

**PART VI
CONTACT WITH THE
LAW**

14 Deprivation and offending

Our study provided an opportunity to measure the incidence and prevalence of charges for indictable offences in the Red Spots up to 33 years of age and to compare families with or without evidence of deprivation. We studied three main hypotheses:

- 1 Underprivileged family environments are associated with criminal behaviour during the school years and thereafter.
- 2 Specific criteria of deprivation are associated with different patterns of criminality so that certain indices of social and family deprivation will be more closely related to offending than others.
- 3 The greater the degree of deprivation in a family the greater the risk of being charged with offences.

By 1957 35 families had moved away from Newcastle and we could not at that time keep in touch with them. Thus 812 families were included in the tenth year analysed.

In 1979-80 the sample of 296 children did include families who had left the city between 1952 and 1962. Since 96 per cent of those who were alive were traced, we infer that, theoretically, a similar proportion of the full sample of 847 was accessible. This was important because, if the full sample of Red Spots as adults is used as the base population without correction, the prevalence rates for offences are likely to be underestimated. Thus, when calculating offence rates a correction was achieved by using the 812 Red Spots living in Newcastle in 1957 as a notional denominator. This was equivalent to correcting for a 4 per cent attrition. Deprivation in the 812 families in 1957 when the Red Spots were 10 years of age are given in Table 14.1.

Findings

During the 1947-65 study, data on offending by children and adolescents to the age of 18.5 years were gathered from

Table 14.1 *Deprivation in Red Spot families when the children were 5 and 10 years of age*

	1952		1957	
	'n'	%	'n'	%
A. Degree of Deprivation				
1. Not deprived	482	57	477	59
2. Any deprivation (one or more criteria)	365	43	335	41
3. One or two criteria	249	29	229	28
4. Multiple deprivation (three or more criteria)	116	14	106	13
	((3) and (4) are included in (2))			
B. Type of Deprivation				
1. Marital instability	123	15	112	14
2. Parental illness	103	12	88	11
3. Poor domestic and physical care of the children and homes	107	13	98	12
4. Social dependency	148	17	130	16
5. Overcrowding	158	19	148	18
6. Poor mothering ability	129	15	120	16
Total 'n'	847		812	

Table 14.2 *Newcastle upon Tyne 1947-65: delinquency: children appearing in court by 18.5 years of age from 760 boys and girls*

	No. of Appearances						
	1st		2nd		3rd	4th or more	
	Boys (n=380)	%	Girls (n=380)	%	Boys %	Boys %	Boys %
By 15th Birthday	58	15.3	9	2.4	6.5	3.2	2.2
By 18.5 years	105	27.6	21	5.6	13.0	7.8	5.3

Note: Only three girls had more than one appearance before November 1965 (Miller *et al.*, 1974: 206).

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local police records, and reported in the volume relating to the school years (Miller *et al.*, 1974). By that time, 28 per cent of boys had appeared in court, 5.3 per cent four or more times by their nineteenth year. In contrast, only 5.6 per cent of girls had been to court (Table 14.2).

In 1980 we obtained information from the official criminal records (CRO data) regarding convictions in adult life and earlier on 106 individuals. Cross-checking the CRO data and the '1,000 Family Records' showed some discrepancies, for the former contained information about convictions of Red Spots who had moved away or committed offences away from Newcastle between 1947 and 1962. On the other hand, the CRO records would have been reduced by 'weeding', which consists of the deletion of relatively minor offences and records of cautioning before an individual's seventeenth birthday. The '1,000 Family' material which was based on court appearances had not been subjected to that process and therefore probably provided a fuller account of offences up to the age of 18 years occurring within or near Newcastle. Combinations of data from these two sources provided a best estimate of lifetime offence rates. The form in which the data was held did not coincide precisely with official listings of delinquency or criminality, but we were able to code our data according to offences committed before and after the age of 15 years.

Incidence of criminality based on Home Office-CRO records: males and females

These records showed that, by the age of 33 years, 13.1 per cent of the 847 Red Spots had committed offences (n=106). These data were analysed according to the degree and type of deprivation in the families and showed that rates of criminality increased markedly with the degree of deprivation. There was a more than fourfold increase from 6.3 per cent (n=30) in the non-deprived group to 29.2 per cent (n=31) in the multiply deprived group, the deprived group with one or two criteria coming in between, with 19.2 per cent (n=44).

