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THE CRIMES OF DETENTION CENTRE BOYS

BY

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## FOREWORD

This Report presents 3 separate studies. The first, examining some aspects of Junior Detention Centre boys, originated in a consideration of certain practical problems and institutional differences which, at the time, were of Regional concern. Its planning prompted the thought that a similar study of Senior Detention Centre boys might be of parallel interest; hence the second study, on a rather larger scale.

The thinking behind the third study, on Habituation, was stimulated by the process of working over the material of the earlier two, suggesting the isolation of its particular sample of cases for further detailed examination.

The 3 papers are thus in a sense all of a piece, justifying their presentation together as a single Report.

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THE CRIMINALITY OF BOYS IN  
JUNIOR DETENTION CENTRES

INTRODUCTION

Certain behavioural differences of trainees at 2 Junior Detention Centres during 1970 prompted some study of available information about the criminal records of the trainees received during that year. The 2 centres serve very large catchment areas, so that their intakes derive from many different Courts, and it would scarcely be surprising if differing sentencing policies resulted in considerable variety of types of case received for training.

The study revealed that: (a) the mean numbers of previous convictions for trainees at the 2 Centres were closely similar, although one Centre received a rather higher proportion of boys with no previous convictions; (b) rather fewer of that Centre's boys had previously had 2 or all 3 of the treatments probation, attendance at an Attendance Centre, or committal to an Approved School (all treatments affording personal methods aimed at influencing behaviour); (c) the same Centre's population contained fewer whose current main offence involved violence or taking and driving away.

In the nature of the situation, such differences as existed were the opposite of those that could have accounted for the observed institutional behaviour differences.

The foregoing results were derived from a retrospective study, and it was also known that there were differences between the 1970 and the 1969 intakes. There appear to be few published studies of criminal records or 'criminality' for samples of individuals, and it was accordingly thought that it might be useful to attempt a delineation of the delinquency of subsequent intake samples for this general purpose as well as for purposes of further comparisons. To these ends, data were collected for a 6 months' intake sample at each of these 2 Junior Detention Centres, comprising all boys received during the period 1 March to 31 August 1971 inclusive. (The writer is indebted to the Wardens and Staff of the Centres for providing the data).

THE COMPLEXITIES OF BEHAVIOUR

Human behaviour varies in innumerable ways, not least in its frequencies. Some activities are continuous, others are of intermittent occurrence and vary widely in their periodicities both among individuals and within the single individual's life history. Complex fields of human behaviour such as drug abuse behaviour or, still more generally, criminal behaviour - whatever its motivations may be - afford masses of detail presenting formidable problems of ordering to arrive at essential characteristics.

It is convenient to disregard many of these problems in criminological research and to concentrate attention on particular facets of the total behaviour - like absconding from penal establishments, behavioural change in response to a particular treatment, a specific form of crime such as violence or sexual offences, and so on. Such a convention is justifiable because from time to time specific matters assume greater or lesser immediate importance, and because there may be methodological limitations or difficulties of comparability. There is, however, the possibility that research may concentrate on the correlates or the 'explanations' of criminality whilst neglecting the criminal behaviour itself.

Since classification and quantification are essential elements in a scientific approach to understanding any field of phenomena, there may be advantages to be gained from systematic consideration also of the whole of a defined field of behaviour, even if the definition itself has some artificiality. An overall, taxonomic approach to criminality, even though limited to discovered criminal behaviour, may lead to useful concepts and categories. (One may recall Kinsey's studies of human sexual behaviour as an example of this approach). What follows is a partial attempt at this for the two six months' samples referred to above. These samples are defined not only by the time limits but also by the fact of their members' arrival at a Junior Detention Centre. This limits their age (14-16 years on arrival) and also fixes the point in their careers at which the delinquent history-taking (though, alas, not necessarily the delinquency) ceased. It is in this sense that this must be regarded as only a partial taxonomic exercise, and likewise because only a somewhat limited range of information was recorded. One has to decide initially how much detail to collect and, conversely, how broad to make the categories one hopes may be useful. We considered here what was documented about past convictions, current offences, and certain information about past treatments.

#### SAMPLE SIZES

Table 1 indicates the total numbers of cases notified as received during the period concerned, and also the extent of attrition of the samples due to incompleteness of information available.

TABLE 1: Samples studied

	Centre A		Centre B	
Receptions notified		354		239
No previous conviction data	21		27	
No current offence data	<u>1</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>28</u>
Available for study		<u>332</u>		<u>211</u>

#### REMAND

Individuals arrive at Detention Centres direct from the sentencing courts. They may, however, prior to sentence have been on remand in custody at a Remand Home, a Remand Centre or a Prison; or they may have been at liberty on bail. In the former instances there would have been opportunity for case-study and the furnishing of reports to the courts prior to sentence should the courts have wished, though this would not have been done in the absence of a request. While it was of little or no direct import for the present cases, it is of potential policy interest to know the relevant proportions. Of the 2 samples, those that had been on remand in a Remand Centre or Prison constituted 23% (Centre A) and 24% (Centre B). Thus, almost a quarter were available for case-study prior to sentence, had the need been indicated and had reporting facilities allowed.

#### AGE

Junior Detention Centre cater for boys who have reached their 14th but not their 17th birthday at the time of sentence. The ages of these 2 samples are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Age of Samples Studied

Age	Centre A		Centre B		A and B Combined	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
14	45	13.6	41	19.4	86	15.9
15	100	30.3	62	29.4	162	29.9
16	185	56.1	108	51.2	293	54.2
(not known)	(2)		(0)		(2)	
Totals	332		211		543	

The difference between the 2 samples is not significant.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS AND ONSET OF DELINQUENCY

The number of recorded previous convictions for the individuals in the 2 samples is shown by the frequency distributions of Table 3. Likewise, Table 4 shows the distributions for age at first court appearance.

TABLE 3: No. of PCs

PC	Centre A	Centre B	A + B
	No.	No.	No.
0	66 (20%)	32 (15%)	98 (18%)
1	72	40	112
2	74	47	121
3	55	45	100
4	38	18	56
5	16	11	27
6	8	10	18
7	1	4	5
8	1	2	3
9	-	-	-
10	1	2	3
Totals	332	211	543
Means:	2.155	2.464	

TABLE 4: Age at First Court Appearance

Age	Centre A	Centre B	A + B
	No.	No.	No.
7	1	-	1
8	3	2	5
9	3	2	5
10	23	15	38
11	22	25	47
12	45	23	68
13	59	29	88
14	49	45	94
15	78	38	116
16	47	32	79
(NK)	(2)	(0)	(2)
Totals	332	211	543
Means	13.5	13.4	

The difference between the 2 Centres is not significant for the data in either of these Tables. However, there is a moderately close correlation between number of previous convictions and age at first court appearance for each Centre (-.66 for A and -.58 for B). This is of course in itself largely a statistical artefact since the younger delinquency began the more time there has been to accumulate convictions by age 14-16. If one couples this with the fact that there are actually more 14- and fewer 16 - year-olds at Centre B than at Centre A (which reduces the average time for Centre B boys to accumulate convictions compared with Centre A boys), it is quite possible that the Centre B sample is in fact somewhat more delinquent than the Centre A sample. Centre B boys are younger and have more previous convictions; but it is difficult to assess the significance of the overall result of this.

TYPES OF DELINQUENCY

If we turn from the number of previous convictions to the nature of the offences concerned, we find a picture of the delinquent histories of our cases which is very similar for both Centres. In Table 5 there are multiple entries of individuals because of the variety of types of offence exhibited in the histories of each individual.

TABLE 5: The occurrence in delinquent histories  
of various types of offence

<u>Offence Occurring</u>	<u>Number of Histories</u>	
	<u>Centre A</u>	<u>Centre B</u>
Violence or threat thereof	53	37
Malicious or Wilful Damage *	41	25
Taking and Driving Away **	78	64
Sexual	2	4
Against Property	245	157
Other ***	117	84
(None (ie 0 pos))	(66)	(32)

\* Includes Arson

\*\* Includes Theft of vehicles

\*\*\* Mostly 'consequential' offences, ie breach of probation or of conditional discharge, driving without insurance or whilst disqualified; otherwise, possessing articles for theft, loitering with intent.

It is clear from these figures that, apart from the offences against property, there must be a good deal of overlap of the types of offence, and this is demonstrable if we look, as in Table 6, at the number of offence categories over which each individual's delinquent history spreads.

TABLE 6: Categories of Offence Covered by Individual Histories

<u>No. of Categories</u>	<u>No. of Individuals</u>	
	<u>Centre A</u>	<u>Centre B</u>
0 (ie no pos)	66	32
1	107	72
2	70	42
3	68	48
4	21	14
5	-	3
Totals	332	211

There is clearly a good deal of variety within each sample in this respect, but no significant difference between the samples.

