one third of UK prisoners has a family member also in prison.
Most family relationships show-father, mother, older brother and older sister, but not younger sister.	• Half of all convictions were the responsibility of 6% of families.
Most young offenders are reprimanded for a number of offences, with a wide repertoire of offences and high recidivism rates. 75% reoffend within two years.	• Most offending occurs between 16-17 years and those convicted six times are more likely to go onto adult criminality.
Young offenders can be classified into (1) delinquent careers, (2) temporary delinquency confined to adolescence.	

Criminal behaviour in the parent and offspring

- There are a few possible explanations of intergenerational transmission of criminal behaviour. Farrington (2011) identifies the following:



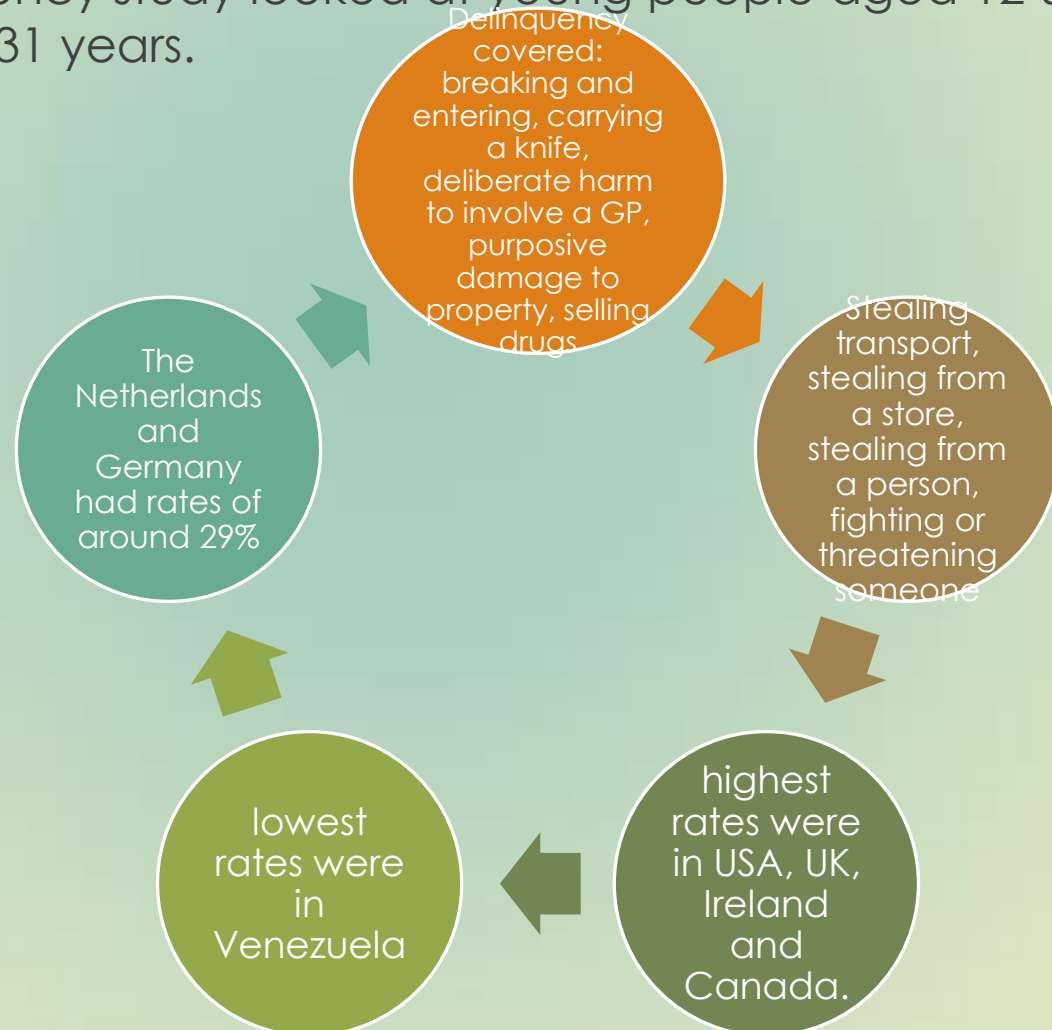


What about the influences on a child when their parent is incarcerated?

- Age of the child in their understanding
- Critical periods of influence?
- Emotional distress
- Negative emotions as a result of no escape of situation
- Prison visits as a frightening or unfamiliar experience
- Parental modelling and social learning theory
- Stigma and labelling theory

