

so well developed that variation in crime only reflects risk factors related to individual behavioural propensity and continuity. More specifically, the findings point to the paramount importance of educational attainment in crime causation. If not possible even sooner, efforts aimed at preventing criminal careers should be targeted at young people at risk of dropping out of compulsory or secondary education, or who are already school drop-outs. Although the relationship between low educational attainment and delinquency is a complex one, with both selection and causation mechanisms at play, it is safe to say that dropping out of school and delinquency go together (Maguin and Loeber, 1996). At least in the Finnish context, in which the overall educational level has been rising steadily, those without qualifications are in an increasingly weak position in the labour market. This may in turn contribute to the increasing risk of marginalization and social exclusion for those remaining outside further education.

## Note

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1. We replicated this analysis using number of prior crimes rather than crime-type specific variables as a measure. This was done in order to assess whether those on more persistent criminal careers would have a particularly elevated risk compared to those with only one offence. This proved to be true. Those with several offences in the past had a particularly high crime probability. However, the results for the effects of SES variables were similar in both analyses, so we decided to keep the original crime-type specific controls.

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