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SPEAKERS

Wayne Osgood, Jenn Tostlebe, Jose Sanchez



Jenn Tostlebe 00:14

Hi everyone. Welcome to The Criminology Academy podcast, where we are criminally academic. My name is Jenn Tostlebe



Jose Sanchez 00:21

And my name is Jose Sanchez.



Jenn Tostlebe 00:23

And today we have Professor Wayne Osgood on the podcast to talk with us about his career as a criminologist, his work on delinquency, and his thoughts about the field.



Wayne Osgood 00:32

Great to be here.



Jose Sanchez 00:33

Yeah, thanks, Wayne. So just a quick introduction for Wayne. He is a criminologist. He spent the largest share of his career at Pennsylvania State University University Park, which he joined in 1996 and retired from in 2016. His research has focused on peers and delinquency, time use on offending, crime and the life course, and evaluating programs to prevent and reduce delinquency. From 2012 through 2017, he served as the lead editor of the journal criminology. And just last month [November 2022], he received the American Society of Criminology's top award for research in criminology, the Edwin Sutherland Award. So thank you again, Wayne, for joining us. We just talked about how you heard this for a full week, but congratulations again.

W Wayne Osgood 01:16

Well, thanks so much. It was an honor I never expected and really enjoyed. And thanks for asking me to be on the podcast with you.



J Jenn Tostlebe 01:23

Yeah, thanks for joining us. So for today's episode, we're going to start at the beginning of Wayne's career as a criminologist and ask him about really what got him into the field, then we'll move into talking about his contributions to research on delinquency and peers. And we'll wrap up by looking back and reflecting on his career to get his thoughts on the discipline and criminology moving forward. So with that, Jose, why don't you get us started?

J Jose Sanchez 01:51

Sure. So like Jenn mentioned, we're gonna go ahead and start at the beginning of your career. And as we were actually prepping for this episode, I started to realize that you and I have, at least at this point in our careers, we have moved through the same geographic locations. You did your undergrad at UCLA, I went to Cal State LA, so we're both in the LA area. You got your PhD in Psychology at CU Boulder, and I'm in the sociology department, but I'm also at CU Boulder. So I'm hoping that this is a sign from the universe, that my career will end up as good as yours.

W Wayne Osgood 02:28

Absolutely, sure. Oh, I wish you the best with it.

J Jose Sanchez 02:31

So going into college, did you have any idea of what you wanted to do with your life, career wise?

W Wayne Osgood 02:37

Just the vaguest. I'd actually been really good in science and math as a high school student, and thought I'd be an engineer. But by the time I finished high school, my favorite part of life was sitting around with my buddies, trying to solve the great social problems of the day and arguing about, you know, which approaches would be best. And then I looked at the college catalog for what I just signed up for, it was like, hardly any courses other than science, if I was going to be an engineer, and I said, Oh, heck with that, and declared undeclared, and took lots of philosophy and psychology and sociology. And then it took me a couple of years to settle down into psychology, I think, because probably, that's what came easiest for me, it was a little more kind of experimental and quantitative that easily with my previous inclinations. But I didn't really get into studying crime at all at that point, or until much later. So it was more like

just all the social science stuff is gonna...That's the way to solve the world's problems, kind of writ large and in general. And I ended up going into grad school in social psychology, by the route, I think is particularly popular, getting to be senior and thinking, Oh, my God, what am I going to do next? And talking to professors who said, you know, you got the credentials, you could get into grad school, and they'll actually pay you to be there, which was a great shock at that time. Anyway, in grad school, I was in psychology, studying social psychology, and really interested in pretty arcane, abstract sort of topics, that by the time I finished my degree, I couldn't remember why I thought they were supposed to be interesting. Because whenever I talk to anybody else about them, they sounded boring coming out my own mouth, you know, the abstractions about the way people think about other people and how that's supposed to influence their own behavior. And it was a long ways from those social problems that struck me as interesting when I started. So I went and finished the degree but the job market was pretty bad at that point. It was my timing was, you know, about a third of the way through the baby boom timing, my birth wise. And so I finished my PhD right about the point that colleges and universities were realizing that they were about to have smaller and smaller, you know, incoming cohorts. There weren't that great job prospects. What am I going to do? And fortunately, Del Elliott's Research Group had lots going on at that point. They were about to launch the National Youth Survey, and I land at a job with them, Frank Dunford, not a name, everybody knows, but a great guy hired me to be a research associate with the National Evaluation of juvenile diversion programs. And I was just so hungry for a chance to use the skills I had. And something that was a problem that makes sense and I could explain it to my mother and my friends, that that sounded pretty darn good. And it, you know, it was a full time job, I was traveling around the country visiting sites these programs were implemented, and was learning a lot by the justice system by going in and trying to talk. Well, I was personally, I wasn't lead on things so I wasn't the main person that had to do convincing, but getting in on all these conversations, to talk. Police departments and juvenile courts and getting involved in research and work really well for me to get my feet wet in the field, and just learn real intensely.



Jenn Tostlebe 05:51

So it sounds kinda like trial and error in a way getting into criminology as a discipline.



Wayne Osgood 05:57

Yeah. Yep.



Jenn Tostlebe 05:57

Landing the right position to really spike those interests that you had originally.