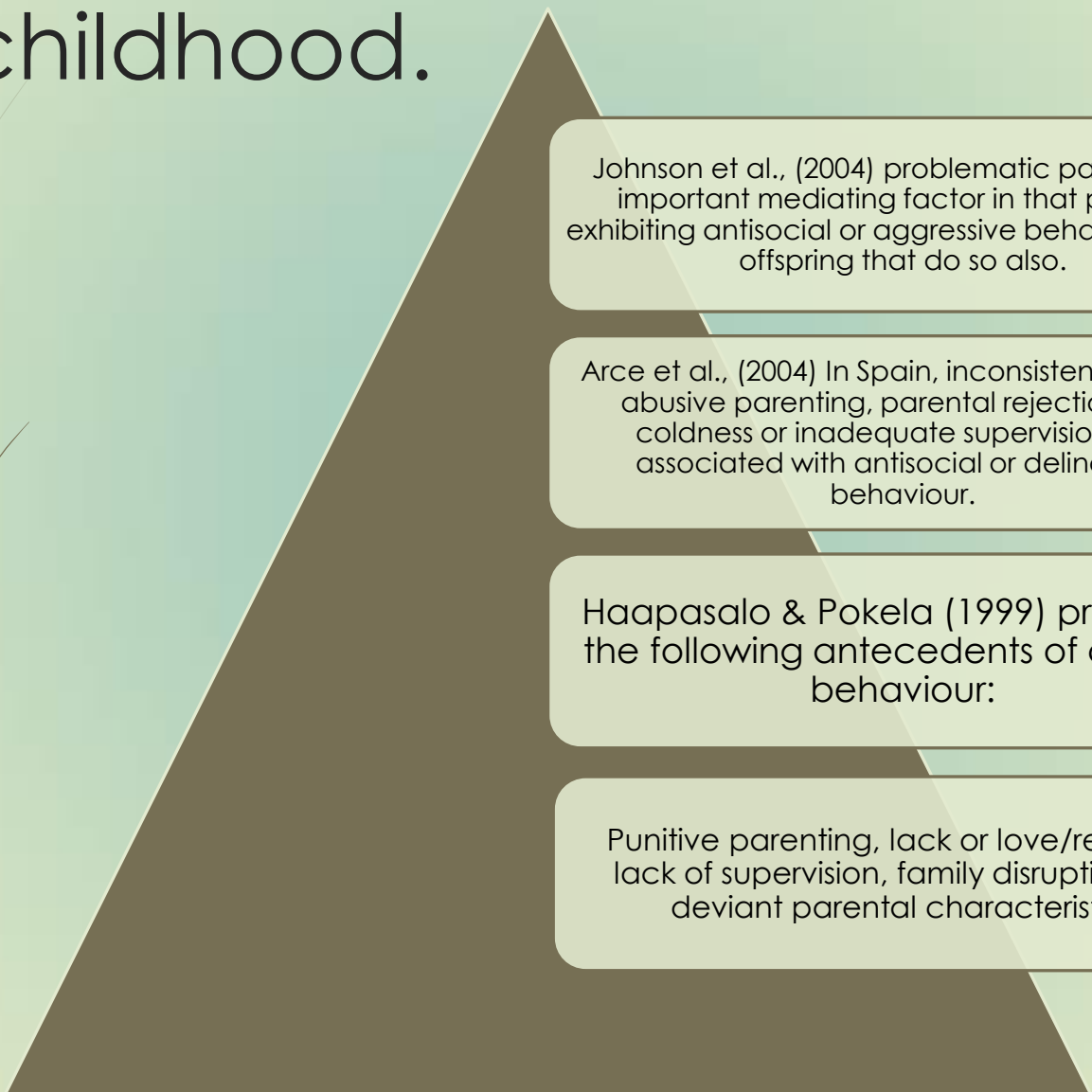
International comparisons

- Enzmann et al., (2010) second International Self-Report Delinquency study looked at young people aged 12 & 15 years in 31 years.





Criminogenic factors in childhood.



Johnson et al., (2004) problematic parenting is an important mediating factor in that parents exhibiting antisocial or aggressive behaviour have offspring that do so also.

Arce et al., (2004) In Spain, inconsistent, harsh or abusive parenting, parental rejection and coldness or inadequate supervision was associated with antisocial or delinquent behaviour.

Haapasalo & Pokela (1999) proposed the following antecedents of criminal behaviour:

Punitive parenting, lack of love/rejection, lack of supervision, family disruption and deviant parental characteristics.



Parenting is just one aspect:

- Childhood delinquency and adult crime have many similar contributory RISK factors occurring in a number of settings:
- **The risks:**
- Neurological/biological factors.
- Low cognitive/educational achievement.
- A history of antisocial behaviour.
- Parental substance abuse.
- Violent or socially disorganised neighbourhood.
- Media violence.
- Each of these single factors can act independently, what about interdependently?



Multiplicative tendencies:

- Perinatal difficulties, low SES and family adversity.
- Lone parenthood, poor parenting and low SES.
- Insecure attachment, poor parenting, life stress, low social support.
- Parental criminality and early family conflict.
- Harsh parenting and marital discord.
- Poor/harsh parenting reduced by emotional/community support.
- Low SES reduced by good parenting and age appropriate verbal ability.

And findings from elsewhere?

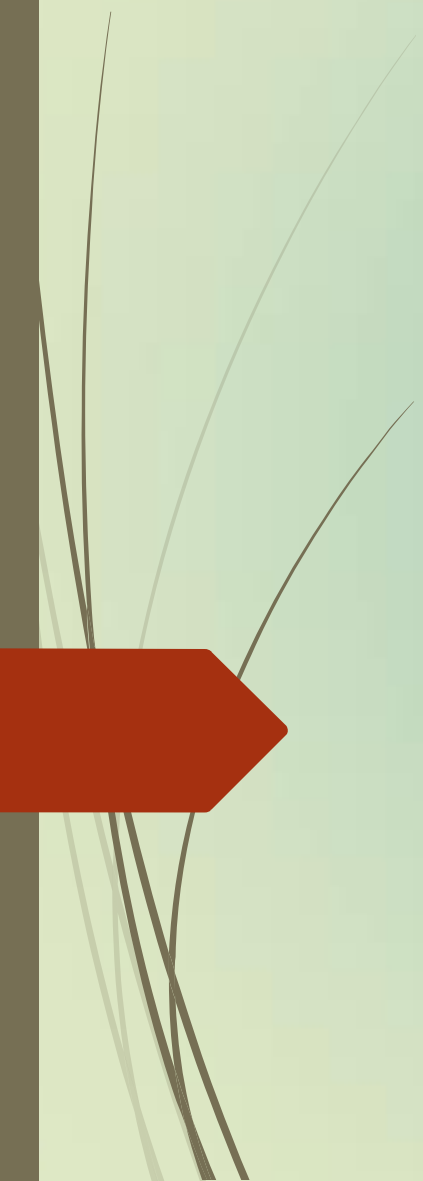
- ▶ Russia (Ruchkin, Eisemann & Hagglof 1998)
compared delinquents to non offenders aged 15-18:

Aggression in boys was best predicted by fathers rejection.

For control group rejection by the mother was associated with aggression.

Delinquents scored higher for rejection and overprotection by both mother and father.

Delinquents had complaints such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal and a lack of concentration



Continuity from childhood to adulthood



From Child to Adult: A recap on the Cambridge Study.

- Farrington (1995):
- Large family size, low family income, poor housing, criminal families, poor parenting.
- These factors are very similar to those associated with psychiatric disorders such as ASPD. For example, Farrington (1995) listed the precursors of ASPD as:
- Low family income, poor housing, large family, convicted parent, erratic parenting, low intelligence and early school leaver.
- However, the Farrington study only looked at older children, what about the younger members?

Haapasalo & Tremblay (1994)

- Over 1,000 children assessed for aggression from aged 3-adolescence:

The 'stable' fighters differed significantly from the others, they came from more disadvantaged families.

