

Christopher Salvatore: *Arrested Adolescent Offenders: A Study of Delayed Transitions to Adulthood*

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Christopher Salvatore explores the effects of emerging adulthood on recent generations, arguing that it produces a new type of offender, the arrested adolescent. Salvatore believes that the emergence of this new stage may be having an adverse effect on juveniles by extending the period of adolescence. To do so, he describes different theories and research that focuses on adolescents, particularly adolescents with criminal offenses and the implications of life course theory. His study reveals not only the effects of the new period of the life course on juveniles but also the changes occurring in the criminal justice system and avenues of new research. This book does not look to exploit a theory. Rather, it seeks to better understand emerging adults who engage in criminal behavior in order to preserve their future generations instead of criminalizing them. This study provides insight into what may be causing youth to extend past the “typical age” of criminal behavior.

In Chapter 1, Salvatore explores the meaning of emerging adulthood and the implications it has on adolescent crime patterns. In present society, the gap between adolescence and adulthood has lengthened due to postponed marriage and childbearing, extended education and self-exploration. Salvatore understands emerging adulthood as a contemporary term describing the period of time lasting from age 18 to 25, but also a period that may continue through the late twenties and thirties. This newly recognized stage of development has created a new offender type through low-level offenders who usually peak early on the “age crime curve” (Salvatore 2013, p. 1). “The age of crime curve refers to the age distribution of

crime...the onset of criminality is typically around age 10, offending peaks between the ages of 15 and 19, and then gradually declines until about age 55 where the age-adjusted rate of criminality is close to zero” (Salvatore 2013, p. 1). The author relies on the conceptualization offered by T. E. Moffitt, who created a classification of different offender types. The first type are *abstainers* who commit no crime, create good social bonds, transition promptly during turning points, and have no neuropsychological deficiencies. The second type is the *adolescent limited* offender or AL whose level of crime is low during teenage years and decreases as they age out of adolescence and progress into traditional life course turning points. An example of this is committing shoplifting or public disorder crimes until reaching the end of adolescence and sustaining full-time employment as a turning point. This low-level crime is usually brought about by role confusion caused by the gap in biological maturity and cultural maturity. AL members who do not transition into culturally defined turning points, for example marriage, continue as low level *arrested adolescents* (AAO), which creates the third offender subgroup. These individuals have the same characteristics but AAO’s have failed to create adult social bonds which further extend their criminal behavior. The last offender subgroup consists of the “life course persistent” offenders or LCPs who commit serious, predatory crimes and have poor social bonds, absent turning points, and neuropsychological deficiencies. These different categories reveal the purpose of the study which is to identify whether this new stage of development is inducing “offending trajectories” by lengthening adolescent limited offenders’ active crime period.

Chapter 1 also identifies the challenges that the lengthened trajectories of crime create for the Criminal Justice system. The first is a rise in courts’ and correctional

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institutions' operating cost due to the high number of "adult" criminals committing low-level offenses typically committed by adolescents. The second involves more arrested adolescent offenders experimenting with drug use, which would require more drug treatment programs in the criminal justice system. Lastly, AAO's would be exposed to long term stigmas involved with previous incarceration and the criminogenic effects of incarceration. Colleges may be affected as well due to more emerging adult student's committing risky and dangerous behaviors. It is theorized that emerging adulthood is changing the roles of social bonds and turning points in the cultural lives of adolescents. The significance of these changes lies in the role of these social bonds and turning points inhibiting criminal behavior. Salvatore is studying these altered trajectories, how they affect offending and what implications it has on current life course theory. This understanding affects research of the age crime curve and the relationship between age and crime. Salvatore describes the two main schools of thought regarding the age-crime debate. "The first is represented by Gottfredson and Hirschi who posit that the age-crime curve is invariant having no variation across historical period, geographic location, or other cultural factors. The second viewpoint is that the age-crime curve does demonstrate variance in factors such as gender and type of crime" (Salvatore 2013, p. 6). Salvatore concludes the chapter by restating that his primary study is that Jeffrey Arnett's theory of emerging adulthood has uncovered a phenomenon that potentially alters the offending patterns of low-level offenders due to delays in social bonds and turning points. The first chapter provides a well-grounded understanding and thorough description of what the author intends to study. The description of the different types of offenders, the implication of the relationship that social bonds have on offending patterns and the different perspectives regarding age-crime theory collectively add to the readers understanding of what the nature of the study is and what it is examining in regards to adolescence.