Much the same general picture emerges if we look at the type of offence for which the current Detention Centre sentence was imposed, as may be seen from Tables 7 and 8, the first of which, again, contains multiple entries.

TABLE 7: Offending Actions leading to Current Conviction

<u>Type of Offence</u>	<u>Incidence</u>	
	<u>Centre A</u>	<u>Centre B</u>
Violence or Threat thereof	87	45
Malicious or Wilful Damage	21	17
Taking and Driving Away	69	50
Sexual	4	3
Against Property	227	138
Other	109	67
(Total Number of Individuals Involved)	(332)	(211)

TABLE 8: Categories of Offence involved in Current Conviction

<u>Number of Categories</u>	<u>Number of Individuals</u>	
	<u>Centre A</u>	<u>Centre B</u>
1	205	128
2	78	57
3	42	26
4	5	-
5	2	-
Totals	<u>332</u>	<u>211</u>

Just as there is a good measure of catholicity of offence in delinquent histories, there is a moderate catholicity in the individuals' most recent offending behaviour.

TRENDS IN DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR

This degree of variety leads one to ask the question: Amid the variety, is there any discernible tendency for an individual to develop a typical pattern of offending behaviour? Obviously, since 74% of the boys have past property offences and 67% committed property offences resulting in their most recent conviction, there is clearly a considerable degree of typicality here. But this would certainly emerge for any unselected delinquent groups, since property offences form the bulk of all crime. What about the other categories of offence?

It can in fact be shown that there is some significant tendency for violence, where it occurs, to appear in past history and current conviction; similarly, where it occurs, with Taking and Driving Away. In Tables 9 and 10 the data for these statements are presented, the cases for both Centres being combined because the results were uniformly similar when calculated separately.

TABLE 9:

	<u>Past History Includes</u>	
	<u>Violence</u>	<u>No Violence</u>
Current ) Violence Offences)	33	51
Include ) No Violence	58	303
$\chi^2 = 23.227$ 1 df. P < .001		

TABLE 10:

	<u>Past History Includes</u>	
	<u>TADA</u>	<u>No TADA</u>
Current ) TADA Offences)	58	45
Include ) No TADA	84	258
$\chi^2 = 36.287$ 1 df. P < .001		

The case is somewhat different with Malicious or Wilful Damage. For each Centre separately the comparison of past and current delinquency does not reveal a significant association. As may be seen from Table 11, when the larger numbers obtained by combining the 2 Centres' samples are considered the association does reach the 5% confidence level; but the very small number of cases in the top left hand cell makes the result suspect.

TABLE 11

Past History Includes  
M or W Dam.    No M or W Dam.

Current ) M/WD	8	22
Offence )		
Includes ) No M/WD	58	357

$$2 = 4.919 \quad 1 \text{ df.} \quad .02 < P < .05$$

This suggests an interesting difference among these 3 types of offence: namely, that the irresponsibility involved in acts of Damage is less stable as a characteristic than is propensity for violence or a predilection for Taking and Driving Away. While acts of damage are in general rather less common than the other 2 types of offence, they are also more capricious - and perhaps largely a feature of juvenility rather than indicative of a personal characteristic.

We may recast the figures of Tables 9, 10 and 11 as in Table 11A as an attempt to display the general picture of the incidence of these 3 types of offence.

TABLE 11A: Percentages of boys committing certain types of offence currently and in the past (based on 445 cases).

Occurrence in	Type of Offence		
	Violence	Mal. or W Damage	TADA
Past History	20	15	32
Current Conviction	19	7	23
Either Past or Current	32	20	42
Both	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	13

The last line of this Table represents the proportions who show some persistence in each type of offence. Clearly the damage type of offence shows little habituation, while the figures for the other 2 types of offence suggest a smallish core of individuals developing a typicality.

#### TREATMENT EXPERIENCES

In the very broadest sense all penalty decisions made by Courts may be regarded as applications of "treatments". Some, however, like absolute and conditional discharges may - especially with youngsters - make very little immediate impact on the "patient"; while others, notably fines perhaps, may bear more heavily on the parent than on the offending child (with or without consequences more directly perceived by the latter). The remainder of the spectrum of penalties consists of various forms of more directly personal attempts at behaviour modification, either in or outside formal custody. Placement on probation, unless with a condition of residence, and attendance at an Attendance Centre afford attempts at personal influence under free conditions, while committal to Approved School, to Care, and Detention in theory at least afford similar attempts under some degree of restraint.

The extent to which these personal treatment methods had been applied previously to our 2 samples is indicated in Table 12. Here again there are multiple entries.



TABLE 12: Past 'Personal Treatment' Methods Experienced

<u>Treatment</u>	<u>Centre A</u>		<u>Centre B</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
None (incl. first offenders)	109	33	56	27
Probation	194	58	129	61
Attendance Centre	59	18	61	29
Approved School	42	13	27	13
Fit Person Order	27	8	25	12
Detention in Remand Home	6 )		1 )	
	)		)	
Detention Centre	3 )	3	- )	$\frac{1}{2}$

The 2 samples are not significantly different except in respect of the proportions who had had to attend at Attendance Centres, no doubt due to differing availability of such Centres. ( $\chi^2 = 9.0313$ ,  $P < .01$ ).

Insofar as the boys in these samples had been subjected to such personal treatment methods, they may be regarded, loosely at least, as having shown themselves un-amenable to such treatment by appearing now in Junior Detention Centres following further offences. The number of such treatments a boy had received might be regarded as a rough measure of his 'un-amenableity'; and quite a sizeable proportion had already received 2 or more such treatments, as may be seen from Table 13.

TABLE 13: Number of Personal Treatments Experienced prior to arrival at Junior Detention Centre

<u>Treatments</u>	<u>Centre A</u>		<u>Centre B</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
0	111	33	58	27
1	133	40	83	39
2	69	21	54	26
3	18 )		14 )	
	)	6	)	8
4	1 )		2 )	
	-----		-----	
Totals	332		211	
	-----		-----	

The difference between the 2 samples does not reach significance; nor does it if one considers only the numbers of custodial treatment experiences. From both samples combined 18% had had one such experience and 3% had had 2.

#### DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this paper was to present some delineation of the population currently being received for training by the Junior Detention Centres. The most widely used and briefly informative criteria of delinquency are number of previous Court appearances and the "treatments" already undergone; and our samples may be summed up in these terms as follows:-

- a. Only 18% were first offenders;
- b. 39% had 3 or more previous court appearances, and ranged up to 10;
- c. 18% had begun their delinquent careers whilst still in the primary phase of their schooling - before age 12;
- d. 59% were or had been on probation;
- e. 13% had been in Approved School;
- f. 10% had been in care under Fit Person Orders.

This summary represents a wide range of variety in 'delinquent tendency', clearly, and this was true of each Centre's population separately. The 2 samples were remarkably similar in most respects. Some overlap, of course, exists between some of the criteria elements quoted; the result of this was that 29% of the sample had had 2 or more 'personal' forms of treatment prior to reaching Junior Detention Centre, and 18% had had at least one period of custodial experience. So far as modification of behaviour away from delinquent forms is concerned, these figures indicate a measure of un-amenability to available forms of personal influence. This is not to say that the boys who underwent these experiences did not derive any benefit or were wholly unresponsive to efforts made on their behalf; but it does indicate a lack of response or failure to learn, of the particular sort the Courts presumably had mainly in mind in making their decisions.

To some fairly considerable extent, it must be recognised, the population now being dealt with by Junior Detention Centres is not as uncommitted to delinquency or merely showing a 'misguided sense of adventure' as originally envisaged for Detention Centres. The delinquent histories are often already prolonged, and the boys have been in many instances the subjects of a good deal of reformatory attention already. Considering also that 94% of the sample were sentenced to 3 months' detention, which meant that the effective custodial part of the sentence was seldom longer than 2 months, it is difficult to anticipate very high success rates unless the experience is in some way a stimulus to normal maturation. It seems much less likely to be such a stimulus in cases where some custodial measure has already been experienced; and ex-Approved School cases uniformly have poorer prognosis than others (8% as compared with 27% not reconvicted after 3 years from discharge).\*

Lastly, we examined the nature rather than the number of the offences committed by this sample of boys. We saw that although, as familiar with most unselected samples, offences against property predominate, there is some variety in types of offence in about 40% of the histories. Amid this variety also there were signs that among those committing acts of violence there were some already showing some persistence in this; and similarly some were habituating to Taking and Driving Away. Even in this relatively juvenile population, apparently, there are the beginnings of some specialisation, perhaps suggestive of particular personality characteristics.