The rates for individuals subjected to the six types of deprivation varied from 21 per cent of those exposed to marital disruption to 33 per cent of those from homes with poor domestic care and lack of cleanliness. The rates of

Age

1957	
'n'	%
477	59
335	41
229	28
106	13
cluded in (2)	
112	14
88	11
98	12
130	16
148	18
120	16
812	

Frequency:
years of

3rd	4th or more
Boys	Boys
%	%
2.2	2.2
8.8	5.3

November 1965

offences in males were five times greater than in females. It must be remembered that these figures are unlikely to include all of the offences committed during the school years as some have been subject to 'weeding'. Finally, there was the question of the inclusion of minor motoring offences, but this seemed marginal. Over almost 20 years, motoring as a principal offence accounted for only seven of the 106 recorded cases and in all of these there was another associated indictable offence. Again, we suspect 'weeding'.

Incidence of offences derived from combining the two different sources of information ('1,000 Families' and CRO data)

To reach the best possible assessment of the incidence of offences from the combination of the two sources required certain considerations. First, no less than 14 (40 per cent) of the Red Spots in the 35 families who moved away from Newcastle between 1952 and 1957 had been convicted by the age of 33. We found this surprising and difficult to explain, since Osborn (1980) found that moving from London led to a decrease in delinquency.

Since the original study had recorded offences to the age of 18 years 6 months we were able to include in the total those offences which presumably because of 'weeding' did not appear in the Home Office records. We could also add those offences committed by the Red Spots away from the immediate vicinity of the city. Finally, we excluded non-indictable cycling/motoring offences which did not appear in the CRO records unless the person had also another indictable offence. By combining these data we were able to give a more complete estimate of offences in our 847 Red Spots (Table 14.3).

Eighty-three children offended before 15 years (the minimum school-leaving age) and three-quarters of them went on to commit further offences. In addition, 66 individuals later appeared in the criminal records for the first time. Thus, by 33 years, 149 individuals had offended, 10.2 per cent by their fifteenth birthday; 15.9 per cent between 15 and 33 years; and 18.3 per cent at some time up to 33 years.

At all ages, convictions were overwhelmingly due to offences committed by males and by 33 years of age more

Table 14.3 *Offences committed by Red Spots in 1,000 families*

1. Overall incidence of offences	By 15th birthday
	After 15th birthday
	Either
2. Offence rate (accounting for deprivation and sex)	(i) All males
	All females
	(ii) Males in non-deprived families
	(iii) Males in deprived families
	(iv) Males in families with deprivation
3A. Offence rate (accounting for deprivation - non-deprived families)	Non-deprived families in 1952
	Marital disruption
	Parental illness
	Poor physical environment
	Domestic violence
	Social deprivation
	Overcrowding
	Poor quality of housing
	Mother's mental health

Notes: 1. Number of offences = c; d = ...
 2. Significant at 0.01; ***p < 0.001
 3. A correction factor of 812 as a result of the families study

Table 14.3 Offence rates in base cohort of 847 families corrected for losses

1. Overall incidence of offences (males and females)						
	By 15th birthday	83 of 812	—	10.2%		
	After 15th birthday	129 of 812	—	15.9%		
	Either	149 of 812	—	18.3% ^a		
2. Offence rate (according to severity of deprivation and sex of offender)						
(i)	All males	125 from 404	—	30.9% ^b		
	All females	24 from 408	—	5.9% ^c		
(ii)	Males in non-deprived families	40 from 226	—	17.7% ^d		
(iii)	Males in deprived families (all grades)	85 from 178	—	47.8% ^e		
(iv)	Males in families with multiple deprivation (overlaps with (iii))	35 from 53	—	66.0%		
3A. Offence rate (according to type of deprivation — males only)		3B. Rates of deprivation in offenders				
		Males n=125		Females n=24		
	Non-deprived families	17.7%	—	—	—	
	Families in 1952 showing:					
	Marital disruption	52.8%	28	22%**	10	42%***
	Parental illness	51.1%	23	18%*	7	29%**
	Poor physical/ domestic care	67.3%	33	26%***	7	29%*
	Social dependency	59.4%	38	30%***	12	50%***
	Overcrowding	55.8%	43	34%***	9	38%***
	Poor quality mothering	60.9%	39	31%**	8	33%**