Wayne Osgood 06:02

Exactly right. And it was the kind of situation, I think a lot of research jobs are like this, that it could have been just a job, you know, go here and do that, you know, write up these reports, do these data analyses, but I was eager enough to wanna kind of make my mark and get good at

this and learn, I felt pretty much an outsider to criminology at that point. Because I was, I mean, I didn't really know much about it. I had pretty good generic skills for social science, you know, conducting surveys, and all kind of stuff. But I had a lot to learn about the topic. So it was a great chance to sort of dig in and make some progress there.



Jenn Tostlebe 06:41

Kind of building off of that, you know, early on in your career, it looks like you moved around quite a bit. You know, you just mentioned working at the Institute of Behavioral Science with Del Elliot, who we've had on the podcast on an episode. And then you also worked at the Institute of Social Research at the University of Michigan, as an adjunct professor in sociology and psychology. And then he became the director of the follow up research at Father Flanagan's boys home. Before, you know, making your way to being an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska Lincoln. And then moving on to Penn State where you stayed for about 20 years before retiring. You've started to kind of talk about your experiences as a researcher at these different institutions. But can you tell us a little bit more about that? And then what made you decide to move into academia as a professor and not just as a researcher?



Wayne Osgood 07:36

Yeah, there's a lot to that, you know, it's a pretty good chunk of life in there. And it was love that took me the Institute of Social Research, because my first wife, Jan Jacobs, was a research assistant on our team at the Institute of Behavioral Sciences. She finished the A in Child Development at Colorado State, and was working... And, you know, we had a real good working relationship that developed into more. Fortunately, I wasn't her supervisor, so it wasn't tangled up in that sort of thing. And then she was saying, Okay, well, I want to go to grad school to in human development. So, you know, we had that interesting joint process of figuring out well, how are we going to do this, you know, should she tried to go in Boulder, and that didn't look too feasible. Applied to a handful of places that look like there might be chances for me to find something. I applied for a few academic jobs. I didn't land any of them. And Michigan, in part I picked Michigan, I didn't really know the Institute of social research. But I was looking at just how many researchers that I'd heard of work various places and the list was enormous for Michigan, because the Institue of social research is the biggest and oldest social research institution like that there is. So anyway, that worked out, and I landed a job there, and she went to grad school. And it was a terrific place to kind of get my chops at being a researcher. It's such a big place that there were, you know, a few dozen people, right at my earlier point, you know, a few years out of grad school, and there are just talks being given three days a week by people on a panel study for income dynamics, and Monitoring the Future, and who knows what else is going on there. And there are lots and lots of grad students of various social science programs around. The friendships I developed there, and the opportunities I stumbled across, and I got a whole lot better at what I did. I learned a lot more about being a good social scientist. And there were a reasonable number of criminologist there. The Adjunct Professor things well, if you're hanging around in a place like that, after a while, they say Wayne you do research on juvenile delinquency. We need somebody to cover this course, can you do that. So oh yeah, sure. And turns out that was really good for me, because those courses I didn't take, you know, when you have to teach them to somebody else, you learn really well, and that made my work better, because then they'd say, Oh, yeah, this thing we've been working on getting this paper out from the diversion project that fits really well with this theory and that

theory that I can really strengthen these papers I'm working with. So it was a terrific opportunity, you know, and I've often looked back and thought, if I had managed to land, an academic system Professor job, right when it came out of grad school, it wasn't the point of my skills that I would have hit the ground running it and publishing really good research, you know, just keeping up with the teaching, you know, in some place that was a lot on the fast track. And Lord knows, that's a great kind of job and got 10s of people doing them. But I was much better at doing big time research, basically. That's really hard to learn without having a role in really large scale sorts of studies. So six years at Michigan really helped with that. And then the Nebraska one was that my wife landed a job in the psychology department in Lincoln University, Nebraska. And the main project I'd worked on with Marty gold, not a name that's known too well now, but was back then, that had been the study of peer influence among incarcerated kids in institutions in Michigan, it was really interesting to have under my career, a lot of my time hanging around the institution, worthwhile experience. Anyway, I spent only a year working at Boystown, and then a position opened up in Lincoln at the university and decided if I was ever going to make that jump, I couldn't fool around with waiting a few years to do it. The chance was there, you know, given the fact when I was living already, hey, take it and that worked out.

J Jose Sanchez 11:31

So we've mentioned this a couple of times in different episodes, but we always try to not get super technical on the podcast because we try to not overwhelm people with like statistics and models.

W Wayne Osgood 11:43

Oh, yeah.

J Jose Sanchez 11:44

But I feel like we've been remiss if we didn't talk to you a little bit about your methodological contributions to the field. I remember, as a first year PhD student, a professor suggested to me that a Poisson model would be appropriate for the project that I was working on at the time, and no one had taught me what Poisson was, so I was kind of trying to like teach it to myself, as reading all these articles. And then I remember thinking, I wonder if someone's like written something about Poisson, in a Crim journal that I can maybe understand a little more. And lo and behold, there's like this Wayne Osgood article on using Poisson regression incriminology, but you've also written papers on item response theory and multi level modeling, and we don't need to get into the weeds of what all those things are necessarily. What I do want to ask about is sometimes I feel like, criminology can get a little behind on some of the methods that maybe other disciplines have been using for a while. Like, it seems like structural equation modeling is like the new darling in criminology right now. You know, psychologists have been using that for quite some time. Now. What exactly inspired you to maybe write these more methodological pieces for criminology?