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\* Calculated from figures in Table F.6(a) of the Report on the Work of the Prison Department 1970 Statistical Tables, Cmmd. 4806, HMSO 1971

THE CRIMINALITY OF BOYS IN SENIOR DETENTION CENTRES

## INTRODUCTION

"Criminality", as an old lag once said, "was invented by the criminologists - I only commit crimes". It is an ungainly term and is used here merely to indicate the general subject-matter of this paper, viz: some aspects of the crimes of a group of individuals. To these has been added some information as to the consequences of this behaviour to the individuals concerned and a little as to their reactions to those consequences.

Such a study as is practicable by way of information available within the prison service is necessarily not a wholly general study, but limited in various ways - some known, some not readily knowable - by reason of the selective processes that occur between the committing of a criminal act and the actor's arrival in a penal training establishment. In the present context, our samples are determined by the limited age range for entry to Senior Detention Centres (17-20 years), by the courts' determination of the sentence merited in the individual case, by the determination of guilt, and by the actuality of detection, to name a few of the selective processes in the reverse order of their occurrence. The individuals here studied comprise all those entering during a calendar year (1 Feb 1971-31 Jan 1972) into three Senior Detention Centres; but the three groups have in the main been kept separate for purposes of statistical treatment as there proved to be some significant differences among them.

## SAMPLE SIZES AND DATA COLLECTED

Throughout the period concerned, all new arrivals were notified and a variety of information noted from what was routinely recorded by the Centres. No attempt was made to obtain other than a selection of "hard data" about the individuals, since the main concern was to attempt some delineation of the samples from the criminal behaviour and penal treatment angles. In a few instances items of information were lacking; Table 1 indicates the numbers of cases available for study.

TABLE 1: Samples studied

	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C
Receptions notified (excluding successful appellants)	492	535	478
<u>Less</u> , lacking previous conviction information	<u>48</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>37</u>
Available for study	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>

We have thus have in all 1408 cases, and the information about them consisted of past convictions, current offences, some information on past penal treatments, current domicile, and reaction to current sentence as indicated by loss of remission.

## SENTENCE LENGTH, REMAND, AND ABODE

The sentence of detention in a detention centre is a determinate one, and subject to certain provisos the law provides for duration of sentences between three and

six months. In practice the vast majority (83% in the present samples) of sentences are of three months, almost all the remainder of six months. Table 2 shows the actual incidence for each Centre.

Table 2: Lengths of sentence

Sentence	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C
3 months	356 (80%)	440 (84%)	377 (85%)
4 "	6	9	4
5 "	1	1	2
6 "	81	73	58
	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>

There are statistically significant differences among the three Centres in the proportions receiving the three months' sentence ( $\chi^2 = 7.643$ , 2df., 05 P .02). There would thus appear to be fairly small and significant catchment area differences either in seriousness of offences proved or in sentencing severity (or a combination of the two).

Whether, pending the trial of his case, an individual is held in custody on remand depends on several factors, about which we have no direct information for these samples. But whether he is remanded in custody also determines, under current conditions, whether there was any possibility of his examination and his being reported on to the court by Prison Department staff, were the facilities available and were there any requirement by the court. Our three samples differ in the proportions who were remanded in custody, as Table 3 shows.

Table 3: Numbers in Custody during Remand

Custodial Remand	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C
Yes	163 (37%)	250 (48%)	184 (42%)
No	281	273	257
	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>

$$\chi^2 = 11.9656, 2 \text{ df.}, P .01$$

One may conjecture that one reason for remand in custody is seriousness of offence, necessitating remand also for trial or sentence in the higher court because the magistrates were not empowered to deal with the offence or considered their powers of sentencing insufficient for the particular case. It is in fact exceedingly difficult to grade offences for degree of seriousness, since something depends, for gravity of the case, on past record, on circumstances of the offence and the offender, and on the general "climate" of the situation. It would thus be hazardous and probably unreal to attempt to grade on a scale of "seriousness" all offences as stated on committal warrants; indeed such judgemental weighing up and evaluation is the essence of the judging task when appropriate sentences are being considered. Probably, therefore, the best available indication of seriousness of offence within the limits of our samples is the actual length of sentence awarded. In these terms, it can be shown that whether or not the individual is remanded in custody before sentence is related to length of sentence, and hence presumably to seriousness of offence. Table 4 gives the details for all our cases combined.

Table 4: Remand in custody and length of sentence

Remand in custody	Length of sentence	
	3 months	4, 5 or 6 months
Yes	470	127
No	703	108

$$\chi^2 = 15.235, 1 \text{ df.}, P .001$$

Again, however, there are differences among the Centres' samples, and almost the whole of this effect was derived from Centre B's sample. For the other two Centres there was no significant and very little actual association between custodial remand and sentence length.

In two catchment areas, therefore, seriousness of offence cannot, apparently, be regarded as contributing to a systematic explanation of remand in custody.

Being aged between 17 and 20 the vast majority (72%) of our individuals were still living in the parental home at the time of their conviction and sentence. There were, however, some significant differences among the samples as to abode, as Table 5 indicates.

Table 5: Place of abode at time of offence

Centre	Parents' Home	Own home with wife	Lodgings*	Forces	NFA	(Not known)
A	330**	17	84	8	5	(0)
B	334	14	140	5	30	(0)
C	351	12	72	1	3	(2)
TOTALS	1015 (72%)	43	296	14	38	(2)

- \* Includes Probation Hostel, and also 1 individual in a Childrens' Home.  
 \*\* Includes 2 individuals married but separated from wife, and 1 married and with wife.

Centre B's sample clearly has a significantly larger number of boys from lodgings or probation hostel and also a significantly larger number who were of no fixed abode at the time of arrest. There are statistically significant differences among the samples as to the proportion living in the parental home ( $\chi^2 = 33.222, 2 \text{ df.}, P .001$ ).

This last feature is in fact related to the question whether an individual is remanded in custody or not. For all cases, Table 6 gives this information.

Table 6: Remand in custody and abode at time of arrest

Remand in custody	Abode	
	Parental Home	Other
Yes	377	224
No	638	167

$$\chi^2 = 47.036, 1 \text{ df.}, P .001$$

This is true for Centres A and B, in each case at this level of significance, but not for Centre C's sample, in which there is no significant association. Thus for two catchment areas at least, the courts tend to prefer remand in custody when the offender is not living in the parental home, and not to require custodial remand when he is, although the preference is by no means always acted upon. There is no obvious explanation for the discrepant result for Centre C; for this sample remand in custody is related neither to abode nor to length of sentence.

#### CRIMINAL CAREER TO DATE AND ITS ONSET

Following accepted practice we have reckoned as a conviction each occasion when, for a given individual, a court has concluded the matter before it and made a sentence decision or order. In very rare instances this will have meant that a child's appearance before a court as in need of care and protection has been reckoned as a conviction (eg in one instance, at the age of 7 - below the age of "criminal responsibility"); but such instances are so rare as to make virtually no difference to the figures computed.

The number of past convictions (ie prior to the current one) for the individuals in our samples is indicated by the frequency distributions of Table 7.

Table 7: Number of Previous Convictions

Convictions	Number of Individuals at			
	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C	A + B + C
0	58	86	28	172
1	86	116	43	245
2	104	126	88	318
3	81	88	87	256
4	60	48	70	178
5	27	33	48	108
6	13	12	32	57
7	7	4	19	30
8	4	6	12	22
9	2	3	6	11
10	1	-	3	4
11	1	-	1	2
12	-	1	1	2
13	-	-	2	2
14	-	-	1	1
TOTALS	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>	<u>1408</u>
Average number of convictions	<u>2.50</u>	<u>2.25</u>	<u>3.56</u>	<u>2.74</u>

Thus, only 12% are first offenders, while 48% had three or more previous convictions, and ranged up to fourteen. For a group of whom 83% received the three-months sentence (ie effectively a two months' training period), they are clearly by no means entirely a criminally uncommitted group. The sample for Centre C is significantly more criminally involved than the other two. (For the difference between the averages for Centre C and Centre A, the nearer of the other two,  $t = 7.370$ , 883 df.,  $P .001$ ).

The age at which these individuals first came before the courts is given in the distributions of Table 8.

Thus, 10% had begun their delinquent careers whilst still in the junior stage of education (before the age of 12), and 49% in all whilst still within the minimum years of compulsory schooling (up to age 15). Thus underlines the comment made in the preceding paragraph, although of course there is inevitably an association between number of convictions and age of beginning delinquent behaviour; among young offenders at least the more convicted are those who begin earlier. Accordingly, the average age at first conviction is also significantly different among the Centres (for the comparison of Centres A and C,  $t = 4.465$ , 877 df.,  $P < .001$ ); and the averages follow the same trend as the average number of convictions shown in Table 7.

