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Disentangling criminal careers for disadvantaged youths

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Suppose that an individual is born in a low socioeconomic position and has obtained limited cognitive and non-cognitive skills during childhood. Further, suppose that childhood has produced early contact with law enforcement agencies and low levels of education. We propose an empirical framework to investigate to what extent such disadvantaged childhood circumstances have a lasting impact on subsequent socioeconomic adult outcomes, and whether life course transitions during adulthood, such as those from intimate relationships and employment, additionally influence adult outcomes. The main focus is on explaining adulthood offending for disadvantaged youths, but a variety of other socioeconomic outcomes, such as employment, social welfare, drug use and intimate relationships, are additionally studied.

Geert Mesters is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and Business at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona and affiliated to the Barcelona GSE and The Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (NSCR). Between 2010 and 2014 he was a PhD student in econometrics and criminology at the VU University Amsterdam, Tinbergen Institute and the NSCR. He holds an M.Sc. in Econometrics from the VU University Amsterdam (cum laude).

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