W Wayne Osgood 12:58

Yeah, interesting question. It differs across the pieces what particular thing prompted me in each case, but in general, I always kinda like doing it. I always like teaching methods. Because people often come to feeling so intimidated. And it's often presented in a way that feels like oh, you outsiders are never going to get this. It's not that hard. You just have to step back, say it in a simple way. Don't use technical language if you don't have to. And you can really get the point across. And none of these papers were breaking new ground about the methods, except in you know, maybe here's a way to use it would be useful. With the Poisson regression, there's a big kind of movement that have been going on for a while toward more and more, these nonlinear models like Poisson, and logistic and multinomial. And all this stuff. And I had a research project, you know, that some collaborators got me in on that had delinquency rate data in small populations and small areas. And the data were just really, so far from the assumptions of the usual methods, that everything just looked nuts. It was just incredibly noisy. And it was obvious that in the smallest areas, the data were so imprecise, that putting through regular models was just meaningless. And I'd read about Poisson models and I thought, Oh, I guess I had to try it. Because it sounds like that would be a better fit. And I did and everything, you know, just worked a lot better. And they don't really do much aggregate analysis. So I had this funny experience of going to my friends that do: George Bridges and Bob Crutchfield and Bob Bursik saying, What should I cite for this? And they say, oh, that sounds cool. I don't know what to cite for that. I wrote a paper and sent it to Crim that had a 14 page or something like that analysis section explaining the methods. They said, Well, we liked the paper, but you really can't do that. You know, that's just beyond the pale. Why don't you send that someplace else? You did a good explaining it, but it's not gonna fit in this paper. So I did, and it worked out. But I really intended it in that way that a grad student with the sort of the regular methods first year or so stuck, could read it and say, oh, okay, this is how this works and why I use it and what I'll get. I think that's a lot of fun.



Jenn Tostlebe 15:18

Yeah, I think that's so important too, because I know, there's some stuff I'm working on right now. And even with like structural equation modeling, because I really taught myself that method. And then I was like, I should take a class to make sure I'm actually understanding this.



Wayne Osgood 15:32

Yeah, right. Right.



Jenn Tostlebe 15:33

But it was like, just equation after equation, trying to understand all of the assumptions behind the method. And it's a lot to take in. And so I really appreciate people when they take the time to break it down. And like you said, not use the super technical language, because that is really helpful to people who have a couple of classes under their belt, but aren't super statistics minded or super savvy in that area.



Wayne Osgood 16:01

Yeah. Item response theory stuff I got started, because working with Elliott's group, one of the main things from the national youth survey was to develop better self report delinquency. And we on the diversion project used all the measures that were developed from the national youth survey at the same time, but we had our data earlier, and we needed to get analysis going. So as the numbers guy, I had the first job of putting those together. And I thought I knew what I was doing, like teaching them often that you don't when you think you do. In this case, the things that I thought I knew about measurement, just didn't help with the form that delinquency comes in, which is incredibly skewed. And I didn't know what to do about it. I can't even remember what we did in those days. But we tried some things that would help but they were real ad hoc. And so I just had that as a topic in the back of my mind for the next decade, and finally came across some things I thought did better. And that led to the item response theory first paper that I did. And really, that paper is as much about what the heck is this problem we have on our hands that we need to solve? As it is about, here's the great new solution, which is it's a good solution, but it's more technical than most people want to deal with. And one thing we found in the course of that work was, it's probably not really necessary. But I think, you know, the whole process was helpful in laying out what you do need for something to be useful and what apparent solutions only make things worse, and there are plenty of those.



Jenn Tostlebe 17:33

Alright, so speaking of contributions, one of the things that you are well known for is your work on unstructured socialization and delinquency. And so we're gonna get into a paper on this topic. But before we do that, we just want to take kind of a step back and ask if this has been an area that you've always been interested in and always focused on, or if your research interests within criminology have changed over time?



Wayne Osgood 18:02

Well, it didn't start until I heard Mark Felson in a criminology meeting talking about this stuff. I'd never heard of it before. When I first heard it in criminology. Well, everybody thinks of the 1979 Cohen and Felson paper is kind of the origin, right. And probably in about 1980 to 1982, that range. I heard Mark talking about his work, and then a few other, you know, related papers. And I just thought that's a really interesting perspective, right, to focus on the shape of ordinary everyday lives, and what that has to do with how much crime happens. And so I just had that in mind as a cool thing. And at some point over, probably would have been 2, 3, 4 years later, as part of my work at Michigan, I ended up working for some of my time with the monitoring the future group. Who do the big annual surveys of drug use, and they have questions on tons more stuff, a lot more people ought to learn about those data and take advantage of them because it's just crazy how many topics that study covers. I mean, like they give questionnaires to something like 15,000 high school seniors every year and fifth graders, eighth graders too. There are six different forms of the questionnaire, two of which have delinquency, and each of which has a few 100 items in it. So you can study a lot of good stuff with those data. I noticed that there was this set of questions on how often do you do this, how often do you do that, you know, go to movies, go to church, have dinner with your parents, go out in the evening with your friends. So I just started, I did a few analyses with those just seeing what they look like. And not really sure quite the order of things when I decided to actually get serious about doing some analysis, because it was a long time before I actually published that paper. But I'd seen enough to see to know that they were pretty closely related. Some of them were pretty closely