Table 8: Age at First Court Appearance

Number of Individuals at				
Age	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C	A + B + C
7	-	-	1	1
8	1	4	3	8
9	7	11	17	35
10	12	11	21	44
11	23	13	20	56
12	27	28	42	97
13	34	39	53	126
14	40	61	53	154
15	52	52	59	163
16	70	73	60	203
17	86	104	60	250
18	58	69	26	153
19	21	38	16	75
20	13	19	4	36
(not known)	(0)	(1)	(6)	(7)
TOTALS	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>	<u>1408</u>
Average age:	15.4 years	15.6 years	14.6 years	15.2 years

#### CURRENT OFFENCE

It is very common for an offender to be convicted of not just one but several offences, and in some instances to have other offences "taken into consideration" when being sentenced. The resulting term of incarceration may thus be a composite of several separate sentences to be served concurrently or consecutively according to the Court's order. This state of affairs similarly complicates the picture in any attempt to delineate the totality of crimes for which a given sample of individuals has been sentenced. This totality could not be stated short of listing all the offending acts proved and listed on commitment warrants. Since we were less concerned about this than about comparing the three centres, we have attempted an approach to the totality of variety in crimes; that is, for example where crimes against property are concerned, each different type of crime was recorded for each individual, but only one instance where two identically described crimes occurred (eg two thefts count only 1, while burglary and theft count 2). No justification beyond some simplicity of recording is offered here;

but the method was consistent so that the data for the three centres are comparable. Table 9 displays the results.

Table 9: Types of Crime in Current Offence

Type of Crime	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C
Violence or threat thereof	141	200	120
Damage (Mal., Wil., Crim.)	27	29	31
Taking and driving away (including theft m/v)	97	106	151
*Driving without licence, without insurance, or whilst disqualified	99	97	147
Against property	347	433	376
Sexual	3	13	5
Drugs	21	34	10
Breach of PO., CD., or SS	73	84	68
Other (RTA offences, dangerous driving, loitering with intent)	23	30	36
TOTALS	831	1026	944
Number of individuals	441	523	440

\*Almost all consequent upon offences of Taking and Driving Away.

The familiar picture is confirmed here of the predominance of offences against property, but there is also a striking incidence of personal indiscipline and irresponsibility reflected in the relatively large amount of violent crime, threats, and of taking cars. Another point of note, perhaps, is that 8% of the offences indicated breaches of extant probation orders, conditional discharges, or suspended imprisonment sentences. Comparing the samples, Centre C has significantly fewer cases of violence (compared with Centre A,  $\chi^2 = 6.528$ , 1df.,  $P = .02$ ) and significantly more Taking and Driving Away (compared with Centre A,  $\chi^2 = 6.799$ , 1df.,  $P = .01$ ). Sexual offences are very rare, and in other respects the Centres are closely similar.

Whilst the overall picture of the offences committed by these samples of boys is of general and social interest, the training establishments are more specifically concerned with the individual boys and their particular patterns of behaviour. It is thus, from the training and rehabilitation angles, of more direct interest to consider the numbers of individuals involved in specific types of crime. Since offences against property are very generally typical, moreover, probably most relevant, if any individualisation of treatment is to be attempted, are the proportions who have committed more specific types of offence, in particular offences involving violence or threats thereof, acts of damage, or the nuisance acts of Taking and Driving away. It is conceivable that these three types of act reflect differences in personality, or may merit some attempts at different approaches in treatment and training. Table 10 displays the numbers of individuals in each Centre's sample who committed these types of offence, although it should be borne in mind that there is some overlap because in some instances an individual has committed more than one type of offence.



Table 10: Incidence of certain types of current offence

<u>Offence</u>	Number of Offenders at			
	Centre A	Centre B	Centre C	All Centres
Violence or Threat	104	147	89	340 (24%)
Damage	25	27	32	84 (6%)
Taking and Driving Away	96	111	150	357 (25%)
Size of Sample	<u>444</u>	<u>523</u>	<u>441</u>	<u>1408</u>

It is clear that acts of damage (malicious, wilful, or criminal) were committed by only a very small proportion of individuals, and that all three samples closely confirm this. Differences among the three Centres that do emerge, however, are (a) that Centre C has significantly fewer violence cases than Centre B, ( $\chi^2 = 8.161$ ,  $P .01$ ) with Centre A falling between; and (b) that Centre C has significantly more boys who committed offences of Taking and Driving Away than the other two Centres, which are closely similar (comparing Centres B and C,  $\chi^2 = 23.104$ ,  $P .001$ ).

It is convenient at this point to consider whether any of the aspects of criminal history and current offence we have examined are related to the questions of custodial remand. While the average number of previous convictions is marginally higher for those remanded in custody than for those not so remanded in the case of two Centres, there is no difference in the case of the third Centre, and no significant difference overall. This, of course, is as one would expect, since at the stage of proceedings when remand is being considered a court has no official knowledge to take cognizance of about the past history of the person before it. The court does, however, know the offence or offences with which the person is charged. Does this have any bearing on whether the individual undergoes remand in custody? We have examined this with regard to acts of damage, violence offences (as construed earlier) and Taking and Driving Away. The results are interesting for their generally negative character, and are summed up briefly in the following points.

(a) Table 11 gives the overall figures for acts of damage (malicious, wilful, or criminal) compared with all other types of offence.

Table 11: Remand in custody when charged with acts of damage

Remand in Custody	Offence	
	Damage	Other
Yes	26	571
No	58	753

Here,  $\chi^2 = 5.170$ ,  $P .05$ . It may be noted that there is thus slightly less likelihood of remand in custody if the offender has included an act of damage among his offences, than if he has not. However, the generally small incidence of damage offences not merely renders this finding of little practical importance, but also makes it of doubtful reliability ( $\chi^2$  becomes an unreliable statistic if, as here, the number of cases in any one position in the table is less than 5% of the total number).

(b) A corresponding comparison for acts of violence is given in the figures of Table 12.

Table 12: Remand in custody when charged with acts of violence or threats thereof

Remand in Custody	Offence	
	Violence or Threat	Other
Yes	135	462
No	205	606

Here  $\chi^2$  has the insignificant value 1.286, and again the figures show a slightly smaller proportion of violent offenders remanded in custody than of other offenders. Centres A and C follow this pattern, Centre B's sample the reverse.

(c) Where offences of Taking and Driving Away occur there is no association overall or for any one Centre's sample with remand in custody. Table 13 gives the overall figures.

Table 13: Remand in custody when charged with Taking and Driving Away

Remand in Custody	Offence	
	Taking and Driving Away	Other
Yes	155	442
No	202	609

$\chi^2 = 0.246$ , a non-significant value.

(d) Since being charged with any one of the above three types of offence has no bearing on whether the individual is remanded in custody, one might anticipate that a similar negative result could be found with the remaining kinds of offence, unless the slight negative tendency of the figures given above summate to lead to a positive result for the remainder, which would be predominantly offences against property. By separating out all cases where the current offences consisted of or included violence, damage, Taking and Driving Away, sexual and drugs offences, we are left mainly (though not solely) with cases involving property offences. Table 14 sets out the resulting data.

Table 14: Remand in custody when charged with offences other than violence, damage, taking and driving away, sexual and drugs

Remand in Custody	Offence	
	Other	Violence, damage, TaDa, sexual, drugs
Yes	265	330
No	334	474

These figures show a slight preponderance of custodial remands for those committing "other" offences, but not to a significant extent ( $\chi^2 = 1.443$ ).

The inconclusive nature of all these four sets of results may well be in part due to the already noted "overlap" of offending acts, ie individual offenders have not necessarily limited their activities to one particular type of offence. Consequently none of the separate categories we have examined is "pure" - all are contaminated by some measure of admixture of offences for individuals. The negative or inconclusive results also, however, may be regarded as evidence that remaining in custody is not the result of any specific bias as regards types of offence, so far as we have been able to discover.

#### SIMILARITIES BETWEEN PAST AND CURRENT OFFENCES

The variety in types of crime committed by any one individual commonly observed particularly among young offenders does not necessarily exclude the possibility that some, at least, begin to specialise in some measure. Offences against property are, of course, common to almost all young offenders, and it is rarely that one finds one who has specialised solely in some other type of offence. However, comparison of past and current offences does show that some habituation to certain kinds of offence does occur: in particular, some individuals show a more than random penchant for offences of violent character (as earlier defined), and some for Taking and Driving Away. If we compare the occurrence of violent offences in the current convictions with the occurrence of one or more past violent offences for all our cases (except those with no previous convictions), we have the figures of Table 15.

Table 15: Incidence of Violent Offences in Current and Past Convictions

Violence in Current Conviction	Violence in one or more past convictions	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Yes	129	132
No	201	774

For this array of figures  $\chi^2 = 86.24$  (P .001), indicating a significant tendency for past violence to be reflected in current offence behaviour. The cases from each Centre separately yield similar results.