The diagram consists of two large, curved arrows. The top arrow is orange and points downwards towards the bottom arrow. The bottom arrow is brown and points upwards towards the top arrow, creating a circular flow. The text is placed inside the curves of these arrows.

Replicated in other countries such as Finland (Viemero, 1996), where later criminality was associated with early aggression and high levels of violence in their favourite T.V. programmes.



Childhood and adult antisocial behaviour

- The link between conduct disorder and criminality has been explored with the assumption that conduct disorder may be a predictor for adult antisocial disorder.
- Whilst the two disorders are not identical, there are considerable similarities (Farrington 1996).
- Using findings from the Cambridge study, predictors of ASPD are as depicted on the following slide.
- In the main, the findings focused on fighting patterns, family adversity, parental control, punishment and regulations.

Major predictors of ASPD at various ages.

Age group	Predictors of ASPD
Aged 10	Poor parental supervision, low school attainment, poor child rearing, high neuroticism.
Aged 14	ASPD score at age 10, separation from parent at age 10, low non verbal IQ at age 10.
Aged 18	ASPD score at age 14, convicted parent at age 10, Father not involved at age 12, father unemployed at age 14.
Aged 32	ASPD score at age 18, convicted parent aged 10, absence from school, hospitalisation at age 18.

Moral reasoning and offending.

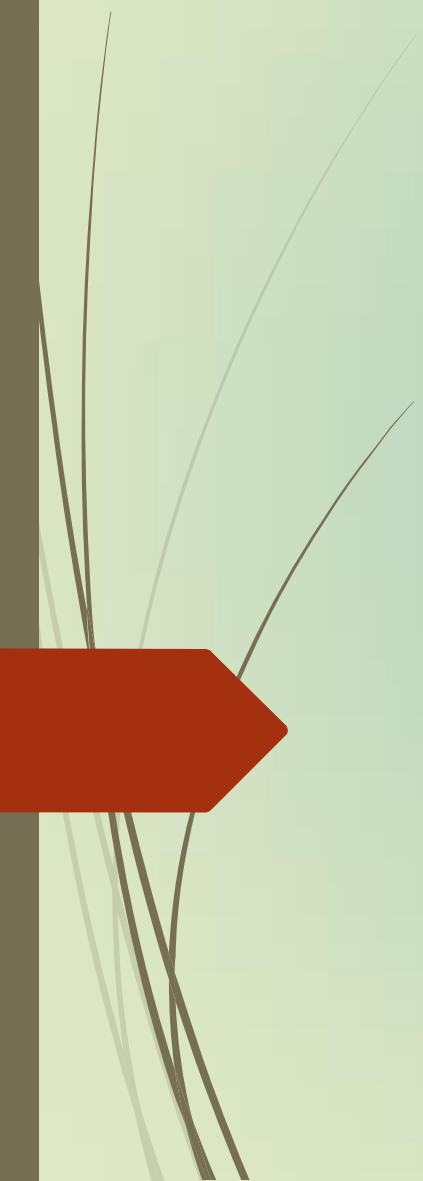
- Theories of moral development (Piaget 1970, Kohlberg. 1984, Gilligan. 1982) show that delinquency is associated with lower moral reasoning.
- Whilst some have argued that girls operate on a lower level, Gregg, Gibbs & Basinger (1994) have shown that females consistently operate at a morally advanced age.
- Palmer & Hollin (1998) reported that offenders are typically at Kohlberg's pre conventional level, while their non delinquent counterparts were at the conventional level.

The scale to measure moral reasoning includes measures on five norms: contract & truth, affiliation, life, property & law, legal justice. Offenders were lower in all five norms.



Different crimes, different moral development?

- Why do different youths commit different crimes?
- Can we map moral reasoning to specific crimes?
- Brugman & Aleva (2004) found slower moral reasoning for the value: `obeying the law`.
- Could it be possible, that if the development of moral reasoning is partly a consequence of internalising one`s actions, then an individuals moral development will be dependent on and vary as a result of their experiences.
- Chen and Howitt (2007) found moderate support for this; they were able to differentiate between drug and violent offences and levels of moral reasoning about 60% of the time.