In Chapter 2, Salvatore goes into further detail about the term *arrested adolescent offenders*, what "on-time" turning points consist of and why they matter to offending patterns. Salvatore also explains age, period, and cohort effects, the study that serves as the foundation for his research and the main research question and hypothesis of the study. The author defines the *arrested adolescent offender* as "a person who has failed to make 'on-time' life course transitions or meet turning points in trajectories that mark the entrance into adulthood" (Salvatore 2013, p. 9). These "on time" turning points include getting married, having children, completing formal education, and sustaining full-time employment which these occurrences typically happen in the late teens and early twenties. The author also reiterates Jeffrey Arnett's theory, "Arnett's

theory argues that emerging adulthood is a new stage of the life course—neither adolescence nor young adulthood—that is the byproduct of several types of social changes over the past 50 years" (Salvatore 2013, p 10). Salvatore also describes the major turning points in emerging adulthood that include marriage, parenthood, job prospects, economy, returning home, military service and parental monitoring.

Those who marry and have children are less likely to engage in criminal activity because of the responsibility of having a family, however this affects offending patterns because the average age of first marriages has increased creating a lessening of this turning point in the emerging adult age group. Having access to a job affects criminal behavior, those who have jobs have less time to offend, however because an individual must have higher education to obtain a better job, less emerging adults are able to sustain quality employment. Also in correlation with employment, higher cost of living in our present economy makes it harder for emerging adults to live on their own therefore increasing the percentage of emerging adults who have to return to live with their parents. Military service could have one of two outcomes, positive or negative. Positive experiences include nullifying past experiences, training and educational opportunities, and routine activities and structure. In contrast, sometimes the effectiveness of military service can be overshadowed by the war situation. For example, positive experiences were seen more in soldiers from World War II than in soldiers in Vietnam where negative consequences were observed such as drug abuse. Decreased parental monitoring also involved increases in risky behaviors and offending. For example, a study of college freshman in dormitories and college students living off campus for the first time revealed that these two groups have increased levels of alcohol and drug abuse from absence of parents in dormitories and absence of residential assistants in college apartments.

Three characteristics of emerging adults also contribute to high levels of risky and dangerous behavior: novel sensation seeking, optimistic attitudes, and identity exploration. Sensation seeking involves motivation for new and intense sensory experiences such as speeding and risky sexual behaviors. Optimistic attitudes involve emerging adults viewing themselves as not being vulnerable to the dangers of risky behaviors. Identity exploration is different in emerging adulthood than in adolescence due to adolescents' most likely experiencing their first love or first job whereas emerging adults are discovering qualities they like in romantic partners and what type of job they want. The author reiterates how the arrested adolescent offender differs from the other two offenders, adolescent limited offenders and life course persistent offenders. The adolescent limited offender is the offender who commits low-level crimes usually stopping at age 20 as they reach

adulthood. The arrested adolescent offender is the extension of the adolescent limited offender in that they commit similar low-level crimes, but the AAO does not discontinue the behavior because no turning point occurs to inhibit the behavior. Salvatore specifically defines AAOs, “Based on the research findings of Arnett and others, I define the arrested adolescent offender as an adult between the ages of 18 and 25 who commits low-level petty offenses at a high rate” (Salvatore 2013, p. 20). Salvatore then identifies the three main goals of his study: “exploring the age and period effects caused by emerging adulthood by identifying the arrested adolescent offender, examining characteristics of the arrested adolescent offender based on previous theory and research and identifying how arrested adolescence modifies offending trajectories identified in the life course literature” (Salvatore 2013, pp. 21–22).

