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*Saving Children from a Life of Crime: Early Risk Factors and Effective Interventions.* David P. Farrington and Brandon C. Welsh. Reviewed by Stephanie Cosner Berzin.

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## Book Reviews

David P. Farrington and Brandon C. Welsh, *Saving Children from a Life of Crime: Early Risk Factors and Effective Interventions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007. \$29.95 hardcover, \$21.95 papercover.

Criminology is a field that has long focused on prevention. Attempts to create intervention have often been built on history or ideology, rather than a careful examination of the literature. With the move to evidence-based practice in many fields, criminology has been galvanized to follow in this direction. Past research has illuminated factors that promote or deter criminal involvement among youth, but seldom has anyone examined the array of factors across the individual, family, and social contexts that impact youth behavior. Additionally, research has lacked a strong link between these preventive factors and the interventions that work to deter delinquency and later offending.

This timely and important work has brought together research on the factors that influence criminal behavior and on the interventions that serve to prevent crime. Farrington and Welsh work to disentangle past and current research on risk factors for delinquency and criminal offending, leading to their outline of a national prevention strategy. The book begins with a call to action by describing why there is a need for early prevention. This theme of action is echoed throughout the book as Farrington and Welsh make the case for the need for a national strategy.

The first part of the book reads as a well-documented, detailed research review of the current literature around risk factors for offending. This section is separated into chapters which focus on individual, family, and socioeconomic, peer, school, and community factors. Each chapter details the state

of research on how elements of these factors promote or deter criminal involvement. The evidence reviewed in this section suggests intelligence, educational attainment, personality, impulsiveness, and temperament are the key individual risk factors, while a criminal parent is the strongest family factor. Low socioeconomic status, delinquent friends, and living in a resource-poor area are community and social level factors associated with risk.

The second part of the book is a careful examination of prevention strategies that have been tested. Chapters in this section focus on individual, family, and peer, school, and community prevention strategies. Preschool enrichment, child skills training, parent education plus daycare, parent management training, and school-based programs were effective interventions for reducing crime. Other interventions, including home visiting, mentoring, and peer-based programs require more research to understand their effectiveness.

The final section of the book is comprised of one chapter, in which the authors outline their national prevention strategy. Based on the findings in the previous sections, their strategy outlines five key factors on which the U.S. federal government needs to focus. They emphasize the need for a vision which they believe should be that early prevention of criminal behavior saves lives. The strategy includes risk-focused, evidence-based prevention strategies and incorporates prevention at the local level. They suggest the establishment of a National Council on Early Prevention. Lastly, the strategy suggests using the *Communities that Care* model which was developed in the early 1990s. This last chapter lays the groundwork for a national strategy rooted in the research work outlined in the earlier sections of the book and has tremendous implications for this field. It takes the seemingly impossible task of overcoming the risk factors and creates a simple but comprehensive strategy to address them.

Although the book's strength lays in its comprehensive outline of studies of risk factors and prevention strategies and in providing readers with the national strategy, its weakness is that it leaves readers wanting more. Readers have been engaged in almost a compendium of the major studies of risk and prevention of criminal involvement for over 150 pages,

but when they finally arrive at the conclusion, there are only 15 pages to guide the creation of a new national strategy. The strategic vision could have been described in a book unto itself. Additionally, providing readers with a more thorough analysis of the strengths and limitations of the present body of research would have strengthened the book's place as a meta-analysis. In spite of these limitations, the reader can take away an understanding of the research in crime prevention and begin to see the links between prevention and intervention. Perhaps this is the beginning of turning the ambitious vision of a national strategy on crime prevention into a reality.

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Clem Brooks and Jeff Manza, *Why Welfare States Persist: The Importance of Public Opinion in Democracies*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007. \$45.00 hardcover, \$18.00 papercover.

What future does the welfare state have in an increasingly interdependent and unpredictable world? Is there any remaining evidence that growth in social provision is an inevitable accompaniment to modernization in the developed democracies of North America, Western Europe, Australasia and Japan, as was once widely believed? Will there be convergence of social provision among these countries and, if so, will it be upwards towards the Scandinavian model, downwards towards the U.S. example, or something in between? Could there be divergence, with some countries becoming more generous in the share of GDP devoted to social expenditures while others rely increasingly on the private market to address the income security, medical, educational and other social welfare needs of their citizens? These are enormously important questions, of course, since there is abundant cross-national evidence that the higher the percentage of a given country's GDP devoted to social welfare expenditures, the lower the levels of inequality and poverty that exist in that country.

The authors of this well-written and thoroughly-