related to delinquency and drug use, which is the main focus in others work. And there was some kind of pattern, it wasn't that obvious what the pattern was. And the other thing that I thought was really interesting, was probably most strikingly how much they changed with age. Because there's a follow up sample in Monitoring the future, from high school seniors onwards, and many of them change just a ton after high school. And 1983 that Gottfredson and Hirschi paper, or is it Hirschi and Gottfredson? The age paper anyway. It was pretty recent. It was really on a lot of our minds about ooh, this age stuff we haven't given much attention to, and what could be more important. And so I just sort of dug into it from there. And there were other articles being written, presentations being given, relating activities to delinquency, but there didn't seem to be much coherence to how anybody approached it. It was just sort of like, I ask people how often do they do these 15 things, and look at all these correlations, right? That led me to doing more specific analyses, a little more depth, really wanting to look at the mediation aspect of it, how much does this explain age trends and how much it does explain gender differences and so on. And also the sense that we badly needed some kind of theory to go with it. And I come at it from the vaguest of interest in routine activities. But it clearly needed some more substance than that. And that was never on the top of my priority list, though. I mean, I had these research jobs, and there were studies we're getting paid to do. So it wasn't really until I was working in academia, and then benefited a lot from having the time to figure out what I really wanted.

J

Jose Sanchez 21:40

Since were like just raring to go on this one, we're going to start moving into your paper. And so it was published in 1996 in the American Sociological Review, it's titled, "Routine activities and individual deviant behavior." It was authored by our guest, Wayne and his colleagues, Janet Wilson, Patrick O'Malley, Gerald Parkman, and Lloyd Johnston. In the paper, Wayne and his colleagues applied the routine activity theory framework, which is traditionally at the macro level, at least how Cohen and Felson proposed it to an individual level analysis of deviant behavior in late adolescence and young adulthood. To do this, they use data from the Monitoring the Future study, which started in 1975. And at that time, was still going on, and focused on high school senior classes. So the first question that when I read this, and I've read this paper a few times.

W

Wayne Osgood 22:32

Thank you.

J

Jose Sanchez 22:33

And so what really prompted you, or what was it about routine activity that spoke to you that made you go, I'm gonna take this macro level theory, and then bring it down to the micro individual level?

W

Wayne Osgood 22:45

Well, it was probably the way to think about that is what does Wayne do and know anything about. And my background and experience was totally about the more individual level or group

about. And my background and experience was totally about the more individual level of group, you know, individual in relation to others, but not macro and demographic and that sort of thing. So to me, that was part and parcel of making it something that I thought I could have a contribution, you know, and coming, having sort of learned the field at the feet of Del and the rest of that group, the task was explaining how much self report delinquency does this person versus that person engage in? Right? So it wouldn't have been my contribution to make if I hadn't done it. So that was part of the challenge, but they didn't make the theory to be that I always thought it was a fascinating and wise choice that Felson and Cohen, had posed the theory of saying, okay, there are three elements, one of them is the motivated offender. And then they effectively say, that's not what we're talking about. Everybody else talks about that. Go look at what they have to say, right? We're going to talk about these other two that nobody talks about. And I think that was brilliant, but sort of like I was already committed to the corners that they'd thrown out the window. So I felt like to have my excuse to play in their swimming pool. I needed to say, okay, how can it make sense to focus on the individual. And so that led me to dig into a couple of theoretical avenues that did things that just always had interest in me. I always thought that Matza had great insights about kind of ambivalence of involvement in crime. Simultaneously maintaining images of self images of being conventional, love their mothers and all good in the world, being patriotic, whatever. At the same time, let me tell you the stories about when were running from the cops the other day. I got a lot of that from my experience of collecting data in the institution or delinquent kids because the treatment programs were all about having the kids come to terms with their misbehavior that got them there and tell their stories in ways that concluded I'm so sorry, I've done all this bad stuff. And they didn't get out until they done a sufficient amount that convinced the adult world that they meant it. Clearly there was a ton of ambivalence there. Right? Because it wasn't hard to pick up in the corners kids laughing about trading their exploits. Both things go on. So anyway, that was part of it. And I never really felt the notion of situational motivation, I just thought was really cool and it was from a real nice paper by Piliavin and Brier. By the way, Irv Piliavin was in Social Work at Wisconsin, and isn't too well known in the field these days, but really was an incredibly smart guy. And we don't think of people in social work as being in criminology. But there's always been a real strong strain of concern about crime in social work programs. And Irv was a really interesting guy, a real mentor, to Ross Matsueda, several other people in the field anyway. So it was fun to sort of point in his direction for that situation motivation. And I think that situational motivation idea just fits really well with all the rational choice, sort of notions that when we look for motivation, partly, you got to look okay, what's going on in this situation? Make anybody think, Oh, well, maybe I'll break the law here, because I can do this or that.



Jenn Tostlebe 26:17

Yeah, so speaking of that, and you just touched on this a little bit, but we are hoping you can get into it a little bit more. In our episode with Del, we really discussed theoretical assumptions or you know, the foundations that theories are built on that typically dictate how the theory will handle for example, as you just said, motivation. So like in control theories, they really assume that the motivation to commit crime is natural or inherent and therefore, they're asking this question of why don't people commit crime instead of why do they. Cohen and Felson's routine activity theory falls under this camp, and therefore, they really don't talk about motivation, a whole lot other than just stating that motivated offenders are around, they're everywhere, and brought forward this idea that you just mentioned of situational motivation. And so can you explain a little bit more about what situational motivation is and discuss how it fits within these theoretical assumptions?