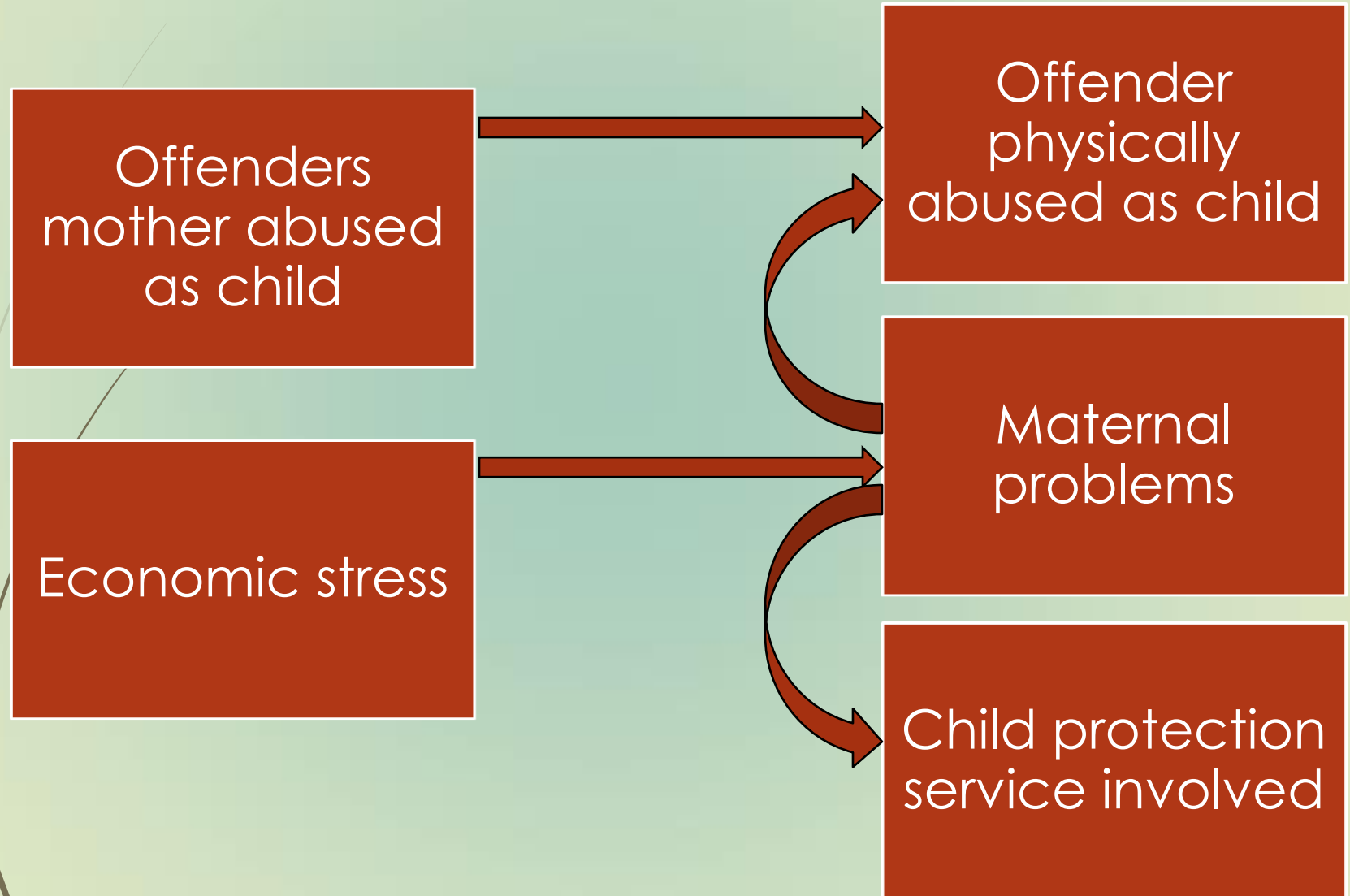


Cycles of abuse

Cycles of abuse in young offending.

- It is clear that there is a link between early experiences of abuse and later offending, but there are several meanings to the term `cycle of abuse`: The recurring theme-
- Could the child who is abused grow up to become violent teen and adult?
- The abused child growing up to become a parent abuser of their own children?
- Problems answering these questions are associated with:
- Self report retrospective questions, a lack of standard definition for abuse and also confounding factors present at the same time as the abuse.

An example:



Models to explain the cycle of abuse.

- The models are:
- 1. based on social learning theory.
- 2. based on attachment theory.
- 3. based on deficient social information processing.
- 4. based on post traumatic stress.
- 5. based on emotional regulation.
- Widom (1989) investigated county court records of children abused at age 11. she then looked at their adult criminal history. 29% had criminal records, equating to a 1.7 times greater risk of criminality than controls.
- **What are your thoughts ?**

SLT

- The experience of aggression leads to being incorporated into behavioural repertoire

Attachment theory

- Experiencing aggression leads to insecure attachments

Deficits in social information processing

- Children attribute hostile intentions to others and respond accordingly

PTS

- Aggression causes traumatic symptoms which the child then re-enacts

Emotional regulation

- The child disassociates from painful emotional experiences and becomes hypersensitive to potential aggression and difficulties in correctly identifying emotions

Young sex offenders.

- ▶ Juvenile sex offenders have been largely ignored within the literature.
- ▶ Langstrom (1999) suggests the figure is relatively low, some 10% of total sex offences in general.
- ▶ His findings relate to Sweden, figures for the U.S. and U.K. are somewhat higher. Based on U.K. statistics the figure may be as high as 30%.
- ▶ British Survey results suggest that youngsters under 18 years commit at least one third of sex crimes against children.
- ▶ Are the characteristics predicting general crime and delinquency the same as those predicting sexual crimes?
- ▶ Young sexual offenders usually have an average of 7 victims before being brought to the attention of the police, one quarter of 12 year olds had a previous record of sexually abusive acts and predictors identified were:
- ▶ **Early onset sexually abusive behaviour, multiple victims and poor social skills.**

Youthful sex offenders.

- Violent crime is most commonly a youthful offence, which drops sharply beyond middle age. Anger is often associated with rape in many offenders. Therefore, should rape be viewed as a violent crime or a lust fuelled crime?
- Worling (1995) examined adolescent sex offender on a range of measures. Those offending against an older woman as opposed to peers, had experienced greater levels of physical punishment and sexual abuse from men led to abuse towards children, whereas sexual abuse by women led to sexual abuse of older women.
- Haapasalo & Kankkonen (1997) compared self reported experiences of childhood abuse in sex offenders compared to violent offenders. Sex offenders claimed to have experienced far more psychological abuse than violent offenders, such as:
- `father/mother threatened to hurt me`, `mother/father belittled me`, `mother/father made me do shameful things`.

Youthful offenders continued...

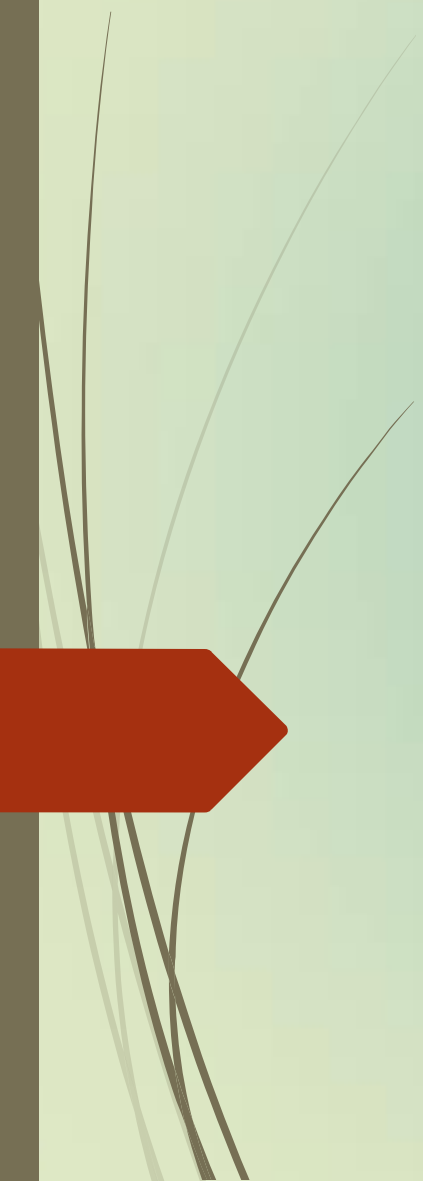
- Up to half of child sexual abuse is conducted by those under age 21. in a meta analysis, Graves et al.(1996) classed offenders into 3 categories:

Mixed Offence:
a variety of
sexual assault,
exhibitionism,
voyeurism,
young children
and frotteurism.

