

The Quantitative Analysis of Juvenile Delinquency in Contemporary Japan (Part 1)¹

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Chapter 1 Problem Location and Themes in the Present Study

Section 1 Problem Location and Themes in the Present Study

This paper addresses the current state of juvenile delinquency in Japan and summarizes empirical research on factors relevant to delinquency. The study first addresses the initial perception of the problem and then presents the theme of the present study based on this perception.

Initial Perception of the Problem

In recent years, a continuous and considerable sociopolitical movement has been observed regarding juvenile delinquency in Japan. The Juvenile Act, positioned as the juvenile court system's nucleus, has been revised several times in rapid succession since 2000. Among various elements within these revisions, the most common element is a trend toward treating juveniles as adults. A social perception that juvenile crimes are presently becoming a formidable social problem in the same way as, or in an even more serious manner than, adult crimes is underlying reason for such revisions. Moreover, another factor that has certainly become a driving force for these revisions is society's widely held assessment that this problem cannot be resolved within the traditional system that treats juvenile offenders differently than adult offenders.

However, the author believes that this assessment lacks validity. Although juvenile delinquency is definitely a major social issue, there is almost no factual basis for assuming that aligning the traditional juvenile court system with the adult criminal court system would lead to the resolution of certain problems (Ayukawa 2005). The most rational explanation for movements to revise the Juvenile Act is the manifestation of "penal populism" (Pratt 2007).

Even now, in 2013, movements to significantly change the nature of the traditional juvenile

¹ This paper is the English translation of chapters 1–3 of the author's original book in Japanese published in 2013, whose title is *Gendai Nihon no Shonen Hiko*. The author thanks Crimson Interactive Pvt. Ltd. (Ulatu) – www.ulatuz.jp for their assistance in manuscript translation and editing.

court system continue in the forms of initiatives that attempt to reduce the Juvenile Act's target age and practice that undervalues documents drawn up by Family Court investigators in lay judge trials for juvenile delinquency. The continuation of these movements engenders concern that a breeding ground for future problems, mid- and long-term, is being created within Japanese society.

The author believes that broad social policy, which includes legal and organizational changes—particularly in criminal justice systems pertaining to restrictions on human rights and social safety—should be implemented, to the extent possible, based on highly credible evidence. Implementation of social policy without evidentiary bases or with evidence that predicts extremely negative impacts on society should be avoided as much as possible.

With such perceptions of the problem, how should juvenile delinquency policies be evaluated from the perspective of policy implementation based on evidence? The author believes that those in charge of policy do not even have a correct grasp of the most basic evidence, that is, the current state of delinquency. Rather, a considerable number are influenced by popular discourse, generally circulated within society, and they tend to believe unreliable information and incorrect recognitions.

Two examples of typical popular discourse on juvenile delinquency are “increasing brutality of juvenile delinquency” and the “decrease in age of juvenile delinquents.” It is clear from Cabinet Poll results that such discourse is trusted. For instance, in a 2010 nationwide poll of adults, 75.6% of respondents, when asked, “Do you feel that serious incidents involving juveniles have increased or decreased in the past 5 years?” replied that such incidents “Have increased,” with 37.8% of them replying that such incidents “Have increased considerably” and 37.8% replying that such incidents “Have increased to some extent.” Furthermore, when asked the multiple choice question “What types of incidents have increased?” 47.6% selected “Incidents involving brutality and violence” and 42.3% selected “Incidents committed by younger people” (Cabinet Office Minister's Secretariat of Government Public Relations Office ed., 2010).

On the other hand, government publications reveal that such discourse is accepted by those in charge of policy making for juvenile delinquency. For instance, the preface of “Program Case Studies for Classes on Delinquency Prevention,” published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the National Police Agency in 2005, states, “We are currently witnessing a major trend toward the occurrence of serious juvenile crimes and increasing brutality and violence of juvenile delinquency” (Ministry of

Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and the National Police Agency eds., 2005: Preface). Furthermore, the “2008 Edition of the White Paper on Youth” describes policies for placing school counselors in elementary schools “accounting for the decreasing age of juvenile delinquents” (Cabinet Office ed., 2008: 79). Neither of these publications provides a basis for “increasing brutality” and “decreasing age,” and similar examples of such statements are too numerous to mention.

Additionally, in Japan, several other prevalent instances of discourse on juvenile delinquency have unclear bases. The author believes that one background factor for such phenomenon is inadequate empirical research into the reality and mechanisms of juvenile delinquency. To begin with, it is difficult to say that even researchers perceive empirical research into the current state, background, and origins of delinquency as inadequate. Regarding academic research into Japan’s youth and educational problems, Fujita (2001: 112) contends, “Structural linkage relevance of the problem generation and consideration of actual mechanisms have been neglected.” This statement applies specifically to delinquency research.

Theme 1: The Current State of Juvenile Delinquency

This study’s specific themes are set below, considering the above-mentioned basic recognition of problems.

The study’s first half (Chapters 2–5) addresses the current state of juvenile delinquency; specifically, it considers the following two issues.