W**Wayne Osgood 27:19**

Well, that's a great question. So situational motivation is basically a notion that a hefty component of the motivation for a delinquent act comes from the situation. And the person wouldn't have that motivation, unless they were in that situation. And as I pose in my theory, I didn't take a strong position, a sort of weak position about, it could affect darn near everybody. Certainly, if it's like armed robbery, there isn't that big of group was going to be tempted by the opportunity. But for kind of mundane delinquent stuff, it's probably pretty darn big, who might be tempted by getting in on the fight with one set of friends against another, shoplifting, or vandalizing, or smoking pot or whatever, you know. It leads you to look at what is in this situation? And then within my theory, well, situations that involve being with other kids are more likely to have that because often, what the positive reward there is to get out of a delinquent act is basically those stories that tell with your friends, that other people will laugh and pat you on the back and say wasn't that cool. And they could also have the tangible things if somebody's watching to see that no one's coming, and all that sort of stuff. So now, in a sense situational motivation isn't enough, you know, that you would need something about well, why is the person susceptible to this temptation? It really is an image of temptation of crime comes from the temptation of being there where something's appealing. And I've sometimes thought this is a little silly, but I think there's something to it, that sometimes criminologists in thinking about why do people do things that are against the rules, they're not supposed to do spend too much time thinking about, you know, all the junk in the TV shows about, you know, the Born Killers and all that and too little time thinking about siblings of the backseat on a long car trip. You know, every set of parents is driven crazy, because like, leave your brother alone, leave your sister alone! Just knock it off! We got a long ways to go. The kids can't do it, right? They're just like, Okay, put a space between them, you know, find some distraction. But it can be very tempting to do pretty pointless things that you're not supposed to do. And that happens to all of us. That's not the same as every crime. But I wonder how much misbehavior/crime has those elements in it, and we don't really give them attention. That's kind of one edge of situational motivation.

J**Jose Sanchez 29:49**

Well, I think we need to make a Netflix documentary about this. To start combating all the serial killer stuff, because that's what people worry about on road trips, is Oh, Don't pick up the hitchhiker. Well. Have you seen a hitchhiker in the last 30 or 40 years?

W**Wayne Osgood 30:04**

Not much. I have to tell you when I got to Boulder in 1971, it was a standard mode of transportation there for a year or two. The driveway would be lined with people with their thumbs out wanting a ride to campus.

**Jenn Tostlebe 30:16**

Wow. Yeah, you don't see that anymore.

W

Wayne Osgood 30:19

Nope, it didn't last too long, actually. And I think crime had a lot to do with it, there started to be this person, that person really did get hurt by some predator. You know, the odds were really low. But that's still dangerous even if they're low.

J

Jose Sanchez 30:31

So another argument that you made in this paper that we thought was interesting was that we actually should move away from Felson's adoption of Hirschi's social bonds for routine activity theory. Instead, you propose that we use Gibbs concept of social control to define guardians and handlers.

W

Wayne Osgood 30:51

Oh yeah!

J

Jose Sanchez 30:52

First, can you tell us what we mean by guardians and handlers? And then tell us why you prefer Gibbs over Hirschi?

W

Wayne Osgood 31:00

Well, that wasn't all that wholesale and embrace of social control by Felson. One article where he sort of, we could fit them together in this way, that might be cool. But it really was a social control kind of argument that kids will be restrained by that was what he called handlers. Where were the two terms handlers and which?

J

Jose Sanchez 31:22

And capable guardians

W

Wayne Osgood 31:23

Capable guardians, right. If you have a good bond with your parents, then they're sort of always there with you. Just a very social control thing. And for my way of thinking, that was nice enough, but what did it have to do with routine activity theory? Seemed to me not much. And Gibb's was an interesting guy, I don't think you seem cited much anymore. But he had like a whole book on deviance. Deviance, I think. That reviewed every definition he could find of deviance, classified them, organize them. There were like 200, or something. And then he had one on social control that was kind of comparable, what do people mean by social control. And within that book, he, you know, kind of laid out all these ways that fit into lots of different theories, and research and thinkers. And he said, you know, almost all of these are about how

people in relationship or interaction with each other, are trying to influence each other's behavior, maybe by rewards and punishments or influence, saying things, stuff like that. But it's actually about interactions that have are directed about the same behavior of other people. And he got to Hirschi's and said, Well, this is an interesting theory. But you know, it really stands by itself has nothing to do with all this other stuff across all of the social science. And in criminology, though, Hirschi's theory was really prominent. Still is, but boy, it sure was back then. And so that's what everybody used the term to mean. But it was still come up in this other respect as well, because it matters in that other respect as well. Any of the social bond theory, I mean, I think Gibb's response was like, let's just not call it social control. Just call it social bond theory. That's what it is, nobody will get mixed up. So when it came to the part of my theory, it was like, well, some of the reasons that the kinds of activities I'm pointing at ought to matter is because it's how much they expose you to other people coming and saying, knock that off, or saying and calling the cops or whatever. And it was really more about that sort of theory that seemed to me that had a lot more to do with the, you know, the basic logic of routine activities. And indeed, I think it was right about the same time that that place manager idea came out, I think, I slipped in a quick reference to that, because Mark Felson, by the way, was a terrific help and commenting on that paper as I worked on it. And he's a very funny guy. So I'm using little side comments it that. And he told me about this work by John Eck, which came up with a place manager idea, and that was very much there was like, people in the place whose job it is to, at least part of their job is to make sure chaos doesn't rain. And you would expect the person at the door at that pizza place is going to call the cops if people start a big fight. And this was just broadening I thought Yeah, stuff like that. The kinds of activities that minimize the chances situations where that stuff isn't going around. Like I think to try to quote myself loosely, there was a line in the paper that was something like, even if you don't love your parents, it's probably going to be more convenient to smoke pot when they're not around. Like you don't really need much of a social bond to have reason to think I'm gonna pick this time not that time, just because who needs the aggravation, or it just seems stupid to do it now. But all those times hanging out with friends just doing nothing in particular. It's much easier to think well, somebody had a joint. Okay, let's go ahead.