Salvatore describes age, period and cohort effects in order to establish the method of his study and describe why he chose the method. The influences of altering behavior classification include age effects, period effects and cohort effects. Age effects are defined as “developmentally maturational changes which show up consistently. Period effects refer to changes that occur with time across all age groups because of specific factors occurring during a specific time...Cohort effects refer to sustained differences in birth cohorts that persists over the life course” (Salvatore 2013, p 22). Studies including age and period effects must be linear in nature meaning the same subjects studied over a linear period of time, however cohort studies must not linear which creates a problem in using all three methods. For this reason, Salvatore only uses age and period effects in his study of arrested adolescent offenders. The Add Health data was used as the basis for this study in which a survey and interviews of adolescents and their parents was conducted in three waves. The statement of research in Salvatore’s study is “this study explores how trajectories of low-level offenders identified by prior researchers in the area of life course criminology as adolescent limited offenders are prolonged when one enters emerging adulthood” (Salvatore 2013, p. 27). He states his main hypothesis as follows: “Emerging adulthood has extended the period of active offending for some adolescent limited offenders by delaying traditional turning points that encourage low-level offenders to decrease participation in crime and deviance” (Salvatore 2013, p. 27). This chapter adds to the overall understanding of who is affected by emerging adulthood and why.

In Chapter 3, Salvatore presents the examination of the arrested adolescent offender by use of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in which adolescents and young adults enrolled in 7th through 12th grade from the 1994 to 1995 academic school year are studied. Three waves of data are collected via in school surveys, in-home

surveys, and parent interviews. This study purposes to represent a broad sample and include factors that effect this age group including family, education, religion, and community on adolescent health. Wave 1 consisted of the in school surveys with respondents being ages 11–21 in April to December of 1995. Wave 2 consisted of the in-home surveys with respondents being ages 12–22 in April to August of 1996. Wave 3 consisted of the parent interviews and surveys in which the respondents were age 18–28 in August 2001 and April 2002. Wave 3 is the most important because the respondents are in the stage of emerging adulthood and it will potentially provide the proof or disproof of the study hypothesis. The questions were different for adolescent limited and arrested adolescent offenders than for life course persistent offenders. AI and AAO Wave 1 and 2 questions inquired about low-level crime involvement in the past 12 months including: painting graffiti, damaging the property of others, shoplifting, running away from home, lying to parents about whereabouts, stealing something worth less than \$50, and being loud and rowdy in public. Wave 3 questions added new crimes to accommodate the advanced age.

Wave 1 questions inquired about Life course persistent offender’s more severe criminal activity in the past 12 months including: hurting someone bad enough that they need bandages or care from a doctor or nurse, stealing a car, stealing something worth more than \$50, burglarizing a house or building, threatening to use a weapon to get something from someone, selling marijuana or other drugs and taking part in a fight where a group of your friends were against another group. Wave 2 questions included: stealing a car, stealing something worth more than \$50, burglarizing a house or building, threatening to use a weapon to get something from someone, selling marijuana or other drugs, taking part in a fight where a group of your friends were against another group, and being initiated into a gang. Wave 3 questions included: stealing something worth more than \$50, burglarize a house or building, threaten to use a weapon to get something from someone, sell marijuana or other drugs, and take part in a fight where a group of your friends was against another group, use a weapon in a fight, and carry a gun to work or school. Questions about drug use in ALs and AAOs are limited to cigarettes, marijuana, and alcohol. LCPs questions about drug use included ecstasy, heroin, cocaine, mushrooms, prescription pills, LSD, speed, ice and PCP. Independent variables in the study included: marital status, parenthood, employment and work hours, active military service, and level of education, level of job satisfaction, religious participation, and strong social bonds to parents, property ownership and economic stability. Independent variables that contributed to increased likelihood of offending included: single marital status, having no children, and not

owning property. Independent variables contributing to decreased likelihood of offending include: working more hours, high job satisfaction, active military service, high levels of education, high levels of religious participation, and high economic stability. This chapter provided an excellent foundation for understanding the book's analysis.