First, how are characteristics of juvenile delinquency perceived when viewing its current state from a chronological perspective? Analysis of current state needs to be performed with appropriate comparisons with the past. Here, understanding the state of juvenile delinquency in different generations by comparisons of its quantity (“arrest rates” described later) in a certain generation (“birth cohort” described later) with that of another generation is emphasized. This method should provide clarity regarding the validity of popular discourse on juvenile delinquency (increasing brutality, decreasing age of delinquents).

Although official statistics are the most important source of information for perceiving the true state of juvenile delinquency in Japan—a country that does not conduct systematic and ongoing self-reported delinquency surveys—ongoing discussions regarding the reliability and validity of official statistics, including the dark figure of crime (unreported crimes), continue to be a major issue in criminology.² While these discussions offer important suggestions, the author

² See Nakagawa (1999) regarding the issue of reliability and validity of official statistics.

understands that “statistical changes reflect changes in reality to a certain extent” (Fujita 2001: 109) and maintains that “much useful information can be obtained through analysis based on police records when data processing and analysis of results are performed carefully” (Harada and Yonezato 1997: 91).

Nevertheless, it is also true that official statistics do not convey the complete picture.

For example, statistics showing the number of individuals arrested are cumulative. In other words, cumulative numbers that indicate the arrest of five people do not distinguish between one juvenile arrested five times or five juvenile delinquents arrested once. News reports often make such claims as “Juvenile Crime Widens Its ‘Turf’ to Include Mugging, Purse Snatching, and Bodily Harm” (*Asahi Shimbun Morning Edition*, June 16, 2004, p. 39). Even if official statistics show an increase in delinquency, whether this indicates a wider terrain for juvenile crimes, cannot be determined based on official statistics alone.

The second issue addressed in the first section is clarification regarding the spread and repetition of delinquency based on public data that longitudinally tracks individual delinquency.

Longitudinal data enables to conduct detailed observations on the state of delinquency, including one out of how many juveniles has been arrested by the police, and how many juveniles repeatedly commit delinquent acts. Longitudinal data also enables study of questions such as “How many juveniles who offend once will reoffend?” In other words, “What is the recidivism rate?”³

Furthermore, using reports of longitudinal delinquency data provides a higher degree of clarity on changes in categories of crimes committed that accompany increasingly long delinquency careers. Many practitioners and researchers disagree “that due to lengthening of delinquency careers, delinquents gradually commit more vicious crimes” (equivalent to “escalation,” described later), a notion practitioners commonly accepted at one time. For example, Kawabe (1999) indicated that many instances of modern types of thievery, for instance, “oyaji-gari” or targeting middle-aged company employees, are suddenly committed by juveniles who have absolutely no record of delinquency. Doi (2003) claimed drastic reduction in deviant career types of juvenile crimes in recent years. The validity of such opinions is an important issue that is worthy of consideration in this study.

Many issues on the current state of delinquency require elucidation, such as whether a tendency exists toward concentration of a specific crime that accompanies repetition of that

³ The rate of repeat offenders noted in the “Crime Statistics” is the percentage of individuals who have ever been arrested among the pool of those arrested and is similar to but different from the recidivism rate.

crime (specialization, described later) and whether juveniles' age can reveal typical patterns in current delinquency. This paper's first section aims to provide highly reliable evidence about the current state of delinquency by addressing these issues while appropriately referring to analysis methods used in previous research from other countries.

Theme 2: Factors Relevant to Juvenile Delinquency

This paper's second half (Chapters 6–8) addresses factors relevant to juvenile delinquency. While such factors have been defined as “conditions that contribute to the occurrence” of delinquency (Yonekawa 1991: 274), the concept of “factor” not “cause” is used because the risk factor approach is considered.

The risk factor approach is a framework that started to gain attention within criminal and delinquency research in the West during the 1990s (Mercy and O'Carroll 1988; Farrington 2000).⁴ For instance, diabetes is not caused by a type of bacteria or virus, but occurs due to complex actions that might include hypertension and habitual drinking. Likewise, the risk factor approach holds that crime and delinquency occur, with a certain degree of reliability, as a result of accumulated and various risk factors and their complex interactions. This approach attempts to identify risk factors of crime and delinquency and take specific measures to prevent and reduce crime and delinquency based on those risk factors.

Prior to 1980, even in the United States, a country where criminal research is highly advanced, a significant gap existed between researchers attempting to explain causes of crime and policymakers/practitioners who deal with crime daily. Since the advent of research focusing on criminal careers in the latter half of 1980s, in addition to clarifying specific circumstances surrounding crime, research also clarified that a significant portion of crimes were committed by a small number of criminals. Hence, momentum arose among practitioners toward effective policies and appropriate treatment of criminals for preventing crime, thereby drastically reducing the gap between criminologists and practitioners. Amid such circumstances, multiple Western countries rapidly adopted the risk factor approach in the 1990s, and many studies thrived, including international comparative studies of risk factors for crime (Moffitt et al. 1995; Farrington and Loeber 1999).