J Jose Sanchez 34:53

Okay, before we start getting into your findings, I promise we will, right after this question. We want to discuss this idea of unstructured socializing or unstructured activities. A lot of people have probably heard the phrase idle hands are the devil's workshop.

W Wayne Osgood 35:10

Yeah, right.

J Jose Sanchez 35:11

And so in other words, there's this idea that kids who engage in extracurricular activities like school clubs, sports, they don't have time to engage in delinquency. However one of the things that you highlight in your paper is that this may not be 100% accurate, right? Or it's not absolute. Has the research supported this notion that kids who engage in structured activities, just don't engage in delinquency?

W

Wayne Osgood 35:36

Not so much. And in fact, this was something I remember Del talking about back when I was still working in Boulder. And you know, Hirschi had a section in his book, it was the bond of involvement, which he took the radical step of saying, this is part of my theory, and it's wrong, was basically that, you know, if you aren't very busy, you'll get more trouble. And I remember, Del telling me and I cannot remember... there was a study that for the life of me, I'm not sure I ever saw, saying, you know, it just doesn't take enough time to get into trouble for that ever to work. If kids are free just a little bit of a time, that's plenty to engage in all sorts of stuff. Oh, that's always kind of been part of my framework that like that initial study, we we looked at all human activities separately. And you can particularly see that some of them that had zero order correlations with delinquency, but not the relationships went away, when you look at them all together, tend to be of that sort than the ones like going to church more often or being involved in clubs. Those relationships really, are weak and inconsistent. And really more accounted for when by just a little bit of correlation with the other ones that do matter, which is really how much time you're doing nothing with other.



Jenn Tostlebe 36:58

Yeah, one of our professors, Kyle Thomas, whenever he teaches theory, he's always like, crime takes no time. What do you mean? Like, it's not like it's that hard? You just need a small amount of time.

W

Wayne Osgood 37:09

Right.



Jenn Tostlebe 37:09

All right. Can you then walk us through your findings in this paper on unstructured activities and engagement and delinquency?

W

Wayne Osgood 37:17

Alright! Sure! Best I can remember anyway. There are a few things trying to do in the paper, one was to pin down. Well, first, there was some relationship of activities. And then it was this particular set of activities, not others. So the main analyses first, were at that level of the list of however many items we had, which was I don't know, 15, or something in that ballpark, in showing that the relationships were pretty darn consistent. And we had several different VB evaders, called them, for drinking, delinquency, pot use, dangerous driving, which was sort of like getting into accidents driving, and so on. And the activities that we classified as unstructured socializing, were related almost all the time. And other ones were just very sporadically, and not in a way that give you much faith.

W

Wayne Osgood 38:07

I sort of like doing analyses in that way, where you have sort of some internal replication going on. So rather than leaving other people to find out which of your findings don't really have much consistency to them, you can show the world yourself to start with, yeah, these things look kind of iffe in those more robust. Another piece of the study, one thing I hope is clear is that I tried not to present this as apriori. You know, there was a fair amount of research already. And I had been looking at these findings for a long time before I wrote this paper. So I really did not want to put across I had this smart idea. And let's see if I was right. But it still wanted to contribute more than was there before. So the second piece was also just to have a stronger research site, we had the longitudinal part of Monitoring the Future from high school senior year forward to about age 28, I think it was. So that we could do within person analyses, which were not that common at that point. But I really liked the idea of being able to rule out stable individual differences. We're only talking about in the years people did more hanging out, did they get into more delinquency, so I think that was an important feature in the contribution. And then the second set of analyses were looking at is the rate at which people participate in those activities explain other important stuff about crime, which always strikes me as a lot of the reason we want theory, it's not to just say yay that variable in theory, you know, is related, pat yourself on the back, but is like Okay, does it help you make sense of the old pattern and stuff we think we know about crime. So particularly interested in the age differences, which has proved a pretty hard thing to explain. And looked at gender again, I mean, god, if there's anything we know about crime and delinquency, it's the gender difference. And race and class. The race differences aren't that big in that sample or most others on self-report delinquency, and the race differences and what race differences there are, this is probably not a particularly big part of the explanation. If anything, you know, other research has come later. And we saw it in that original data was the if anything, white and a little bit wealthier kids do more running around, they had the resources to do it, they're more likely to have cars and money and so on. This isn't a theory of everything. And probably it's not going to be the one explains that. But it did account for a pretty good chunk of the age differences and the gender differences.