- Notes: 1. Number of non-indictable motoring offences included: ^a = 5; ^b = 4; ^c = 1; ^d = 1; ^e = 3
2. Significance of difference from non-offenders: *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001.
3. A correction for a 4 per cent loss between 1952 and 1979-81 using 812 as a notional denominator representing the Red Spots in the families studied at the 10th year.

than one in four males had offended as against only one in 20 females. The proportions in males varied according to the degree of deprivation, ranging from one in six from non-deprived families, to more than six in 10 from multiply deprived families.

Having ascertained the proportion of offenders in the various deprived groups, we also asked what proportion of offenders had suffered deprivation in their early years. Table 14.3 shows that approximately one-fifth of the male delinquents experienced parental illness and marital disharmony in childhood and about one-third overcrowding, social dependency and poor mothering. In female offenders, the rates of such deprivation are much higher reaching 50 per cent for social dependency and 40 per cent for overcrowding and marital disruption.

Next we looked to see whether there were differences in rates of deprivation for those who committed their first offence before or after the age of 15 years (Table 14.4).

Table 14.4 *Percentage of male offenders and non-offenders who experienced deprivation in early childhood*

	Non- Offenders n=279	First Offences Before 15 Years n=67	First Offences After 15 Years n=58	Chi-Squared	p
Marital instability	25 9.0%	20 29.9%	8 13.8%	21.4	< .001
Parental illness	22 7.9%	19 28.4%	4 6.9%	20.2	< .001
Poor physical/ domestic care	16 5.7%	18 26.9%	15 25.9%	30.3	< .001
Social dependency	26 9.3%	24 35.8%	14 24.1%	25.3	< .001
Overcrowding	26 12.2%	25 37.3%	18 31.0%	27.1	< .001
Poor mothering	25 9.0%	18 26.9%	21 36.2%	30.8	< .001

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While a relatively small proportion of those who committed their first offence after age 15 had been exposed during childhood to marital instability or parental illness, those who offended before age 15 had frequent such experiences. Offenders at any age had been exposed as children to significantly higher rates of poor physical and domestic care, poor mothering and overcrowding. Social dependency appeared linked to offending before age 15.

From youth to adulthood

Nearly half (47 per cent : 52 of 110) of those males charged after 15 years had previous charges and only 5 per cent of those who did not offend after 15 years had done so earlier (15 out of 294). Boys charged before 15 years had a three in four chance of being charged again by 33 years (52 out of 67) whereas those not charged by 15 years had only a one in six chance by 33 years (58 from 337).

Female offenders

Only 24 females (5.9 per cent) were charged. Yet the rates rose from only 2 per cent of the non-deprived to 9 per cent of deprived and 15 per cent of those living in multiple deprivation. This rise was steeper than in the boys where the increase was three and four times, and not four and seven times as in the girls.

Mean number of convictions in relation to age (males: criminal record data only)

The mean numbers of offences committed by males at each age to 33 years are shown in Figure 14.1. The numbers have been calculated in relation to the degree of deprivation the individual experienced at five years of age. The picture is clear: the rates in pre-puberty (10 and 11 years) were low; there was then a steep rise through the teens with a peak at 16-17 years. The rate then fell away and at 33 years was almost as low as at the tenth-year level. The three curves soon diverged but from 26-27 to 32-33 years they again converged. At every band before 26 years those with multiple deprivation had the highest score, the deprived were intermediate and the non-deprived the lowest. Both deprived groups had a small secondary peak between 26 to 29 years. Thus, not only did a higher percentage of multiply deprived