The risk factor approach does not emphasize the causes of crime and delinquency or the quest for mechanisms. It is considered possible to draw practical implications in criminal

⁴ Rather than a theory, the risk factor approach is a framework that differs from the traditional etiological thinking style. Farrington (2000) called this a *paradigm*.

policy if risk factors can be found, even though strict causal relationships remain unknown. Regarding this point, Farrington (2000: 7) clearly states that the risk factor approach “paradigm avoids difficult theoretical questions about whether risk factors have causal effects.” A major characteristic of the risk factor approach is its emphasis on empirical verification and practical utility, rather than theoretical explanations. U.S.’s acceptance of the risk factor approach has actually encouraged development of research measuring effects of criminal justice policies and triggered the promotion of criminal policy based on evidence.

Many crime and delinquency studies that rely on the risk factor approach examine risk factors that affect violence occurring during the later teenage years. Important risk factors clarified by a series of studies include the existence of antisocial peer groups (Fergusson and Lynskey 1996; Elliott and Menard 1996; Patterson and Yoerger 1997), low socioeconomic status of the household (Farrington 1989, 1998), the presence of antisocial parents (Moffitt 1987; Farrington 1989), inappropriate parent–child relationships (excessively permissive or strict, etc.) (Patterson and Yoerger 1997; Hawkins et al. 1998), broken homes (Farrington 1989), parental abuse (Zingraff et al. 1993; Smith and Thornberry 1995; Silverman et al. 1996), and poor attitude and grades at school (Farrington 1989).⁵

This paper’s second half contains observations based on research findings about the risk factor approach. Chapter 6 addresses the relationship between delinquency and parental circumstances/abuse. Chapter 7 addresses the relationship between delinquency and education level, and Chapter 8 deals with the relationship between delinquency and parental circumstances, difficulty adapting at school, and so on. By addressing these risk factors, I hope to clarify the overseas findings’ adaptability to Japan.⁶ Furthermore, I believe that these analytical results can contribute pragmatically, for policymakers and practitioners, to future domestic delinquency policy.

⁵ A major characteristic of the risk factor approach is the focus on protective factors that serve to decrease the impact of risk factors (Farrington 2000; DeMatteo and Marczyk 2005). For example, the risk of diabetes is higher for people who have a history of diabetes within the family, compared with those who do not. In other words, a family history of diabetes is a risk factor for diabetes. The individual in such circumstances can lower the risk of onset by avoiding smoking and alcohol. Thus, “avoidance of alcohol use and smoking” is a protective factor against diabetes. Following this rationale, isolating protective factors against delinquency and strengthening their effect serves to decrease delinquency and recidivism, even though eliminating risk factors of delinquency might not be possible. However, research from this perspective is still in its infancy internationally, and research findings defining protective factors have yet to be established.

⁶ According to Moffitt et al. (1995) and Farrington and Loeber (1999), many crime and delinquency risk factors are valid across international borders. The comparisons of the United Kingdom in the 1960s and the United States in the 1990s, Farrington (2000) conclude that there are multiple commonalities among risk factors in spite of wide differences in time periods and countries. However, the scope of these international comparative studies is limited to Western industrialized countries.

Of course, none of the factors (home environment, social level, etc.) addressed in this paper's second section are new to delinquency studies. However, using this as an excuse to disregard them as irrelevant to the relationship between risk factors and delinquency would be misdirected. This is because the dominant discourse in Japan currently holds that there is no relationship, or merely a weak relationship, between these factors and delinquency; the argument that delinquency is unevenly distributed among individuals in specific environments is less prevalent than before, even in delinquency studies.

Even today, voices are frequently raised for popularization of delinquency ("popularization of delinquency" discourse), and they lament participation by the average child ("average child" discourse) in, especially, violent delinquency. Commentary such as "Compared with past crimes that were committed due to life hardships or antisocial intent, the background of delinquency is becoming more vague as those appearing on the surface to be 'average children' are committing violent acts" (*Yomiuri Shimbun Morning Edition* editorial, May 10, 2004) are readily accepted by society. Moreover, the premise for such discourse is a perception that in contrast to past juvenile delinquency committed by children of lower social class and those facing unfortunate circumstances (without parents, etc.), any child, regardless of social class or home environment, is capable of participation in delinquency.

Such discourse that is circulating as characterization of the delinquency "of today" has actually existed for quite some time. For example, a 1970 "White Paper on Crime" included commentary stating that juvenile crime is becoming more common (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed., 1970: 270). The word "universalization" first appeared in a "White Paper on Crime" published in 1977 (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed., 1977: 251). The "popularization of delinquency" discourse was recognized among delinquency professionals latest by the latter 1970s. It was subsequently used in combination with the "average child" discourse that began to appear in newspaper articles during the 1980s and has since been frequently advocated in combination with the "increasing brutality of delinquency."