W

Wayne Osgood 38:07

Okay, we want to spend the last bit of time that we have left up asking you to reflect back on your career a little bit and on the field. And, you know, we've talked to you about your, I mean, we just finished talking about your 1996 piece, which is, in our opinion, a must read, do you have any other accomplishments that you are most proud of either as a researcher or as a professor?

W

Wayne Osgood 41:04

Yeah, it is very satisfying to have some papers that get a real good response. And I've tried to remember how much that meant to me, you know, when people who I respected said, It's good stuff. So that kind of led me to feel like, you know, once I gotten some accomplishment there, I knew I did this, that was good. And, you know, writing more papers is good, I like doing that, and continuing that. But really, I was, in the long run, more interested in helping my students get to that point. To have that first success to get the skills they need. They're really accomplished things. So that's probably the thing that I'm most proud of. And, you know, we

have real good grad students at Penn State, I had just a couple a few students in Nebraska, and I really enjoyed working with them. But at Penn State, there are more students in there in a program that was really had the resources to help them get ahead. So probably my favorite thing, and I put it in my little bio thing for that Sutherland award was a whole bunch of my students have won that Gene Carte paper award and couple of one other kind of dissertation awards. And then just that they, they all do well, right. Many are at good criminology programs. Some of them are in totally different sorts of things, and done well, in research institutes or state agencies, or the more teaching oriented schools, that's great, too. But the whole business of being a mentor and getting to know people well, and being an important part of their lives, and having them end up feeling like you're on their side, and that they can do this and come out with a career. That's my favorite part.

W

Wayne Osgood 42:46

And the other one I'd point to was probably being an editor, I really liked being an editor. It's the sort of job that when I'm done, I was really glad to be done cuz it's a lot of work. It's just relentless and keeps going. But Charles Tittle was editor, I don't know, 10 years before us or whatever, but I'd been real active in reviewing for him and knew him pretty well from the meetings and all. He came up and said something to me, which I sort of already knew, but it meant a lot when he said it, which was the most important part of the job is what you do for the papers you reject. And most of them are going to be published someplace. And the field will be so much better if they get good feedback along the way, and the research and the authors are going to be better if they get kind of feedback that really helps improve their skills, and is encouraging not discouraging, and so on. And I love that image of the journal publication process, reviews and acceptances and rejections is not really about that journal, it's about peer review as this massive help, self help thing that we're all doing to turn the field into a better field as it goes along. So I really liked approaching the editorship from that kind of perspective that were at the heart of this thing. I enjoyed it a bunch from that. I mean, it was wild, being sort of in the middle of I never heard of this topic or where'd this come from. Learning about something that in a few years turns out to be a neat new thing that a lot of people pick up is cool. And the other part that was cool about it was people like Kyle, who was, we published his first paper when he wasn't that far through grad school and like who is this guy. Well, he did really good work. And I got, you know, know him from early in the queue. And occasionally, you know, there'd be assistant professors that were just doing such a good job at reviewing, we think, well, let's put them on the editorial board, they'll do there are a lot of good to this point. And they're doing that much work. Why take famous person X, put them on the editorial board. They got all the credit and not the time. So, anyway, so that was a really cool experience.



Jenn Tostlebe 45:04

Absolutely. And just, I mean, it sounds like editors really have this ability to kind of shape, you know, the discipline and what is kind of, you know, the up and coming things. And what's interesting.

W

Wayne Osgood 45:15

So related to that question, we want to know, what do you consider to be like the greatest lesson that you've learned throughout your career?

W

Wayne Osgood 45:15

Yeah. You know, it's funny there's an extent to which we have a lot less control than you think. I've read multiple people, well known in various fields saying they came into the job thinking they're really going to shape the field, in the sense of, they'll publish a lot more of this kind of work, they think is great, and not that kind of work that they think is boring, and finding, not really, you know, there's this huge pool of fantastic work that wasn't getting in the journal before, but I think there's a lot of shaping that's in the longer term sort of thing. Encouragement, and probably some of the papers that I think played the biggest role were ones that were pretty innovative and kind of weird, and well known people in the field might say, that's not the way you do that. But you know, one or two others would review it who would say, Wow, I never thought of that. They think, well, it's better for the field, even if this isn't in its final form. And you know, just kind of put it out there for a lot of, you know, innovation is cool.

W

Wayne Osgood 46:26

Oh, wow. Probably, that it's worth taking the time to do the best job you can do on what you're working on. I mean, which is not to say, we still have to deal with realities of like, nobody's going to give you tenure for a paper that will be the best paper in the world when you write it 10 years from now. But taking the time to do work that you feel is really worthwhile, do a really good job of it. It's the way you do the work that other people notice. And that makes a difference. Not every paper is going to be that substantial. Some papers do need to get written that aren't that ambitious. But everybody knows there's a trend in the field where there are people who publish on a seemingly weekly basis sometimes. And I never did anything that was worth a darn, that I didn't take me a lot more time than that. And I'm sure there are people smarter than me out there. But, I don't think that much smarter that they can produce that much good work working in that kind of quantity. So, yeah, probably that.

J

Jose Sanchez 47:33

Yeah, I mean, it takes me two weeks to just even get an outline together for a paper and making sure that I've read what I need to read.

W

Wayne Osgood 47:41

Right, right, you know, that's the stage, where in a sense you're doing the biggest thinking. Hopefully, if you get the outline sorted out really well, then the rest of it's going to be smoother.