Paedophilic:
first offence
between 6-12
years, usually
female.

Sexual Assault:
first offence
age 13-15,
victims vary,
both older and
younger.

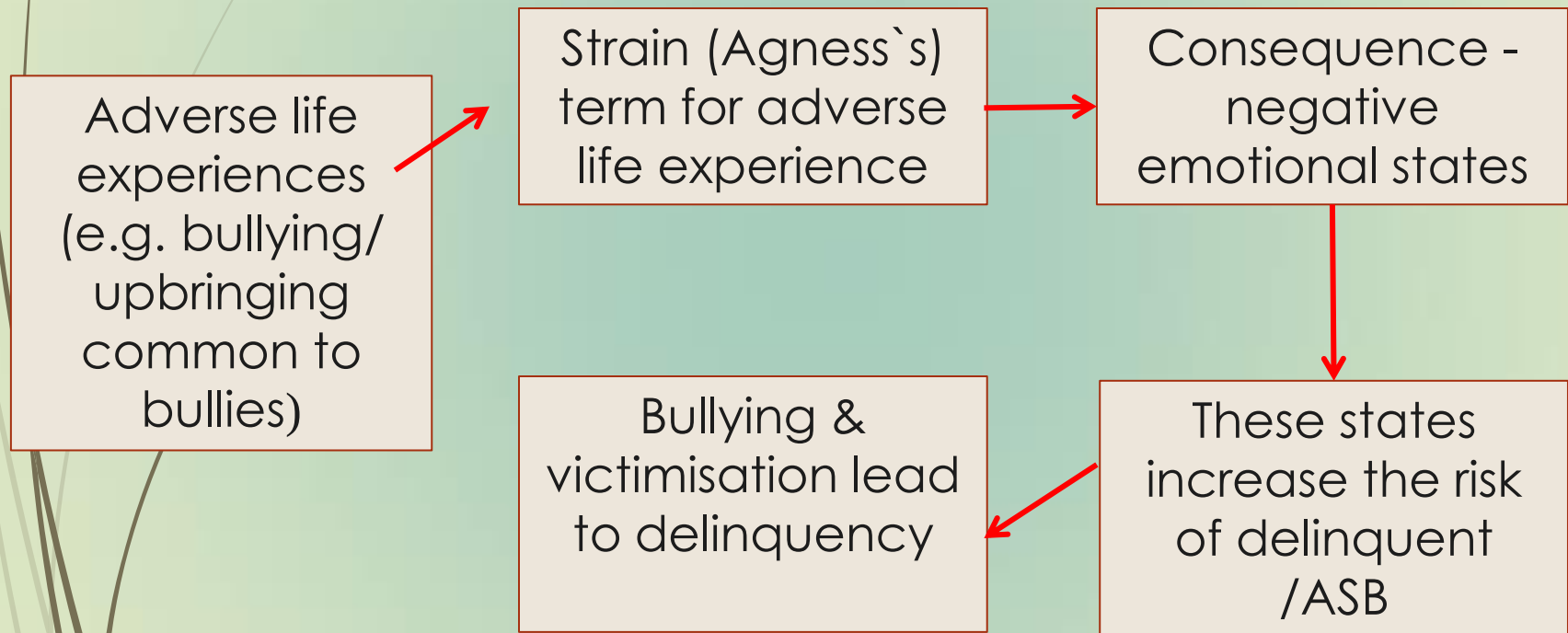
Offenders are generally
of lower social class,
with pathological family
structures, parents
physically
neglected/abused as
children and a
patriarchal problem of
substance abuse.

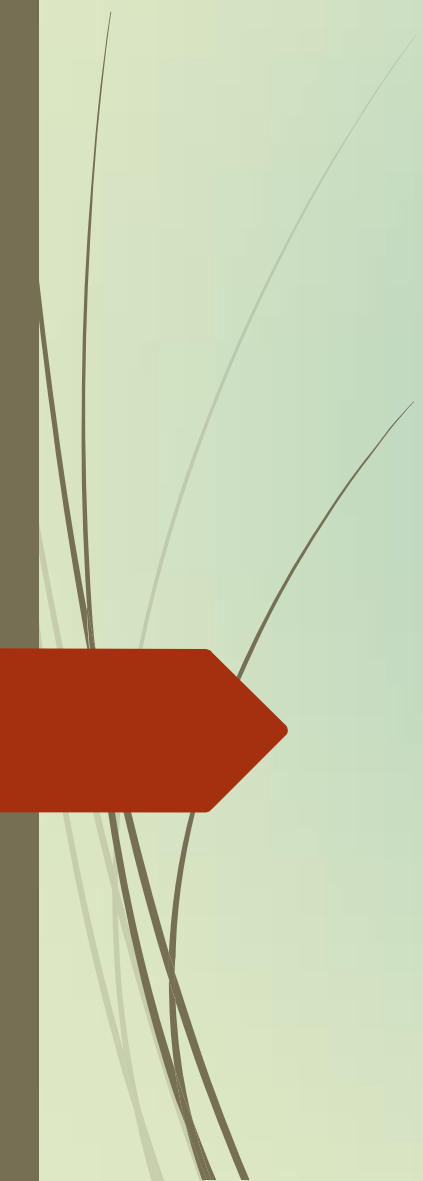


Bullying

- 
- Research frequently suggests that bullying is associated with non violent delinquency for both victims and perpetrators (Sigfusdottir et al., 2010).
 - In their research they noted that the effects of bullying for the victim and the perpetrator were mediated by anger.
 - However an additional direct pathway between victimisation and delinquency in the absence of anger is also present.
 - This supports Agnew`s social-psychological general strain theory, acknowledging the importance of the role of emotions.
 - The underlying idea is that people treated badly behave badly....
 - The diagram on the next slide illustrates Agnew`s Strain theory applied to bullying.