More importantly, some researchers now share this perception of delinquency. For example, Maniwa (1997) cited that any juvenile, regardless of social class, is capable of participating in vicious crime as a characteristic of the juvenile delinquency today. It has been also claimed that much serious crime historically committed by youth with long juvenile crime careers has now crossed over into "average youth with absolutely no criminal history or youth who were once exceptional students at school" (Doi 2003: 28). From the author's perspective, bases for such claims are usually characteristics of a specific case or a "professional sense." In either case, the

“average child” and “popularization of delinquency” discourse are not limited merely to popular discourse, but have become powerful views in the professional field of juvenile delinquency.

Conversely, from crime and delinquency research in Western countries, we find that “class is one of the very few correlates of criminality which can be taken, as persuasively supported by a large body of empirical evidence” (Braithwaite 1981: 36). Recent empirical research still considers family background and socioeconomic status as important factors of delinquency and objects of examination.

Yamamoto (2006: 27) observes that in current Japanese society, where “research results dealing with immobilization of social class and reproduction of social class are subsequently reported,” “ignoring these represents a major flaw when considering the current state of juvenile delinquency.” The author completely agrees with this expression of the problem. The ultimate goal of analysis that will be developed in this paper’s second section is to reconsider the validity of the “popularization of delinquency” and “average child” discourse, based on the recognition of problems noted above.

The following three issues will be examined:

- (1) What exactly is the connection between home environment and delinquency?
- (2) What is the relationship between education level and delinquency?
- (3) What are the factors impacting juvenile delinquency recidivism?

The data utilized include official statistics, questionnaire survey data, and longitudinal delinquency data.

Concept of Delinquency Factor Analysis using Official Statistics

One frequently quoted basis for the “popularization of delinquency” discourse, accepted after the 1970s, is that court statistics show a decrease in the ratio of juvenile delinquents whose family economic conditions are at the “poverty level.” However, the author believes that this assumption lacks evidence. Because this critical issue forms a premise for analysis using official statistics in the paper’s second section, which is further considered here.

First, as indicated by Iwai (1964) and Hoshino (1966), there is a problem of low reliability regarding the official statistics’ item that reports economic levels. On this point, Hayami (1989) suggests the possibility that detailed classifications of Family Court economic status categories have caused variability in statistical data due to changes that occurred in the mid-1960s. Even assuming no problems in the statistics’ reliability, the interpretation that the relationship between social class and delinquency has diminished merely because of a decreased percentage

of youth who are deemed to be at the “poverty level” is a major mistake because, in a society with the majority of youth born into middle-class families, it is only natural that many middle-class youth would be included in the overall ranks of juvenile delinquency (Nakagawa 1982, Matsumoto 1984, Hoshino 1986).

Fig. 1-1 and 1-2 are hypothetical schematic diagrams for conceptualization of this problem,⁷ illustrating the assumption that the possibility of an individual born into a lower social class becoming a delinquent is equally high in any of periods (A), (B), or (C) (the shaded area represents delinquent youth, and the non-shaded area represents non-delinquent youth).

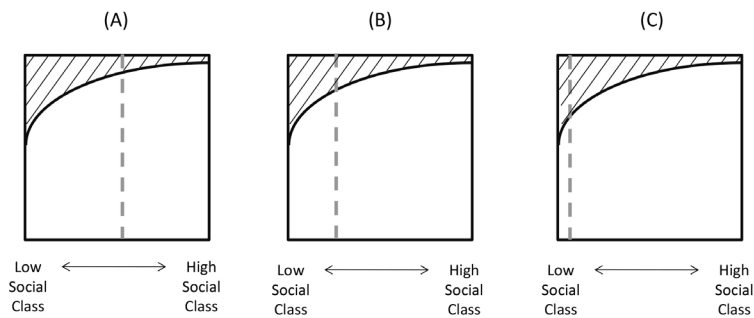


Fig. 1-1 Hypothetical schematic 1, relating to social class and delinquency

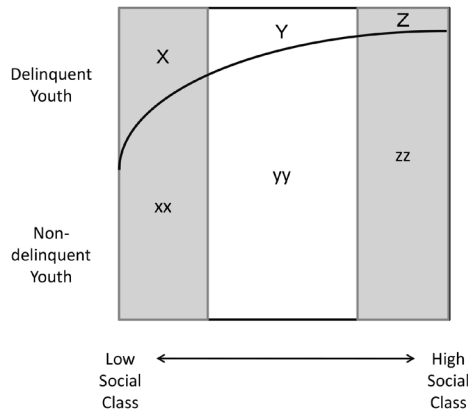


Fig. 1-2 Hypothetical schematic 2, relating to social class and delinquency

Now, let us assume that approximately half of the youth in time period (A), one-fourth of the youth in time period (B), and a certain percentage of the youth in time period (C) are positioned as coming from low social class (the portion to the left of the dotted line), regardless of delinquency. By such positioning, in time period (A), the majority of youth involved in

⁷ These figures have been created by the author based on Matsumoto's (1984: 100) Fig. 4-1.

juvenile delinquency, indicated by the shaded area, are classified as coming from a low social class. Conversely, in time period (C), the majority of the youth involved in juvenile delinquency are not classified as originating from a low social class. The “popularization of delinquency” discourse claims that delinquency has expanded into the middle-class based on this.