J

Jose Sanchez 47:51

So you wrote this chapter. And I know Jenn loves this chapter, that you put in the title that we should build criminology by stealing from our friends, we want to start asking you about your thoughts on the state of the field of criminology, and whether you think we've been doing this

effectively, and kind of where we currently stand and get your thoughts on that.

W

Wayne Osgood 48:12

Yeah, that was a fun paper. I actually did that for a session on integration that Thornberry or somebody put together at ASC in San Diego way back. I'd written the thing, and I thought, Okay, that was kind of fun. What am I gonna do with it? I can't remember who suggested, but it was the idea of having it in the Criminologist was where in the first place, because it was really just kind of an admonition to each other. It'll be cool if you know, you're not a criminologist, but you're good at something else too. So you can bring us what they know. And you can also tell them about what we know. I really do believe that strongly as ever. And it's actually a little bit unhealthy if you only know what criminologist know about whatever your topic is, because it can be a pretty funny little slice of whatever they feel might be. And jeez, it's hard to think of anything in the social sciences that doesn't have potential to be applied to understanding crime. So it's hard to know what specific directions are going to be best. Probably the sneaky and simple answer is to say, the ones I'm not going to think of, because I haven't seen them lately, right? And I never really thought about them. But I see a lot going on with geographers. That like macro level area-oriented crime stuff is totally different than it was 10 or 15 years ago, kind of reached a culmination you know, at the Chicago school. That massive data collection really did a great job of integrating survey work and demographic information and crime rates. But now there's all that stuff about integrating stuff at multiple geographic scales and integrating big data stuff into the picture that seems really interesting and has a lot of potential.

W

Wayne Osgood 50:04

You know, a lot of my work in the last decade is network based, that is friendship networks. I think there's a lot of room still, interesting things to be done with that. Now that I've kind of gotten pretty good at working with network data. Like virtually all of that work is asking kids who their friends are, and then that's the network and everything about the network is who are your friends. But people have a lot of different relationships with each other. And there's a little bit of work that gets into other kinds of relationships, like who do you ask for advice, who you dislike, things like that? I think a lot, a lot of neat stuff that can be done with networks in those ways. Networks that have nothing to do with links between people like that it needs to create a graph here is a good at this intersection of things like commuting networks with crime rates. So you know, what neighborhoods are people coming from and going to throughout the day, and, you know, gives you just such a wildly different view of what spatial stuff matters for crime.

W

Wayne Osgood 51:06

I do think we particularly need people to actually get good at stuff in other fields. Good enough to work with really good collaborators. It isn't likely need to be so good, that you don't necessarily need to quite reach the Rob Sampson level of publishing in the very best journals of fields that huh, who knows about that sort of stuff. But if you're at the level of you just read a paper or two in this other field in so you can bring in some nice ideas, that's great. But if you're going to do big complicated work, you probably actually need to know it more deeply. And even

better, if you have collaborators. That's their whole thing. And you can actually talk to them, and understand what they're doing if not do what they're doing. I think that's where you really get the payoff of doing work that we aren't quite imagining yet.



Jenn Tostlebe 51:56

Yeah, I love this idea. In my work, I try and be super interdisciplinary. I'm a sociologist, I have a background in psychology. And so I really like trying to bridge these ideas and pull from other areas in public health and epidemiology. And so I know you're stealing from our friends piece there was on my comps list.



Wayne Osgood 52:17

Oh, cool.



Jenn Tostlebe 52:17

And I used it on my comps. And yeah, it's a really cool idea as far as how to go about integration. All right, those are like our core questions for you. Do you have anything else you'd like to mention or add before we wrap up?



Wayne Osgood 52:33

One little thing I just throw in is we criminologists have had this long run ridiculous amount of what our job market has been excellent since I stumbled in field myself. And that, I suppose that probably can't last forever. But it is a rare privilege, that, you know, virtually everybody getting a PhD in our field can go on to a real good job making use of what they learned, whether it's a professor or researcher or at an agency, or whatever. So it's just sort of a wonderful part of having picked this field.



Jenn Tostlebe 53:13

Absolutely. All right. Well, thank you so much, Wayne, it's been an absolute pleasure to have you on, you're writing a paper for your Sutherland award, right?



Wayne Osgood 53:22

Yeah!



Jenn Tostlebe 53:23

Do you know when that will be coming out?



Wayne Osgood 53:25

Well, in a deep sense, no, because it yet exist in the form it has to go in. It'll be a few months. Sometime during the coming year.



Jenn Tostlebe 53:34

All right, cool. Well keep an eye out for that. And if people want to reach out to you, ask you any questions, where can they get a hold of you? Is email best?



Wayne Osgood 53:43

Yeah, email would be best. If they just Google Penn State and look down the faculty list to get to the emeritus faculty because I'm retired now. They'll find it there and it'd great to hear from them. And thanks so much for asking me to do this. And I really appreciate the opportunity and really appreciate you doing this for the field.



Jenn Tostlebe 54:03

Thank you.



Jose Sanchez 54:04

Thank you.



Jenn Tostlebe 54:05

Hey, thanks for listening.



Jose Sanchez 54:07

Don't forget to leave us a review on Apple podcasts or iTunes. Or let us know what you think of the episode by leaving us a comment on our website, thecriminologyacademy.com.



Jenn Tostlebe 54:16

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Jose Sanchez 54:27

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Jenn Tostlebe 54:32

See you next time!