A quite similar picture emerges from the examination of Taking and Driving Away offences, as may be seen from Table 16.

Table 16: Incidence of Taking and Driving Away Offences in Current and Past Convictions

Ta Da in current conviction	TaDa in one or more past convictions	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Yes	173	154
No	226	683

$\chi^2 = 83.39$ , P .001. Again, a significant tendency for the offence to be typical of both past and present convictions, and similarly reflected in each Centre's sample separately.

With acts of damage the picture is different. The comparison is made in Table 17.

Table 17: Incidence of Damage Offences in Current and Past Convictions

Damage in Current Conviction	Damage in one or more past convictions	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Yes	23	52
No	206	955

Although  $\chi^2 = 7.576$ ,  $P = .01$ , in this case, the effect is due solely to the cases from Centre C, and the overall incidence of Damage offences is so small as to render the statistic unreliable. It cannot therefore be said that there is any characteristic tendency towards acts of damage among these young offenders.

These results closely follow those obtained from similar comparisons made on a sample of boys from the slightly younger age group in Junior Detention Centres.

They do not, of course, suggest that "once violent, always violent" or that violence or Taking and Driving Away are wholly specialisms once embarked upon. They do, however, indicate that with a significant proportion of cases the particular form of delinquent activity tends to perpetuate itself, and that it is by no means unreasonable to anticipate that "if it has occurred in the past, it may well occur again in any further criminal activity". This could be important in crime detection; it may also be a factor to consider in any attempts at particular approaches to training and treatment.

#### PAST TREATMENTS

It is clear from the previous convictions of the boys in our samples that the original concept of Detention Centres as appropriate to youths essentially uncommitted to crime has been markedly departed from over the years. The boys have undergone various penalties and treatments for their past misdeeds; and, disregarding Absolute and Conditional Discharges, the numbers who have received each indicated form of "treatment" at least once in the past is shown in Table 18. A boy may have been fined on more than one occasion or placed on probation more than once, but here individuals, not occasions, have been counted.

Table 18: Incidence of Recipients of Various Forms of "Treatment" for Past Offences

Treatment Decision	Centre A	Number of Individuals at		A + B + C
		Centre B	Centre C	
<u>Non-custodial</u>				
Fine	300	315	348	963 (68%)
Probation	251	303	284	834 (59%)
Suspended sentence of imprisonment	12	12	5	29 (2%)
Attendance Centre	30	42	41	113 (8%)

<u>Custodial</u>					
Approved School	31	43	55	129	(9%)
Detention in a Remand Home	0	6	3	9	
Detention Centre	16	8	11	35	(2%)
Care under FPO	20	15	12	47	(3%)
Borstal Training	0	2	1	3	
Imprisonment	2	1	3	6	
<hr/>					
Number in sample	444	523	440	1407	

There are minor but not statistically significant differences among the three Centres as to the proportions who have been one or more times on probation ( $\chi^2 = 5.553, 2 \text{ df}, P .05$ ). All three Centres, on the other hand, differ significantly among themselves in the proportions who have been fined once or more. (Comparing Centres A and B  $\chi^2 = 5.827, P .02$ ; comparing Centres A and C  $\chi^2 = 14.253, P .001$ .) Thus there do seem to have been systematic differences in the three catchment areas in Courts' inclinations to use fines as methods of dealing with these delinquent boys in their past careers.

This has led to some smallish but systematic differences in the proportions who have had previous penal institutional treatment ( $\chi^2 = 6.217, 2 \text{ df}, .05 P .02$ ), although the overall proportion is fairly small (12%) and the tabular figures fall a little short of proportions needed for a wholly reliable statistic. In fact, the Centre with the highest proportion of boys who have been previously fined (Centre C) also has the highest proportion with previous penal institutional treatment. This is because, as we saw from Table 7, Centre C's sample has a higher previous conviction rate, ie they were more delinquent as a group than either of the other two samples.

In these days of very full penal establishments it is relevant to enquire what methods of on-going "personal" treatment (as distinct from the relatively impersonal imposition of a fine) have been applied to these boys before they were committed on the current sentence to Detention Centres. In this context, and again disregarding the number of times any one treatment may have been applied to a particular boy, the relevant treatments are: placement on probation, committal to Care under Fit Persons Orders, requirement for attendance at an Attendance Centre, committal to Approved School, to Detention in a Remand Home, to Detention Centre, to Borstal, or to Prison. All these represent in some measure attempts at personal influence over a period on the boy's subsequent behaviour. The numbers of boys who have had such treatments is shown in Table 19, from which it may be seen that almost three-quarters of those with any past offences at all have had at least one such form of treatment before their current offence and committal to Detention Centre. Almost a fifth have had two or more such methods of treatment attempted with them.

Table 19: Past Experience of "Personal" Treatments before Present Committal to Detention Centre

Number of Treatments	Centre A		Number of Individuals at				A + B + C		
	*	*	Centre B	Centre C	*	*	*	*	
0	167	109	202	116	140	112	509	337	(27%)
1	215	215	240	240	212	212	667	667	
2	53	53	68	68	70	70	191	191	) (19%)
3	8	8	11	11	17	17	26	36	
4	1	1	2	2	1	1	4	4	
TOTALS	444	386	523	437	440	412	1407	1235	

\* These columns exclude the first offenders from each sample.

The figures for the three Centres (including first offenders) are quite closely similar ( $\chi^2 = 9.339$ , 4 df, P .05).

#### BEHAVIOUR DURING CURRENT SENTENCE

Like other determinate sentences, detention centre sentences are subject to one-third remission in the absence of misbehaviour that results on adjudication in loss of remission. As an indication of misbehaviour during sentence we have information as to the number of days' remission forfeited, although we have no recorded information as to the nature of the misbehaviour involved. For our three samples combined, a total of 252 boys (18%) lost some remission, the loss for these averaging 4.6 days, ranging from 1 day to 22 days. There was no significant difference among the three Centres as to the proportion of boys who lost remission ( $\chi^2 = 4.731$ , 2 df, P .05).

We have compared the incidence of remission loss with certain other features, with the following results.

(a) Sentence length: Slightly more of the long sentence cases lose remission than of the three-month sentence cases - Table 20.

Table 20: Loss of Remission and Sentence Length

Remission	Sentence	
	3 months	4-6 months
lost	199	53
no loss	974	182

$\chi^2 = 4.210$ , 1 df, .05 P .02. No doubt this effect is due mainly to the fact that those serving longer sentences have more time in which to misbehave!

(b) Numbers of Previous Convictions: However, no doubt sentence length also reflects badness of past record to some extent; and it appears that remission too is also related to number of previous convictions. The average number of previous convictions for those who lose remission was 3.06, compared with 2.67 for the remainder ( $t = 2.671$ , P .01). This significant difference indicates that misbehaviour during sentence is in some degree a reflection of past bad behaviour - remission losers are significantly more delinquent boys.

(c) Past Penal Institutional Experience: There is no difference in the proportions of remission losers among those who have and those who have not had previous penal institutional experience ( $\chi^2 = 0.7379$ , a negligible value). There is thus no suggestion for this age group of habituation to the penal institutional situation to the extent that boys feel able to take liberties with the discipline requirements.

(d) Type of Offence: Damage offenders are not different from the remainder as regards remission loss ( $\chi^2 = 0.345$ ); but fewer both of violent offenders and of the Taking and Drivers Away lose remission than of the others (for violent offenders  $\chi^2 = 5.929$ ,  $P = .02$ , and for TaDa offenders  $\chi^2 = 5.742$ ,  $P = .02$ ) Those two latter groups are thus significantly better behaved during sentence than others.

#### DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This paper has attempted some description of the crimes of a particular group of individuals subject, at the time they were studied, to a particular form of penal treatment. Along with this account we have made various comparisons and considered certain aspects of the treatments the individuals have undergone. In order to draw some conclusions that go beyond this particular sample of individuals - to enable us to generalise to other, similar, groups - we subjected our numerical results to statistical procedures. This is the essential justification for statistical methods of treating numerical incidences: to allow one to go beyond the actual sample with one's conclusions by assessing the probability that such results as were obtained would be obtained again from other samples similarly drawn. To the non-statistically minded reader this inevitably makes the tedium in the presentation of results, and so some desirability of summarising the conclusions in straightforward and non-mathematical terms. Summarising results, however, is not necessarily the same as interpreting them or inferring their implications, which is an additional process and in some instances may even depend on the interpreter's point of view. We shall try to keep the two processes separate.