Nonetheless, the fact that individuals from a lower social class are equally likely to become involved in delinquency remains unchanged in each of the time periods (A), (B), and (C). Each period evidences a clear connection between social class and delinquency.

Most important when using official statistics in these discussions is the extent to which the percentage of delinquent youth in “total” youth population varies according to social class. Using notations in Fig. 1-2, the problem is whether the following three values differ: $\frac{X}{X+xx}$, $\frac{Y}{Y+yy}$, and $\frac{Z}{Z+zz}$.⁸

Furthermore, showing association between delinquency and social class is possible, even when the values above cannot be directly calculated, by comparing the difference in percentage of individuals deemed to belong to a certain social class in total population of youth not involved in delinquency (for example, $\frac{xx}{xx+yy+zz}$) with percentage of those deemed to belong to a certain social class in the total population of youth involved in delinquency (for example, $\frac{X}{X+Y+Z}$). Whichever method is used, it is impossible to draw strict conclusions regarding association between social class and delinquency by relying solely on the study of official statistics, no matter how detailed the study. There is also a need to consider not only juvenile delinquency itself but also combining the data that covers juvenile delinquents as a whole (official statistics or social survey data using representative samples).

Section 2 Structure of this Paper

The structure of this paper and major themes to be examined are summarized here.

In Chapters 2–5, analysis pertaining to the state of juvenile delinquency is conducted based on official data.

In Chapter 2 “Chronological Changes in Delinquency Occurrence—Consideration Based on Official Statistics,” observations with a focus on birth cohorts are conducted to determine how the state of juvenile delinquency has changed in post-World War II Japanese society.

⁸ By applying a concept of epidemiology here, the relative risk of delinquency for individuals in the lowest social class compared with individuals in the highest social class is $\frac{X+(X+xx)}{Z+(Z+zz)}$. If the resultant number significantly differs from 1, then a certain degree of association can be said to exist between delinquency and social class.

Furthermore, we seek to determine the validity of current popular discourse, broadly accepted by society, regarding juvenile delinquency—in particular the increasing brutality of delinquency and decreasing age of youth involved in delinquency.

Chapters 3–5 clarify in detail the state of delinquency from the perspective of delinquent careers based on police department longitudinal delinquency record data. In Chapter 3, “Spread of Delinquency and State of Recidivism—Consideration Based on Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data in Prefecture A,” the spread of delinquency and state of recidivism are examined. Based on two groups of cohort data comprising those born in 1986 and 1978, the question of whether delinquency has become more common in the 1986 cohort compared with the 1978 cohort is examined, and characteristics observed in patterns of delinquency occurrence circumstances by age and degrees of delinquency recidivism are further considered.

Chapter 4 “Changes in Types of Crimes Associated with Repeated Delinquency—Consideration Based on Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data in Prefecture A” addresses questions including whether tendencies toward escalation (transition toward more serious crimes associated with repeated delinquency) or specialization (concentration on a specific type of crime) are observed and whether there are differences in the nature of changes involving crime types due to the type of crime or individual attributes. Analysis based on the 1986 cohort data studies evidence regarding development of juvenile delinquency careers.

Next, in Chapter 5 “Longitudinal Patterns of Delinquency Occurrence—Consideration Based on Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data in Prefecture A,” patterns of delinquency occurrence accompanied by increase in age are further analyzed in detail to gain comprehensive understanding of longitudinal delinquency patterns. With an overview of theories on the relationship between increase in age and occurrence of crimes, a modeling technique introduced into criminal research in the latter half of the 1990s is then applied to juvenile delinquency record data in Japan, to examine longitudinal patterns of delinquency behavior within individuals accompanied by increase in age. As in Chapter 3, analysis is conducted with data from two different birth cohorts, which are combined to discuss pattern changes occurring in recent years.

Chapters 6–8 addresses factors relevant to occurrence of delinquency based on official data and questionnaire surveys.

In Chapter 6 “Home Environment and Delinquency—Consideration Based on Official Statistics, Questionnaire Surveys of Youth Involved in Delinquency, and Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data,” the relationship between home environments of juvenile delinquents and their delinquent behavior are discussed based on official statistics, questionnaire surveys of

youth involved in delinquency, and longitudinal record data of questionnaire respondents. In examining official statistics, data that relates to the presence/absence of both parents is used, a common statistic in both census data and National Police Agency statistics. Analysis based on questionnaire surveys and delinquency records focuses on the parental situation and abuse within the home.

In Chapter 7 “Education Level and Delinquency—Consideration Based on Official Statistics,” the relationship between social class and delinquency is explored using official statistics. Specifically, focusing on the fact that survey items about education level exist within census data, National Police Agency statistics, and court data, the relationship between delinquency and educational level by crime type is scrutinized; furthermore, the validity of the “popularization of delinquency” discourse is discussed.