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RED SPOT MALES ONLY

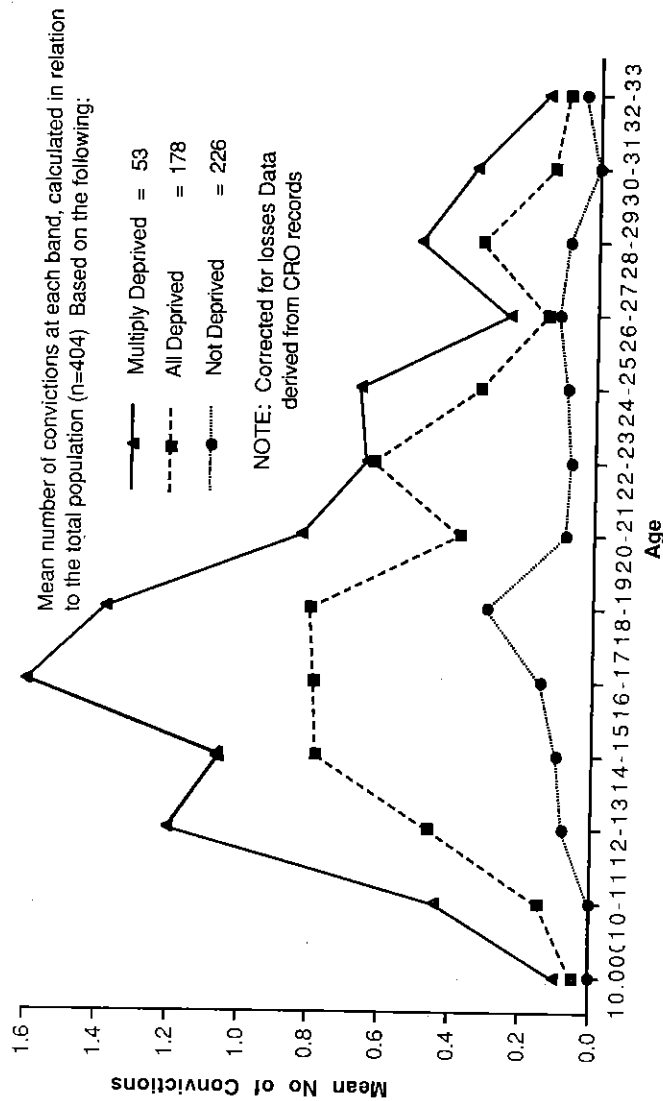


Figure 14.1 Mean numbers of offences committed by males at each age to 33 years

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individuals commit offences, but the number of offences committed was also greater. After the age of 30 the mean number of offences committed was low.

Analysis of data from Home Office records (males and females)

Calculations were made on the basis of 477 non-deprived individuals, 335 deprived and 106 multiply deprived. Due to 'weeding', the rate should be regarded as minimal. For the principal offences of violence, sex, criminal damage and fraud/forgery the rates were all low, the highest being 3 per cent for violence in the multiply deprived group. Only burglary, robbery and theft (combined) show a gradient, from 20 offences (4 per cent) for the 477 non-deprived to 23 (22 per cent) for the 106 multiply deprived families. Offences other than principal offences were summed and slight gradients from the non-deprived to the deprived were seen as follows: criminal damage in the non-deprived (1 per cent), the deprived (4 per cent) and multiply deprived (8 per cent); taking and driving away (1, 5 and 10 per cent respectively); and motoring (1, 6 and 8 per cent respectively). However, none of the differences was significant except the item 'all other theft' where the rates are 3, 13 and 21 per cent respectively. We also found that the multiply deprived group had a higher percentage of both offences and repeated offences (Table 14.5).

These different offences were also studied in relation to the six criteria of deprivation experienced in the early years of life. When listed according to the highest and lowest rates of the different types of deprivation the following patterns emerged:

	<i>Highest Percentage</i>	<i>Lowest Percentage</i>
Violence	Poor care	Parental illness
Criminal damage	Poor care	Parental illness
Fraud/forgery	Social dependence	Parental illness
Theft	Poor care	Marital instability
Drink	Poor care	Overcrowding
Motoring	Poor care	Overcrowding

Despite what appeared to be small differences between the groups with the highest and lowest rates, the findings

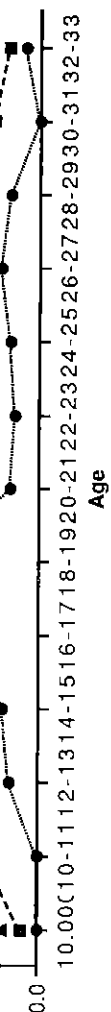


Figure 14.1 Mean numbers of offences committed by males at each age to 33 years

suggested that poor care of the child and home were the most powerful adverse influences in the family of origin and parental illness and overcrowding were the least adverse.