83% of the boys received the three-months' sentence, nearly all the remainder being sentenced to six months. Whether they were remanded in custody in connection with their trial was related to the length of sentence received; those remanded in custody were more likely to get the longer sentence, although this occurred mainly in one out of the three catchment areas. Remand in custody was more likely to occur in the case of those who were not still living in their parental home at the time of arrest. But custodial remand appeared not to be, in general, determined by the nature of the offence committed nor by the extensiveness of the offender's previous criminal history. This last point substantiates the Courts' lack of official knowledge as to the defendant's history; and in general custodial remand seems likely to be determined more by whether the individual could be considered to be subject to some controlling (parental) influence than by any other feature we examined.

The criminal involvement of present-day Senior Detention Centre populations is succinctly indicated by our findings that only 12% were first offenders and almost half have three or more convictions prior to that which brought them to Detention Centre. The ages at which their delinquency began were such that 10% were still in the Junior School stage of education when they were first dealt with by a Court, and almost half were first convicted whilst still young enough to be compulsorily attending school.

In common with any other unselected sample of offenders that one might study, the most frequently occurring offences were against property. After that, the most numerous were acts involving violence, threats of violence or potential violence.

It would not, of course, be correct necessarily to infer that violent offenders are the next most numerous after offenders against property. It may, for instance, be more appropriate to interpret the numerical facts as indicating that violent offenders of this age-group frequently receive custodial sentences.

In comparing the particular sorts of offence committed with past offences (apart from offences against property), we found some measure of consistency in criminal behaviour. Past violence tends to a significant (ie more than random) extent to be reflected in the current offence; similarly does Taking and Driving Away tend more than randomly to occur in the current offence for those who have done it before. Damage offences, on the other hand, show much less likelihood of such consistency and, moreover, have declined to a quite small incidence in current offence. Table 21 compares the incidences in past and current offences for these three types of act.

Table 21: Proportion of Individuals Committing Certain Types of Offence in the Past and Currently (based on 1408 cases)

Offence	% with a past conviction	% with present conviction	% with both
Violence or Threat	23	19	9
Taking and Driving Away	28	23	12
Damage (Mal., Wil., Crim.)	16	5	2

Damage offences thus not only have declined appreciably with this sample of individuals but also occur randomly rather than typically of particular individuals. In contrast, there is some typicality for the other two types of offence, and the decline in incidence is relatively slight. These results are wholly consistent with those found in a similar examination of samples of boys at Junior Detention Centres, a slightly younger group (aged 14-16 years).

Apart from the 12% who were first offenders, all the boys in these samples had previous experience of being dealt with by non-custodial sentences. Two-thirds of the whole group had been fined at least once, and three-fifths had been placed on probation at least once. Those who had had previous experience of custodial sentences constituted 12% of the whole group. Of the 88% with previous convictions, three quarters had had at least one experience of what we defined as "personal" and on-going attempts at diverting them from further criminal behaviour; one-fifth had been subjected to two or more such attempts in the past. For most, therefore, the Detention Centre sentence came not at the beginning but somewhere up the line in attempts to induce them to modify their behaviour.

Lastly, we made some attempt to examine behaviour during the Detention Centre sentence as reflected in lost remission. The vast majority (82%) lost no time due to misbehaviour; the remainder lost an average of 4.6 days, varying between one day and 22 days. Relating this feature to other information, we found that (contrary perhaps to expectation in the first case) violent and Taking and Driving Away offenders were apparently better behaved institutionally than others - they had significantly fewer remission losers among them. Again, remission loss was not related to past penal institutional experience: remission losers were not more frequently those who had had previous custodial sentences. There is thus no suggestion here that previous institutional experience had led to any inclination to misbehave, take liberties within the disciplined situation, or to fail to respond adequately to requirements. If institutionalisation or 'prisonisation' occurs, it does not apparently take these forms, at this age, judging by these samples of boys.



We did, however, find remission loss to be related somewhat to length of sentence and clearly to number of previous convictions. While in the former case this may be partly due to there being more time in which to misbehave, it seems reasonable to conclude that in general those who have been the worst, ie the most continuing, offenders in ordinary life tend also to be those who earn themselves punishments during sentence.

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14 June 1972

HABITUATION TO CRIMINAL BEHAVIOURINTRODUCTION

There have been and are various views as to the "explanations" of criminal behaviour, ranging from moral through social to individual drives of varying nature. In contrast, more recent attempts to account for anti-social behaviour in terms of inadequate conditionability, or lack of response to social conditioning forces, stress not the internal drive but the relative absence of specific forms of learning. This is to express the negative, or non-habitation, and assumes it to be determined by (probably) innate temperamental characteristics. It is, however, possible to view a developing criminal career in more positive learning terms in certain circumstances: ie if the "benefits" (gain, excitement, release of tension, or whatever) to be derived from criminal activity are deemed or perceived by the actor to outweigh the possible "cost" (punishment, sentence, likelihood of getting caught, etc). Under these conditions at least, one can conceive of habitation to criminal behaviour rather than unconditionability, and if this is a justifiable way of looking at the matter, it should be possible to adduce some practical evidence from a study of actual criminal careers.

CRIME AS AN INTERMITTENT ACTIVITY

Many forms of human activity are intermittent rather than continuous. Criminal activity is of this sort, and if habituation to criminal behaviour occurs then it would be expected that the intervals between successive criminal acts would tend to decrease. One cannot, of course, here speak of habituation to precise acts; in any case few human acts above the simple neurological level are repeated with literally exact precision. Generally, however, criminal acts are acts known to the doer to be contrary to law, requirements, mores, or the usual pattern of behaviour and - perhaps more importantly in the present context - to involve both potential gain from the action and potential loss from socially inflicted sanctions.

The immediate aim of this brief study was to test the hypothesis that habituation to criminal behaviour occurs, by examining the sequence of crimes in a sample of criminal careers. Secondly, the question was considered whether there was any evidence of characteristic periodicities in criminal behaviour for particular individuals.

SAMPLE STUDIED

It would be difficult to accumulate a sample of cases for whom one had exact details of dates on which successive offending acts occurred. Such detail is not available in lists of convictions and in many instances would be unobtainable since some crimes do not get found out. The nearest we can reasonably get from available sources is information from conviction lists, which are clearly very condensed and may also be selective so far as the occurrence of delinquent events is concerned. Many factors, some quite fortuitous

so far as our present interests go, influence the matters so recorded, as is immediately apparent; so that such material is relatively unhelpful as a basis for testing our hypothesis. However, this merely makes the test of the hypothesis more stringent.

The sample of cases collected for examination was drawn from a year's entrants to three Senior Detention Centres, a population being studied in another connection. For the present purpose, all those cases were selected who had at least four previous convictions without their leading to a custodial sentence. Thus, for each boy, we had a series of at least five conviction dates, but in no case was the interval between two successive dates artificially lengthened by the intervention of a period in custody under sentence. Periods in custody on remand were disregarded, because mostly unknown; and some cases were included in the study where a custodial sentence (eg committal to Approved School) had been undergone before, provided that there was a run of five conviction dates prior to such a sentence. No other selection feature determined the sample. Our series of dates for each boy began with the first recorded offence, so that we are here studying the first five convictions for each individual.

### RESULTS

The cases were drawn from three Centres and as a check on the repeatability of the results were initially divided randomly into three sub-samples uniformly composed as regards the contributions from each Centre. Each sub-sample contained 96 boys. For each boy the number of complete calendar months between each conviction and the next was recorded,\* and the data summated and averaged for each sub-sample. Figure 1 presents the results for the three sub-samples, and the pattern for all 288 cases combined is indicated by the large circles.

It is apparent that the three sub-samples are quite closely similar, and that in general there is a steady decline in the interval between successive conviction dates. This appears to be prima facie evidence that habituation does occur. Can we from the material at hand discover anything further about it?

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\*An interval of less than one month was counted as 1.