Based on the examination of factors relevant to delinquency in Chapters 6 and 7, Chapter 8 “Factors Relevant to Recidivism—Consideration Based on Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data in Prefecture B,” explores factors leading to recidivism by youth who have already committed a delinquent act. Survival time analysis using police department longitudinal delinquency record data is conducted to clarify the level of effect that certain factors have on juvenile delinquency recidivism, based on delinquency records of male juveniles first arrested for delinquency as middle school students. Based on observations in Chapters 6 and 7, the home environments of juveniles and difficulty experienced while adapting at school are examined.

Chapter 9 “Conclusion and Comprehensive Discussion” summarizes findings based on discussion in Chapters 2–8, offers comprehensive discussion, and identifies future research issues.

Section 3 Summary of Concepts

In this section, concepts frequently presented in this study are defined.

Official Data and Statistics

Three types of data are utilized in this study: official statistics, delinquency record data, and data obtained from questionnaire surveys.

The term “official statistics” is certainly a concept commonly used in the social sciences and is also called public or government statistics. In this study, the term refers to statistics generally published serially or, in recent years, made available to the public on websites of

various government ministries and agencies. Population statistics based on census etc. is a prime example of official statistics.

In addition, government offices keep data that, unlike official statistics, is not generally published. Police department delinquency record data used in this study can be categorized here. Within this study, the concept referred to as “public data” is used to include this type of data as well as official data.

Official statistics that contain information on crime and delinquency include National Police Agency statistics (police statistics), court statistics (judicial statistics), Ministry of Justice statistics, and Public Prosecutors Office statistics. Those used or mentioned in this study are as follows. Names of serial publications are indicated by double quotation marks.

First, the National Police Agency statistics used in this study include the “Criminal Statistics” (“Crime during the Year ___”) and “Status of Juvenile Guidance and Protection for the Year ___.” Both of these categories of data from recent years are published on the National Police Agency website, URL <http://www.npa.go.jp/toukei/index.htm> (last visited on June 30, 2013). Some statistics related to juvenile delinquency are present in both of these publications, while some only appear in one of them. In this study, when a particular statistic is in both publications, it is considered to be based on the “Crime Statistics.”

Court statistics are presented in the “Annual Report of Judicial Statistics,” published in four volumes every year; the publication used in this study is the “Juvenile Cases,” which includes statistics related to juvenile delinquency. Recent information is also available on the Supreme Court’s website, URL <http://www.courts.go.jp/search/jtsp0010/> (last visited on June 30, 2013).

Ministry of Justice statistics used or referred to in this study are from the “Annual Report of Correctional Statistics” and the “White Paper on Crime.” In recent years, the “Annual Report of Correctional Statistics” has ceased hardcopy publication, transitioning to publication on the Ministry of Justice website, URL http://www.moj.go.jp/housei/toukei/toukei_ichiran_shonen-kyosei.html (last visited on June 30, 2013). The “White Paper on Crime” is also published on the Ministry of Justice website, URL http://www.moj.go.jp/housouken/houso_hakusho2.html (last visited on June 30, 2013). When the “White Paper on Crime” is quoted in this study, the location of the quote is based on the page numbers indicated in hardcopy version.

Most of the statistics present in the “White Paper on Crime” are obtained from official statistics in other publications, such as the “Crime Statistics” and the “Annual Report of Correctional Statistics.” In most cases, the “White Paper on Crime” includes interpretations and observations about statistics; therefore, it differs from other publications mentioned above in

that respect. It should be considered as a document that shows how society (or judicial authority) views the crime/delinquency situation for the given year.

Crime Types and Categorizations

In this study, “crime type” generally indicates the type of illegal act. However, crime type is used restrictively in official statistics relating to crime and delinquency. For example, in National Police Agency statistics, the crime type “homicide” includes homicide, infanticide, homicide premeditation, and suicide involvement. When terms such as “homicide” and “robbery” are used in this study, they are used in accordance with crime categorizations by National Police Agency.

National Police Agency statistics include the concept of “comprehensive crime type” that is a broader concept of crime type used in the Penal Code for the following six categorizations: brutal crimes, violent crimes, theft, intellectual crimes, sex crimes, and “other.” The comprehensive crime type of “brutal crimes” includes the following four: homicide, robbery, arson, and rape. Violent crimes include the following five: unlawful assembly with weapons, assault, bodily injury, threats, and extortion. “Theft” is the only crime type that constitutes “theft” as a comprehensive crime type. In other words, “theft” as a comprehensive crime type and the crime type “theft” indicate the same crime. In this study, concepts such as “brutality” and “theft” are used in accordance with National Police Agency definitions.

Because theft is such a broad concept, sub-categorizations in accordance with National Police Agency statistics are used when needed in this study. Among these, “burglary” is defined as theft committed by breaking into a building. “Non-burglary theft” is theft other than burglary (e.g., shoplifting and vehicle theft). While joy riding on a bicycle is categorized as “theft of unsupervised property,” a label used in National Police Agency statistics, which is referred to as “theft of lost property” in the Ministry of Justice statistics and is categorized within comprehensive crime type as “other,” but the crime’s nature is similar to bicycle theft and will be treated as such in this study.