In Chapter 4, Salvatore analyzes the results of the data collected in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health by Add Health and their implications regarding his main hypothesis. First, there was a significant difference between the arrested adolescent offender's level of offending and the life course persistent offender's level of offending as well as drug use. It was found that LCPs at younger ages commit the same low-level crimes as AAOs but at higher rates, similarly drug use in LCPs included harsher substances. Demographics included age, gender, and race which almost all produced expected results. As AAOs aged, the level of offending decreased and LCPs committed almost nine times as many offenses as the other typologies. Females committed fewer offenses than male subjects. Race produced what some might view as a surprising result; blacks had lower rates of AAO drug use whereas whites had higher rates. The most significant relationship in the section was race and offender type in which blacks proved to have lower rates of drug use as AAOs.

The next topic Salvatore analyzes is the turning points. The two most significant turning points were education and hours worked per week. Education proved to have the opposite effect than predicted. Those with higher levels of education had higher levels of offending. Those who worked more hours per week had lower levels of offending as expected. Marital status also proved to have a relationship with significant decreased drug use in AAOs. The final topic analyzed was social bonds. There were several social bond relationships that contributed to lower levels of offending in AAOs including: religious participation, increase in parental bonds, and higher levels of economic stability. Surprisingly, property ownership had the opposite effect than hypothesized by increasing offending in AAOs. In regards to drug use in LCPs, higher levels of job satisfaction, increase in parental bonds, and high levels of religious participation decreased drug use, but higher levels of economic instability led to increases in LCP drug use.

In the final chapter, Chapter 5, Salvatore discusses his data, what this means for the criminal justice system and future research to be conducted. The importance of understanding the distinction between arrested adolescent offenders and life course persistent offenders is reiterated. In demographics, the correlation between age and crime varied depending on which wave of data was studied. In Wave 1, younger individuals had more positive outcomes while older respondents were at the ages of peak offending

patterns. In Wave 2, age only mattered with adolescent limited offenders and life course persistent offenders, which was surprising because all three typologies had reached the age of peak offending patterns. This could be explained because of high levels of drug use in young populations. Another explanation could be that the public is redirecting its attention to juvenile crime. "As a result, greater attention may have been paid to adolescents during their most crime prone years by both informal and formal agents of social control. This would coincide with the general shift from a due process to more crime control oriented model" (Salvatore 2013, p. 83). Wave 3 indicated that offending decreased as the respondents aged, which Salvatore states, "these results lend support to Gottfredson and Hirschi's discussion that the age crime curve is invariant, and that changing social circumstances such as emerging adulthood would not alter the relationship between age and offending" (Salvatore 2013, p. 83). Gender was a very significant factor in predicting AAO and LCP offending in that females had lower levels of offending. Race was not significant in predicting offending, but was in predicting drug use in that blacks had lower levels of drugs use, both low and serious drugs, than whites.

For turning points, marriage was not a significant factor in predicting offending. This could be attributed to many postponing marriage in emerging adulthood. However, marriage was a significant factor in predicting drug use in that lower levels of drug use were seen in AAOs and LCPs who were married. Another possible explanation is that presently marriage is not the only form of romantic relationships that inhibits deviant behavior such as cohabitation. The role of parenting was not supported in inhibiting offending, but was seen more different in males than in females. Females are typically the primary caregivers of children so parenting inhibits offending. However, in cases where adolescent's parents assist in parenthood offending increases because of "freedom" to participate in criminal behavior. Working more hours lowered offending for AAOs, but not LCPs possibly because LCPs have lower likelihood of having legitimate jobs. Military service and lower levels of offending was not found due to the low number of respondents who actually actively served in the military. At Wave 3, higher levels of education correlated with higher levels of offending in AAOs which is surprising. This may due to college students displaying public drunkenness and loud and rowdy behavior; however in LCPs higher education acted as a positive turning point decreasing offending behavior.