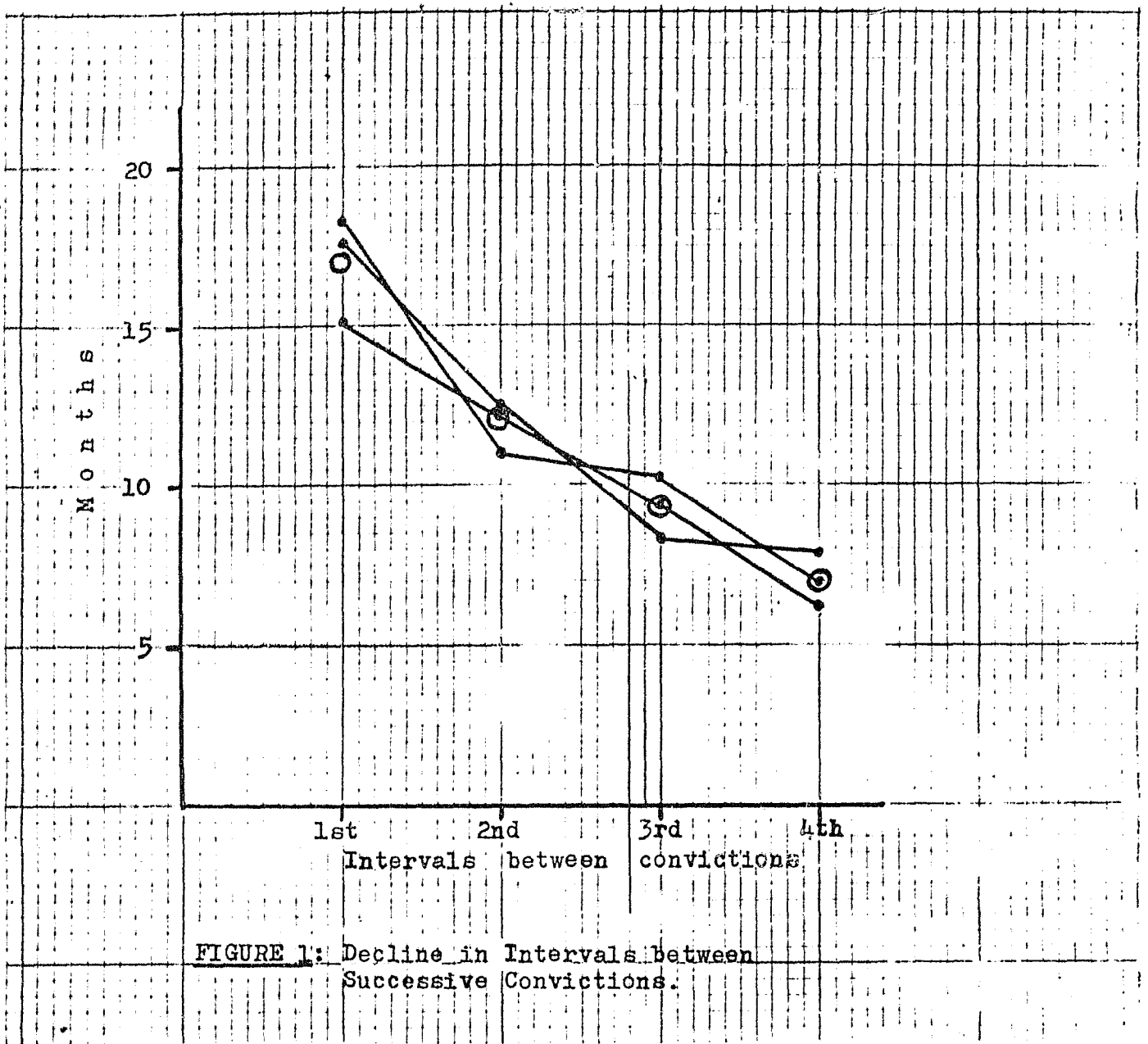


FIGURE 1: Decline in Intervals between Successive Convictions.

The conviction dates and intervals that contributed to the results in Figure 1 occurred at very varied stages in the lives of the individuals concerned. In fact, the ages at which the individuals were first convicted range from 8 years to 19 years, and the total sample breaks down fairly conveniently into three groups, as follows: those whose first conviction occurred within the period of primary school education, ie up to the age of 11 years (N = 62); those who were first convicted during the compulsory secondary period of education, ie between the ages of 12 and 15 years inclusive (N = 155); and those first convicted after that period (N = 71). If we plot the data for each of these three groups separately, interesting differences appear, as may be seen from Figure 2.

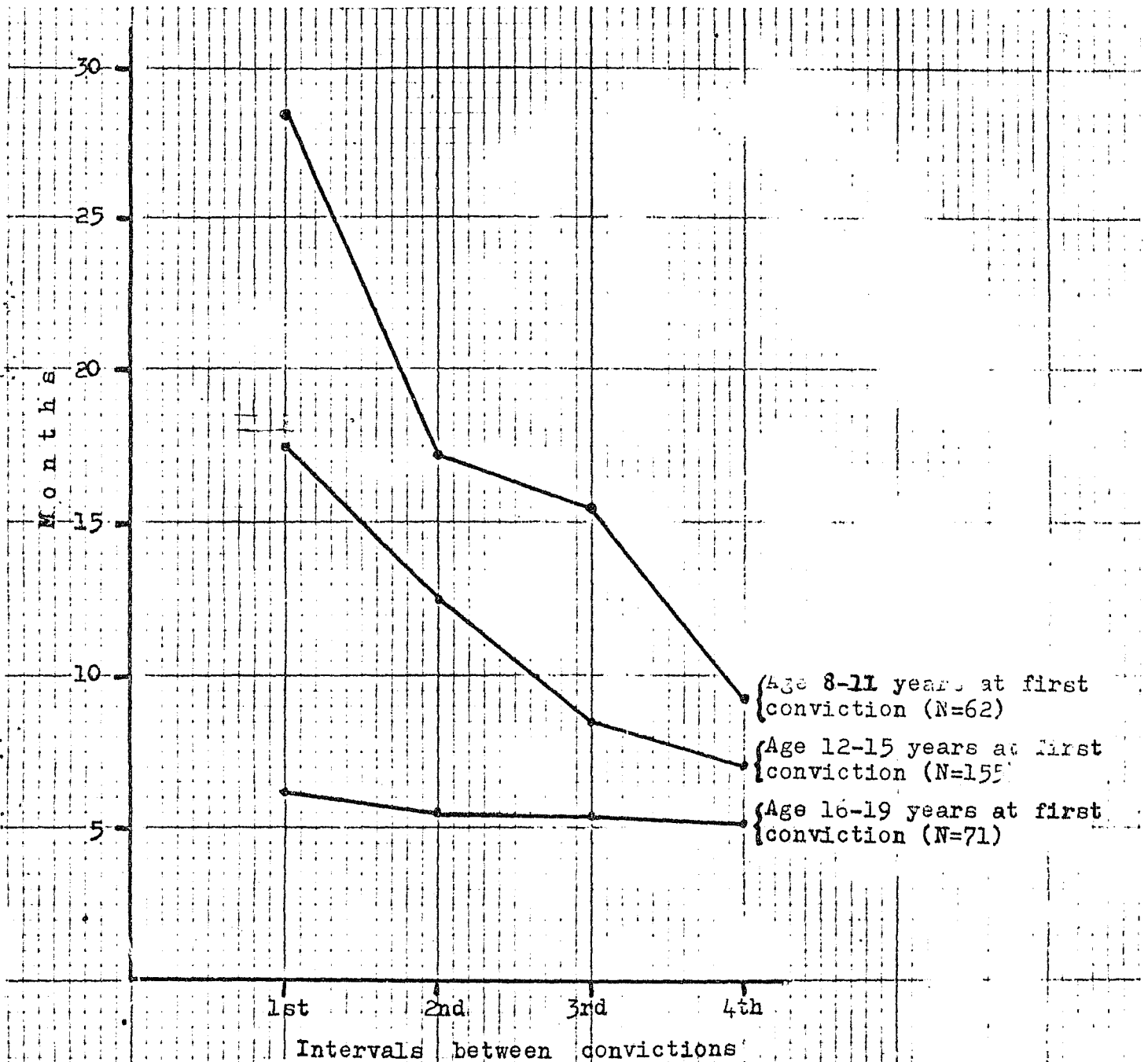


FIGURE 2: Habituation for different Starting Ages.

It is clear that age at which criminal career began is very relevant to the matter of habituation, that in this latter respect the three groups are appreciably and progressively different. Table 1 sets out the statistical details from which it may be seen that: (a) all three groups are significantly different in respect of the first interval (ie the interval between first and second convictions); (b) the group with the latest onset of criminal behaviour has a significantly shorter fourth interval (ie between convictions 4 and 5) than either of the other two groups, but, the latter are not significantly different from each other; and the latter are not significantly different from each other; and (c) there is no significant habituation for the group with the latest onset, whilst there obviously is for the other two groups.

TABLE 1: Average Interval Between Convictions

Onset	N	Average Interval (months) Between	
		1st and 2nd Convictions	4th and 5th Convictions
8-11 years	62	28.5(a)	9.2(d)
12-15 years	155	17.5(b)	7.1(e)
16-19 years	71	6.2(c)	5.1(f)

Statistical tests:

- (i)  $t(a)-(b) = 3.903$   $P < .001$
- (ii)  $t(b)-(c) = 6.439$   $P < .001$
- (iii)  $F(d,e,f) = 7.98$   $P < .01$
- (iv)  $t(d)-(f) = 3.939$   $P < .001$
- (v)  $t(e)-(f) = 2.816$   $P < .01$
- (vi)  $t(d)-(e) = 1.898$   $P < .05$
- (vii) Mean change in interval ((c) minus (f)) = +1.69  
 standard error 0.900; mean/S.E. mean = 1.878  
 $P .05$  (ie mean not significantly different from zero).