Agnew's strain theory and bullying.





Parenting and parental control

Patterson and colleagues - longitudinal OYS (1984)

- Two routes to delinquency:

The diagram consists of two large, stylized arrows pointing in opposite directions. The left arrow is orange and points left, containing the text 'Early starter'. The right arrow is brown and points right, containing the text 'Late starter'. Below each arrow is a block of text describing the route. The background is a light green gradient with some faint, dark, curved lines on the left side.

Early
starter

Arrested before age
14 and caused by
poor parenting and
antisocial behaviour

Late
starter

Arrests from age 14
onwards caused
mainly by deviant
peer groups

A developmental model for early starters

- ▶ This coercion model focuses on poor parenting skills as a cause of antisocial behaviour in childhood (Patterson & Yoerger, 1993).
- ▶ Home life is distressing, where unskilled parents reinforce behavioural problems through coercion.
- ▶ Three characters contribute to this:
 - ▶ No positive reinforcement for prosocial behaviours
 - ▶ No effective punishment for problem behaviours
 - ▶ A rich supply of reinforcement for coercive behaviours
- ▶ As trivial delinquent acts at home become more frequent, they will escalate into more serious acts such as fighting, stealing and fire starting.
- ▶ This generalises to other settings and drives individuals towards other deviant peers (partners in crime).



A developmental model for late starters

- ▶ Family processes lead to unsupervised time for many reasons and individuals end up in association with deviant peers.
- ▶ Three defining characteristics of late starters:
 - ▶ Not antisocial at an early age
 - ▶ During adolescence, disrupted family routine/conflict results in unsupervised time
 - ▶ Find themselves involved with a deviant peer group by around age 13 or 14.
- ▶ Patterson and Yoerger (1993) found that family conflict and disruption could account for 72% of involvement with deviant peers.
- ▶ Again, much evidence to support these claims.

What about birth order and parental control?

- Many studies have found that first born children are less likely to be delinquent than later born children.
- It is impossible for parents to treat all siblings the same in terms of time, supervision and experience (Begue and Roche, 2005).
- They found that `first borns` were more supervised than later born offspring and they reported less minor and serious delinquency than later born children.
- Thus there was moderate support for the effects of parental supervision on later criminal activity.

Lifespan development and criminal careers:

- However, whilst childhood criminality is important, not all offenders reveal criminal behaviour early in life.
- The Berlin Crime Study (Dahle, 1999) consisted a detailed history and follow up of 25 years through prison, health and legal records.
- Property offences and fraud represented 60% of cases, robbery and GBH, 10% each, but sexual/murder crimes were rare.
- 17% of the cohort died, mainly between 30-45 years, therefore a specific cluster analysis was conducted, revealing five types of criminal career:

Adolescence limited offenders: offending peaks by early twenties, linked to peer groups. Any later offending linked to drugs or trivial offences.

1 in 6

Limited serious offenders: begin in adolescence but escalates in twenties, drops off by thirties. Crimes are serious and associated with bio-psycho-social factors.

1 in 9

Late starting offenders: crime specialisation e.g. fraud or burglary, based on a rational decision to commit crime.

Persistent serious offenders: a life devoted to crime, with high rates of recidivism, serious violent crime. Associated with accumulated risk factors and being a social loner.

1 in 7

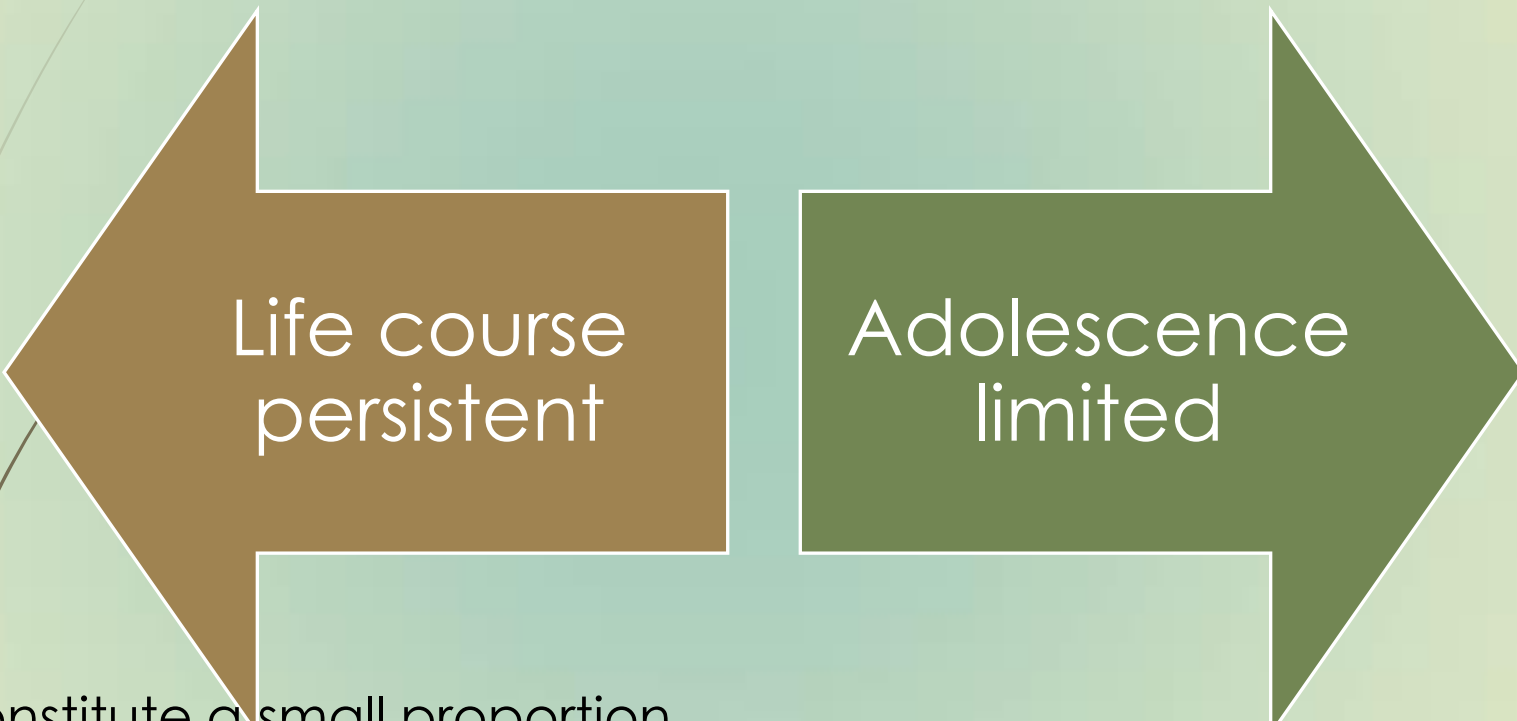
1 in 8

Occasional offenders: low level of delinquency, limited to specialist crimes, risk factors absent, BUT experienced critical life events prior to offending.