For social bonds, job satisfaction presented no significance to AAOs whose offending increased with higher job satisfaction; however in LCPs high job satisfaction decreased offending. Religious participation depended on

which wave of data was discussed. In Wave 1, higher levels of religious participation resulted in higher levels of offending possibly due to lack of cognitive development to understand moral values. However, as the respondents aged religious participation resulted in expected outcomes that offending and drug use would decrease. This social bond is also the most effective in inhibiting criminal behavior and drug use in AAOs and LCPs. In AAOs, high parental bonds resulted in lower levels of offending, however in LCPs high parental bonds were not significant because of the low familial bonds LCPs tend to have. Economic instability had negative effects on AAOs offending patterns. This could be due to the fact that young populations face a greater economic instability presently along with economic shifts. Property ownership produced lower levels of offending in AAOs and LCPs, however created higher levels of drug use. This could be attributed to the privacy inherited when you own your own home, which makes it more difficult for police to intrude on personal property.

Salvatore also addresses the policy implications that arise from his findings. For education, colleges and universities may need to increase their disciplinary action and support services for drug use and offending. Salvatore says, “In other words, colleges and universities may be pushed into caregiver roles more traditionally held by parents and lower level educational facilities (e.g. grade schools and high schools)” (Salvatore 2013, p. 92). Religious participation also yielded ideas of adding religious components to drug treatment programs in order to comprise more successful treatment for emerging adults. In addition to religious participation, the positive effects of strong parental bonds create opportunities of adding reconnection with parents as a part of drug treatment and diversion programs. High economic instability created higher levels of offending in AAOs and LCPs suggesting that economic stress may be adding to low-level offenses. Diversion and drug treatment also could include financial counseling by trained professionals. For property ownership’s increasing drug use, police may use neighbors to report high levels of alcohol or drug use to avoid invading reserved private spaces without cause. Avenues of research suggested were the long term influences of emerging adulthood and arrested adolescent offenders, the role of military service specifically those active in the Middle East, and more qualitative research on arrested adolescent offenders and life course persistent offenders over longer periods of time.

Salvatore ends by emphasizing that multiple factors influence AAO and LCP offending patterns and drug use. These factors also produced a way of predicting this type of behavior. Factors such as education, religious participation, hours worked per week, economic stability, and parental attachment were very significant in these predictions. Understanding of the distinction between AAOs and LCPs

is very important to indicate which turning points will produce positive results. If extensive research is conducted on this topic, the interactions of age, gender, and race need to be accounted for and the distinction in offender types must be understood. Salvatore completes his study with these words, “In short, the new stage of emerging adulthood and its implications for identifying AAO offending and offenders appear to be an important area of study” (Salvatore 2013: 100).

This thought provoking book pointed out interesting points about not only emerging adults but also the legal system. The extension of adolescence is extending offending patterns and having a recursive relationship with the law. This extension of adolescence has created a reaction from the public to prosecute more youth and in essence control them as previous historical patterns have suggested. However, there is hope in the new understanding of youth development in that if the public and more importantly the law understands how adolescence development, policies can be created to not simply lock away youth, but to rehabilitate. This study contributes to that new understanding of youth, one that does not support getting tough on youth but, rather, points to the need to understand them and their environment. As such, the book provides important insights into the age-crime arguments that have emerged in the study of crime during emerging adulthood (see Shulman et al. 2013; Sweeten et al. 2013) as well as emerging research on different factors influencing crime patterns during emerging adulthood, such as online network influences (Cook et al. 2013) and diversity (see Edwards and Sylaska 2013). Salvatore provides a solid foundation for understanding that research and to build more research to better inform social responses to offenders.

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