



John Laub and Robert Sampson awarded the Stockholm Prize in Criminology

John Laub of the National Institute of Justice, USA, and Robert Sampson of Harvard University, USA, were awarded the 2011 Stockholm Prize in Criminology in a ceremony at Stockholm City Hall on the evening of June 14. H.M. The Queen presented the prize to the winners.

Laub and Sampson received the prize for their research showing why and how criminals stop offending. The award was presented in conjunction with the Stockholm Criminology Symposium.

Photo: Robert Sampson and John Laub together with Queen Silvia. Photography by Pernille Tofte

The Press Release Announcement of the Stockholm Prize is below:



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Stockholm Prize in Criminology Awarded for Discoveries on Why and How Criminals Stop

The 2011 Stockholm Prize in Criminology has been jointly awarded to John Laub of the National Institute of Justice, USA, and Robert Sampson of Harvard University, USA, for their research showing why and how criminals stop offending.

The authors of the longest life-course study of criminal behavior ever conducted, Laub and Sampson discovered that even very active criminals can stop committing crimes for good after key “turning points” in their lives. In their sample of 500 male offenders born in the 1920s, these turning points included marriage, military service, employment, and other ways of cutting off their social ties to their offending peer group.

These findings, reported in their books *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life* (1993) and *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70* (2003), as well as in numerous articles, have had broad influence in criminology world-wide. They have also influenced the policy debate about criminal justice and sentencing policy, especially concerning the potential for rehabilitation. Their work has influenced other scholars to search for means by which offenders can be assisted to break their links to other offenders, such as by moving to new communities.

The Importance of Turning Points

Their research methods included both quantitative and qualitative data collected at regular intervals over the life-course of 500 juvenile delinquents who were incarcerated in one of two institutions in Massachusetts in the late 1930s. The sample was drawn by the late Harvard Law School scholars Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck and originally reported in their 1950 book *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency*. The study continued to collect data up to the age of 45 for some of the offenders. All of the data were then neatly boxed and stored in the basement of the Harvard Law School in 1972. There they sat until John Laub discovered the dusty boxes in 1985.

With support from the National Institute of Justice, they launched the second phase of the study of the sample. Collecting new data from a wide range of official records, they also launched a new round of interviews with the research subjects who were then in their late 60s. These late-life data offered a major breakthrough in understanding how criminals stop, start again, and stop again, depending on the turning points in their lives. In what might be described as a combination of circumstance and will, these turning points provided new insights for the growing study of “desistance” from crime as a *process*, rather than as a *result*.

The Prize to be Awarded in Stockholm in June 2011

In announcing the Prize winners in San Francisco at the Annual Meetings of the American Society of Criminology, the Co-Chairs of the International Jury for the Stockholm Prize,

Professor Lawrence Sherman of Cambridge University and Professor Jerzy Sarnecki of the University of Stockholm, said the Jury “selected the winners for their achievement in producing one of the most influential studies in modern criminology, one that has changed the way in which many scholars and practitioners think about crime.” The Co-Chairs suggested that the hundreds of scholars of crime in the life course might wish to gather in **Stockholm next June 13-15** to exchange their latest research and celebrate the achievements of their field, so well exemplified by the work of Laub and Sampson.

John Laub is the Director of the National Institute of Justice, the research arm of the United States Department of Justice. He is also a Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice on leave from the University of Maryland. In 2002 he was elected President of the American Society of Criminology, which then awarded him their highest research prize, the Edwin H. Sutherland Award, in 2005. With Robert Sampson, he has also twice won the Albert J. Reiss, Jr. Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Crime, Law and Deviance, once for each of the two books on their Massachusetts life-course sample.

Robert Sampson is the Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences and former Chair of the Department of Sociology at Harvard University, currently on leave at the Russell Sage Foundation in New York. The American Society of Criminology awarded Sampson the Edwin H. Sutherland Award in 2002, and elected him President in 2010.

Both Sampson and Laub have also received awards from other learned societies for their joint research with the Glueck sample. Both 2011 Stockholm Prize winners also hold a PhD in Criminal Justice from the State University of New York at Albany.

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Further information: Chairmen of the Jury, Professor Jerzy Sarnecki, +46 8 16 21 02 or +46 703 72 78 39, and Professor Lawrence Sherman, +1 267 269 17 57.

Information is also available at www.criminologyprize.com

About the Prize: The Stockholm Prize in Criminology was instituted in 2005 in order to recognize outstanding achievements in the field of criminological research or in the application of research findings by practitioners. The Prize is financed by foundations in USA, Sweden and Japan. The principal donor is the Jerry Lee Foundation, USA. Substantial donations are also made by Söderbergs Foundations, Sweden. The Prize winners have been selected by an independent jury comprised of criminologists from Asia, Latin America, North America, Africa, Australia and Europe. The Jury is chaired by Professor Jerzy Sarnecki of the University of Stockholm and Professor Lawrence Sherman of the University of Cambridge.



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