Almost half



Moffitt's adolescence-limited and life-course-persistent offenders



The diagram consists of two large, stylized arrows pointing in opposite directions. The left arrow is brown and points to the left, containing the text 'Life course persistent'. The right arrow is olive green and points to the right, containing the text 'Adolescence limited'. Below each arrow is a block of descriptive text. The background is a light green gradient with some faint, dark green curved lines on the left side.

Life course
persistent

Constitute a small proportion of offenders often biting and hitting at age 4, shoplifting age 10, robbery age 22 and child abuse aged 30

Adolescence
limited

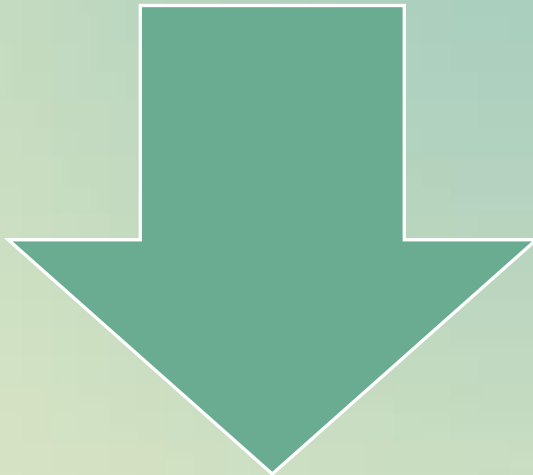
Engage in antisocial behaviour with peers when rewarded, but not with others



Causes of life-course persistent and adolescent limited offenders:



Life course persistent offending arises due to a combination of neuropsychological deficits which is further compounded by less than ideal home situations. This is also influenced by evocative, reactive or proactive interactions



Adolescence limited offending occurs because of the `maturity gap` between biological, sexual and social maturity. Adolescents are in search of status and any responses to their behaviours act as reinforcers. They cease offending when they `age out`