Definitions of “Penal Code Offenses” and “Special Law Offenses” differ slightly when used by the National Police Agency, the Ministry of Justice, and the courts. In this study, the National Police Agency definition will be used. Furthermore, a distinction is made between Penal Code Offense and General Penal Code Offense in the Ministry of Justice statistics depending on whether a traffic accident includes the crime of negligence. In this study, when only the term “Penal Code Offense” is used, negligence related to traffic accidents is not included. Moreover,

legal violations related to traffic, such as the Road Traffic Law, are not included as Special Law Offenses.

14+ Juvenile Offenders, U-14 Young Offenders, etc.

Definitions of “14+ Juvenile Offenders (Hanzai-Shonen)” and “U-14 Young Offenders (Shokuho-Shonen)” are in accord with the Article 3 of the Juvenile Act. In other words, “14+ juvenile offender” refers to youth aged 14–19 years who have committed a crime, while “U-14 young offender” refers to youth under the age 14 who have come into contact with the criminal justice system. The term “juvenile delinquent (Hiko-Shonen)” is a legal term that includes these concepts along with youth deemed likely to commit crimes (Guhan-Shonen).

Arrests, Arrestees, etc.

“Arrest” is defined as “identifying a suspect in a crime and undertaking the necessary investigatory measures necessary for referral, remittance, or misdemeanor punishment” (Crime Statistic Bylaws (National Police Agency Directive) Article 2 (5)). While the expression “guidance (hodo)” is often used instead of “arrest (kenkyo)” when dealing with U-14 young offenders or youth deemed likely to commit crimes, the term “arrest” denotes both circumstances for purposes of this study.

While not a concept in official statistics, this study refers to a person who has been arrested as an “arrestee.” The number of persons arrested is indicated by the expression “number of arrestees” (equivalent to “arrested persons” in official statistics). Furthermore, the term “ratio of arrestees” refers to the number of arrestees per 1,000 individuals of a given group (e.g., youth aged 14–15 years).

Birth Cohort, Longitudinal Data, Criminal Career, etc.

“Cohort” is an epidemiological term referring to a group subject to observation. In general, cohort refers to a group of people who have experienced a common major event at a certain time throughout the course of their lives. Birth and marriage cohorts are some examples, and when used alone, cohort generally indicates “birth cohort” (Naoi 1994). The term used in this study also refers to “birth cohort,” e.g., a group of people born in 1945 will be called the 1945 birth cohort. In this study, the term is shortened thus: “1945 cohort.” “Birth Cohort” is abbreviated to “BC” so “1945 BC” refers to “1945 birth cohort.”

In research using cohort as a unit, each sample generally has data from multiple points

in time. Studies using methods that survey the same individuals multiple times over a certain period are called “longitudinal studies,” and data used therein are referred to as “longitudinal data.” Police department delinquency record data used in this study are longitudinal because they include delinquency information from multiple points in time for each youth.

Using longitudinal criminal record (delinquency record) data enables analysis of criminal careers (delinquent careers). The concept of “criminal career” is a way of understanding individuals’ criminal participation over time.

Chapter 2 Chronological Changes in Delinquency Occurrence— Consideration Based on Official Statistics

Using a line graph with age (age group) on the x-axis and the ratio of arrestees on the y-axis for a certain BC enables us to observe the occurrence distribution of arrestees per age group for that cohort. In this study, chronological changes in delinquency occurrence are examined based on the ratio of arrestees calculated by crime type and age category. Furthermore, we wish to determine the validity of discourse on juvenile delinquency widely accepted in society (focusing on increasing brutality of delinquency and decreasing age of delinquents) by comparing the state of delinquency in recent years (after 2000) with previous years.

Section 1 Analysis of Juvenile Delinquent Ratios in “White Paper on Crime” and Its Problems

When its use is confined to the period during youth, the concept of “arrestee ratio” is the same as “juvenile delinquent ratio” used in the “White Paper on Crime.”⁹

The term “juvenile delinquent ratio” was initially used in the “White Paper on Crime” in 1984, which included a comparison of five BC shown in Fig. 2-1. Here, we focus on its meaning for “juvenile delinquent ratio.” While quite lengthy, the following is quoted directly from that section of the publication:

The curves are similar regardless of the year, with juvenile delinquency occurrence peaking at around the age of 14 to 16. We find that the tendency decreases with the increase in age to 17, 18, and 19 years. Juvenile delinquent ratios have markedly increased in recent years,

⁹ However, the term “juvenile delinquent ratio” used in the “White Paper on Crime” was previously calculated per 1,000, but is currently calculated per 100,000.

particularly at the ages 14 and 15. Moreover, their ratios are higher than that of any other generations. However, the differences between each generation begin to disappear when approaching age 19. This demonstrates a rapid shift from delinquency at the borderline age of 16 for most juvenile delinquents arrested for delinquency at younger ages. (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed. 1984: 265)