The pattern for males alone was more distinctive with most showing clear gradients from non-deprived to multiply deprived, suggesting that all types of offences, and particularly theft, increased in relation to the severity of deprivation in the family of origin. That pattern was confirmed by the characteristics of offences for males only (Table 14.5) which showed a steep increase in the mean number of convictions and mean time in custody according to the degree of deprivation. The multiply deprived began to commit offences earlier than the non-deprived.

Finally we attempted to use the profile approach developed by Gunn and Robertson (1976) to ascertain whether different types of deprivation were associated with distinctive profiles of offences. No such association was found. The only pattern broadly true for all types of deprivation consisted of high rates of theft and low rates of drug offences. The rest gave an indistinct picture.

Table 14.5 *Convictions (CRO data) in relation to deprivation (1952)*

Total Families	Non-Deprived n=226	All Deprived n=178	Multiply Deprived n=53
(a) Number of males with criminal (CRO) records to age 33	27 (11.9%)	62 (34.8%)	27 (50.9%)
(b) Number of offences:			
1 to 5	20 (9%)	36 (20%)	14 (26%)
6 to 10	3 (1%)	9 (5%)	5 (9%)
11 or more	4 (2%)	17 (10%)	8 (15%)
(c) Mean number of offences	0.7	2.9	5.1
(d) Mean time incarcerated (in months)	7.9	13.9	20.9
(e) Mean age in years at first appearance	19.4	18.2	16.7

Family factors

Some social factors
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Another approach offenders and offenders per cent came from occupational class from occupational strata. 42 and 56 per cent of sibships with a mean as compared to 2.6 offenders. The fathers an excess of unemployment

Parental personality factors
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Table 14.6 *Predominant characteristics in relation to deprivation*

Parental Characteristics	Frequency (n)
Effective and kind	123
Ineffective but kind	46
Aggressive	46
Anxious	5
Others (includes non-applicable)	35
Total	255

Note: Data not corrected for loss

Family factors

Some social factors and offending rates There was a close relationship between offences and lower occupational status rising from 3 per cent of those from social classes I and II to 27 per cent of those from social classes IV and V. The association was even stronger for men alone; 5 per cent from classes I and II, 26 per cent from class III and 42 per cent from classes IV and V plus.

Another approach was to look at the data for non-offenders and offenders separately. Of the non-offenders, 12 per cent came from occupational classes I and II, 55 per cent from occupational class III, and 33 per cent from the lowest occupational strata. The percentages for offenders were 2, 42 and 56 per cent respectively. Offenders came from larger sibships with a mean sibship of 3.5 overall and 3.7 for males as compared to 2.6 overall and 2.5 for males who were not offenders. The fathers of families in the offending groups had an excess of unemployment.

Parental personality factors (Table 14.6) Parental characteristics had been described and analysed in 1962 when the study team had known the families for 15 years and had

Table 14.6 Predominant character traits of parents in relation to male Red Spots aged 15 years

Parental Characteristics	Fathers' Characteristics				Mothers' Characteristics			
	Sons Non-Offenders		Sons Offenders		Sons Non-Offenders		Sons Offenders	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Effective and kind	123	(48)	22	(20)	90	(35)	25	(23)
Ineffective but kind	46	(18)	31	(28)	27	(11)	38	(34)
Aggressive	46	(18)	32	(29)	47	(18)	18	(16)
Anxious	5	(2)	2	(2)	71	(28)	11	(10)
Others (includes non-applicable)	35	(14)	24	(22)	20	(8)	19	(17)
Total	255		111		255		111	

Note: Data not corrected for losses.