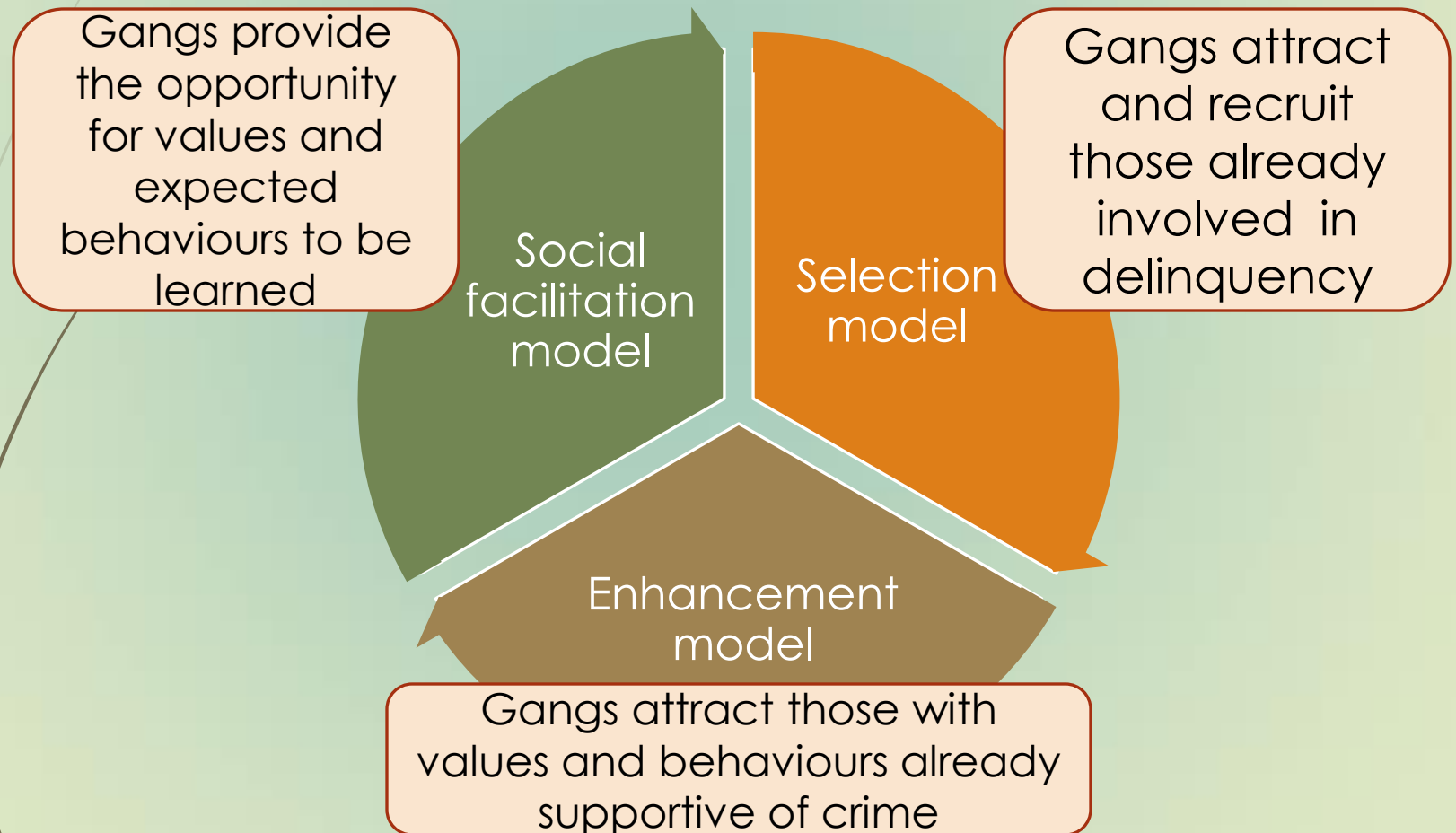
According to Farrington (2010) -

- Offending is most prevalent aged 15-19 years.
- However the peak in onset of offending is around 9-14 years.
- The distance to offending peaks at age 20-29 years.
- Early offenders have highest and longest rate of offences.
- Offenders are versatile as opposed to specialist.
- Criminal offences are part of antisocial disorders developmentally.
- Young offenders operate in groups, adults on their own.
- There are different motives dependent on age. Younger crimes are for excitement, revenge and utilitarian purposes; older are mainly utilitarian in function.
- The type of crime is characteristic of their age. Shoplifting in younger, burglary in older individuals.

Juvenile crime and gangs

- To many, delinquent behaviour is synonymous with gangs.
- Gangs however only account for a small proportion of delinquent behaviour (Warr, 1996)
- Nevertheless, gang membership does increase the likelihood of crime or victimisation (Gordon et al., 2004).
- There has been considerable debate when defining gangs since the first attempts by Thrasher in the 1920`s.
- Bursik and Grasmick (1993) focus on the inclusion of illegal behaviour; a delinquent based definition, in contrast to the earlier process based models.
- Whilst controversy remains regarding definitions, Klein (2011) and others across America and Europe have reached a consensus that a street gang is `...any street-orientated youth group whose involvement in illegal activity is part of its group identity` (Klein & Maxson, 2006, p4).

Models of gang influence (Thornberry et al., 1993)



Group processes involved in gang delinquency

HOW gang leaders acquire status via constant aggressive responses

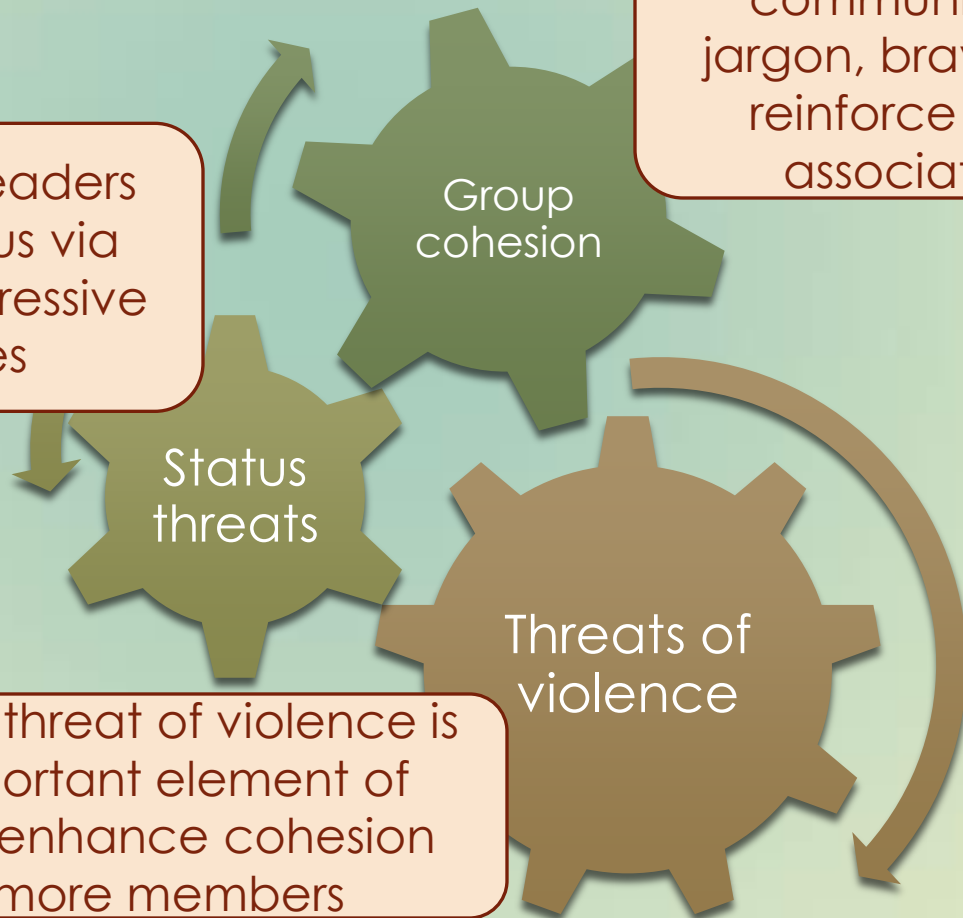
HOW gangs communicate-jargon, bravado to reinforce weak associations

Group cohesion

Status threats

Threats of violence

HOW violence or threat of violence is single most important element of gang culture to enhance cohesion and attract more members





Individual differences in gang participation

- Roughly 30% of the gang population is female (Curry & Decker, 2003) and in general they are less delinquent than their male counterparts.
- Nonetheless there are still higher rates of offending for females in gangs.
- Females join gangs for much the same reasons as do males (Bell, 2009) but they are far more likely than males to come from abusive or dysfunctional families and join gangs as a form of escape from real or expected exploitation or oppression.
- Gangs also attract those from the bottom end of the socioeconomic ladder.
- Therefore, gangs often contain those from minority status groups such as disadvantaged social class, putting them at risk of criminal involvement (Pyrooz et al., 2010).

Concluding comments

- Clearly, any account of developmental criminality needs to be able to address the varying factors that may contribute to criminal behaviour (Howitt, 2015).
- From the plethora of studies devoted to explaining lifespan criminology, the following conclusions may be drawn:
 - Origins of childhood criminology are diverse.
 - Different risk factors are associate with different patterns of offending.
 - Early problem behaviour should not be neglected for two reasons:
 - It may be predictive of later problem behaviour, and
 - If so, simple interventions may lead to a reduction in future delinquent behaviour.

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