It thus appears that where there have been five successive convictions without any custodial sentence intervening to affect the intervals, considerable habituation to criminal behaviour occurred in those cases where the first conviction was incurred at an early age, none where the first conviction was in the late 'teens, with the intermediate group showing a corresponding intermediate degree of habituation.

It is, however, also to be noted that the first interval is already short for the late starters in criminal behaviour, as though these individuals were already habituated. Such an inference is, of course, an unlikely one. It is nevertheless tempting to consider that the graph for the latest starters is that part of a common graph which the earlier starters will also subsequently show, for the following reason: the total average time elapsed for the early (8-11 years old) starters between first and fifth convictions is 70.4 months, so that by their fifth conviction the early starters will be 14-17 years old. This puts their graph and that for the latest starters quite close to conformity to a common graph if the one really relevant factor is age. Some support for this argument can be derived from a consideration of those cases for whom we have eight consecutive convictions before any custodial sentence was received, affording seven intervals to study. Our series includes 37 such individuals, and they divide into two groups with first convictions at age 8-12 years (N = 18) and first convictions at age 13-17 years (N = 19). The graphs for these two groups are shown in Figure 3.

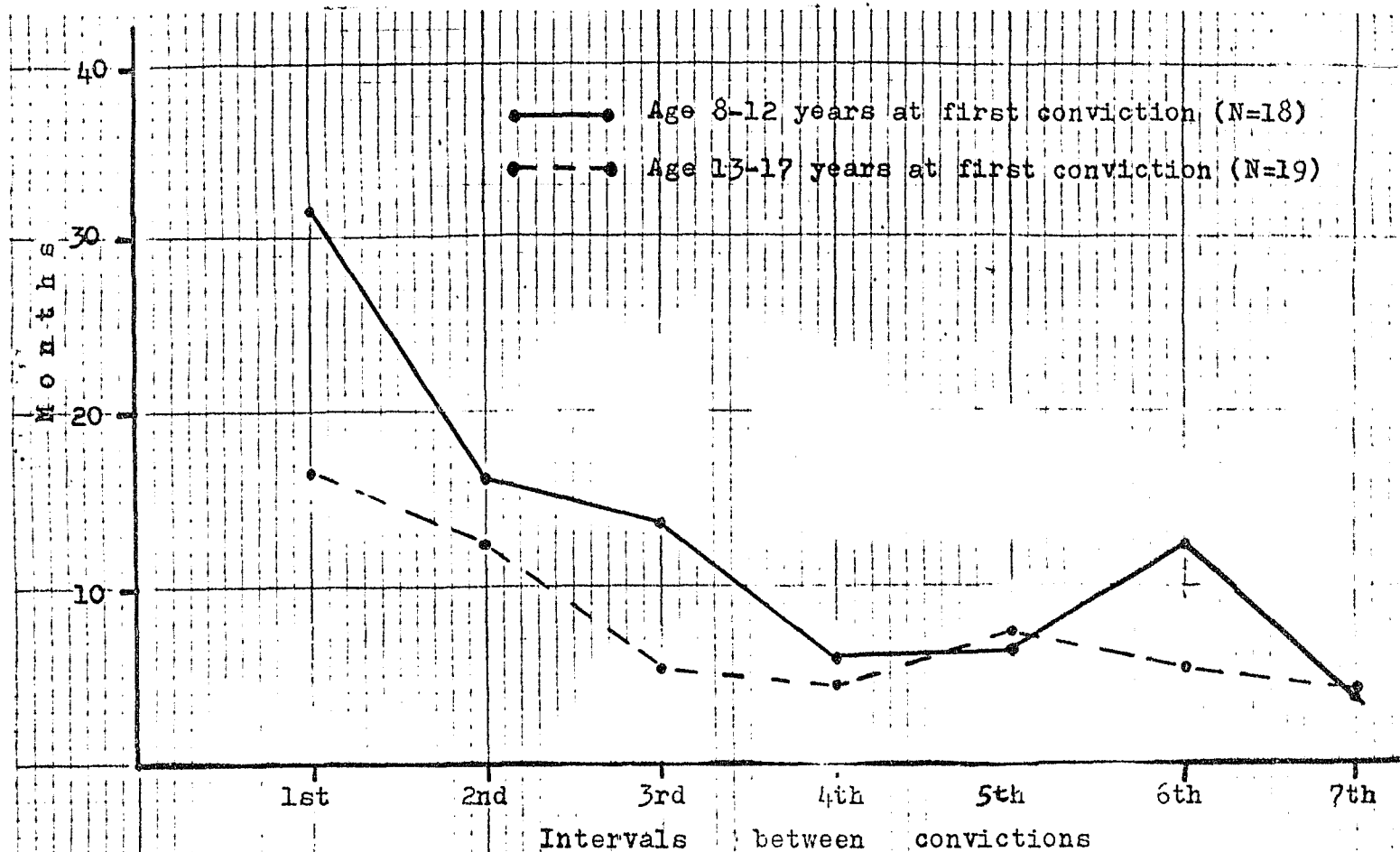


FIGURE 3: Habituation in Longer Series.

Again, the difference in "habituation" between the earlier and later starters can be seen, and on the whole the graphs are surprisingly regular for such small samples. More particularly, in spite of an uncharacteristic rise in the 6th interval point for one graph (due almost entirely to an exceptionally long interval for one individual), both groups are clearly levelling out at about a 4 to 5 months' interval length. This is similar to the level of the curve in Figure 2 for the latest starters, with whom they will now be approximately similar in age.

It thus appears that the habituation indicated by decreasing intervals between successive convictions is essentially a characteristic associated with early onset of criminal behaviour. Our results are in fact quite reminiscent of the observations of Clarke and Martin\* on abscondings from Approved Schools: their Figure 7:2 (page 84) shows graphs of mean intervals for younger and older subjects substantially similar to ours. But their Figure 7:3 (page 86) showing separately those with and without a previous absconding history (ie at an earlier Approved School) indicates that those two groups do not produce graphs that converge: those with previous absconding history continue with a shorter interval than those without, and hence are more "habituated". This suggests that it is perhaps not correct to speak of that effect which is associated with youth or immaturity as "learning". It does not occur (and so cannot be "learning") in the sequences for those who begin late. In some

\*Clarke, R V S and Martin D N: "Absconding from Approved Schools", Home Office Research Studies, No 12, London HMSO 1971.

sense the younger starters begin with a considerable handicap, so to speak, in the "Crime stakes": they have ground to catch up; and they do catch up. It may be more appropriate to regard the effect as an indication of the shedding of an uncertainty of tentativeness typical of the very young in their early misbehaviour. The obvious difference between the earlier and the later starters in criminal behaviour is that the former tend in our society, generally speaking, to be treated in more lenient, caring, less punitive ways than the latter, because of their relative immaturity. Whether this can account for the observed differences is, however, pure speculation.

#### PERIODICITY IN CRIME

It is sometimes assumed that criminal behaviour in the young is determined by the arousal or development of states of anxiety or tension. If such states were externally stimulated there would be no reason to suppose that the events giving rise to them would have any particular periodic characteristics. On the other hand, if they were developed from within one might anticipate that the build-up of tension sufficient to issue in delinquent activity could have its own periodicity for the particular individual, dependent, for example, on his tolerance limits. This notion suggested examination of the inter-conviction intervals for each boy. The method was simply to intercorrelate successive intervals. The fact that intervals generally are larger for the earlier starters in criminal behaviour would, however, lead to spuriously high correlation coefficients if calculated over the whole of our cases; accordingly, the three starting-age groups were examined separately. The results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Inter-Correlations of Successive Intervals

Age at first conviction	N	Correlation between intervals		
		1st and 2nd	2nd and 3rd	3rd and 4th
8-11 years	62	-.269*	-.102	+.130
12-15 years	155	-.312**	-.088	-.004
16-19	71	-.214	+.182	+.108
* P < .05				
** P < .01				

Contrary to the tentative hypothesis stated, there is no evidence of any significant tendency for the individuals to have their own characteristic periodicities. The two significant correlations in the table suggest that, to some extent, the earlier starters follow a long interval by a short one, or vice versa. That is, where a first offence is quickly followed by a second, the third comes after an unusually long interval; where the second is long after the first, it ends soon to be followed by the third. Such a situation clearly cannot be related to any periodic characteristic. It could, however, ensue from the delinquents' differential response to greater or less severity of consequences, if it were the case that an isolated offence is dealt with leniently, while a quick repetition of offending is visited



with more serious consequences. The latter would conceivably discourage further offending at least for an appreciable interval. The available material does not allow of any further examination of this, but the suggestion is certainly consonant with the earlier graphic data.

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**END**

7 10/10/11