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978-0-521-70551-6 - Legacies of Crime: A Follow-Up of the Children of Highly Delinquent Girls and Boys

Peggy C. Giordano

Frontmatter

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LEGACIES OF CRIME

Legacies of Crime explores the lives of seriously delinquent girls and boys who were followed over a twenty-year period as they navigated the transition to adulthood. In-depth interviews with these women and men and their children – a majority of whom are now adolescents themselves – depict the adults' economic and social disadvantages and continued criminal involvement, and in turn the unique vulnerabilities of their children. Peggy C. Giordano identifies family dynamics that foster the intergenerational transmission of crime, violence, and drug abuse, rejecting the notion that such continuities are based solely on genetic similarities or even lax, inconsistent parenting. The author breaks new ground in directly exploring – and in the process revising – the basic tenets of classic social learning theories and in confronting the complications associated with the parent's gender. *Legacies of Crime* also identifies factors associated with resilience in the face of what is often a formidable package of risks favoring intergenerational continuity.

Peggy C. Giordano is Distinguished Research Professor at Bowling Green State University. Her research – published in leading journals such as *Criminology*, *American Sociological Review*, and the *American Journal of Sociology* – has long focused on the causes of juvenile delinquency and particularly on similarities and differences in male and female pathways to criminal involvement. A Fellow of the American Society of Criminology, Giordano's analyses of the adult lives of a sample of delinquent youth have twice won the American Sociological Association's James F. Short, Jr. award for best article. This book extends this research in a unique exploration of the lives of the children of the original study subjects.

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Bowling Green State University



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To my parents,

Doris and Jim Cochran

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Acknowledgments

Interviews conducted in connection with the Ohio Life-Course Study (OLS) took place over a twenty-five-year period and involved the active collaboration and hard work of many colleagues and students. Special thanks must go to Stephen Cernkovich, a co-investigator on the adolescent phase of the OLS, the Toledo Youth Survey, as well as the related adult follow-up studies. Steve played a central role in the collection and analyses of these data, and our collaborative work on the respondents' lives and criminal careers is key to an understanding of the family environments their children must navigate. Ted Groat also played an important role as co-investigator on the adult follow-ups, particularly in analyses of the qualitative data, formulating ideas about desistance processes, and, most important, offering encouragement over the long haul. These early interviews were funded by grants from the National Institute of Mental Health (grants MH29095, MH46410, and MH52268), while a grant from the W. T. Grant Foundation enabled us to complete the most recent third wave of interviews focused on issues of parenting and the well-being of the next generation of children. Monica Longmore and Wendy Manning, co-investigators on the parenting project, brought useful social psychological and demographic perspectives to the investigation and offered immeasurable quantities of intellectual, practical, and moral support. The Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (used for some comparisons to OLS children) was funded by The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (grant HD36223), and was also completed in collaboration with Manning and Longmore.

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Many outstanding interviewers have participated in each wave of data collection, but Claudia Vercellotti deserves special mention, as she not only completed a large number of the structured interviews, but almost all of the open-ended life-history interviews quoted at length in these pages. Claudia possesses a unique sensitivity and openness, nonjudgmental attitude, and gentle humor that have been central to the respondents' willingness to share many aspects of their lives with us. She also worked tirelessly to track difficult-to-find respondents and offered valuable insights on matters ranging from the dynamics within specific families to more general theorizing about religion, romantic partners, and the long-term effects of drug abuse. I would also like to express my gratitude to the adult and adolescent respondents themselves, for their willingness to participate in interviews that required introspection and candor, and recall of experiences that may have been difficult or painful to discuss.

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