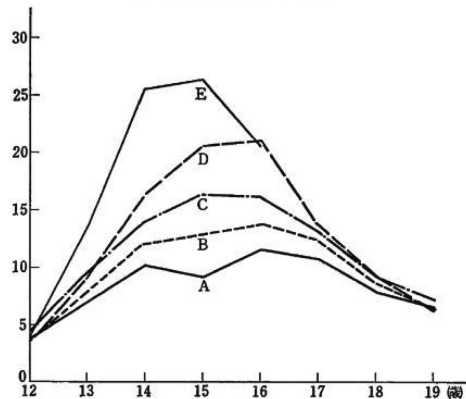


Fig. 2-1. Example of Juvenile Delinquent Ratios from the “White Paper on Crime”
(Unit: per 1,000 individuals)

Note 1: From Fig. IV-1 of Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed. (1984: 264)

Note 2: The five lines A, B, C, D, and E represent juvenile delinquent ratio trends for BCs whose members were aged 16 in 1966, 1969, 1973, 1976, and 1979, respectively.

In the “White Paper on Crime,” the perception of problematic “trends toward decreasing age of delinquents” was abundantly clear (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed. 1984: 264) as evidenced by the passage quoted above. The phrase “decreasing age of delinquents” makes its first appearance in the 1963 edition of the “White Paper on Crime” (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed. 1963: 9).¹⁰ As shown in Fig. 2-2, this phrase is used with the greatest frequency in the “White Paper on Crime” in the first half of the 1980s, revealing that society was concerned about the decreasing age of juvenile delinquents with the 1984 edition of “White Paper on Crime,” the same year juvenile delinquent ratios were first introduced.

¹⁰ Based on search results of all published editions of the “White Paper on Crime” by the author. The author accessed the Ministry of Justice website on January 28, 2008, and downloaded all “White Paper on Crime” data for published editions to 2006, in electronic files in SGML format (electronic file format that enables text searches as well as full-text searches). However, the author was unable to download electronic files in SGML format from that date to after certain points in time until January 28, 2009, due to Ministry of Justice website renewal. This point contradicts the ideal of digital public access to government information, and we would like to see the reintroduction of public access to SGML versions.

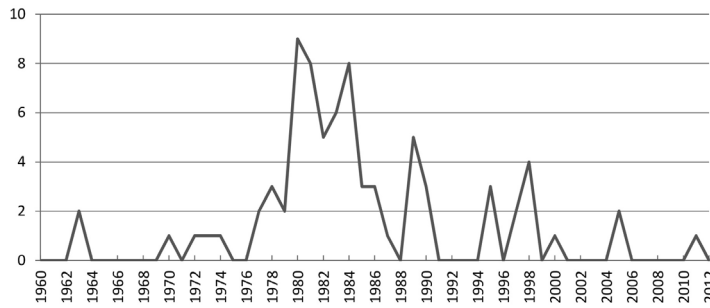


Fig. 2-2. Frequency Trends in Usage of the Phrase “Decreasing Age” of Delinquents in the “White Paper on Crime”

Note: Prepared by the author using SGML format files from the Ministry of Justice website for data prior to 2006, text data from CD-ROM versions of the publication for data 2007 and beyond.

Interestingly, the 1984 “White Paper on Crime” stated, “There was a rapid shift from delinquency at the borderline age of 16 for most juveniles arrested for delinquency at younger ages” (Ministry of Justice Legal Research Institute ed. 1984: 265). It has been sensibly observed that, based on existing official statistics, decrease in age is not a phenomenon tied to increase in criminal “wannabes” or deterioration in public order.

From 1984 until the present (2013), with the exception of certain years (1997 and 2001), the juvenile delinquent ratio noted annually in the “White Paper on Crime” has been an important indicator, calculated on National Police Agency statistics (“Crime Statistics”). However, there is a problem with duplication because persons arrested several times in the same year are counted as multiple individuals. In spite of this, the juvenile delinquent ratio is an indispensable indicator for comparing quantitative trends in juvenile delinquency among multiple generations.

The juvenile delinquent ratios calculated in “White Paper on Crime” include all crime types. In fact, there are no researches studying crime type. However, crime type and age of juveniles are generally closely linked. In other words, certain illegal acts are usually committed by individuals in a relatively lower age group; other acts are generally committed by those nearing adulthood. Studies using juvenile delinquent ratios are more significant when conducted by crime type.

Furthermore, as the name suggests, the “juvenile delinquent ratio” in the “White Paper on Crime” does not include the crime situation for young adults aged 20 and above. While comparisons with young adults are considered essential for examining the nature of juvenile delinquency, the “White paper on Crime” lacks analysis on this point.

Based on the awareness of the problem above, this chapter’s remaining sections examine

various crime types, with analyses covering years prior to young adulthood.

Section 2 Research Method

Four crime type categories are established: brutal crimes, homicide (a type of brutal crime), violent crimes, and theft. For each of these categories, the arrestee ratio is calculated by age for the following six BCs: 1945–46, 1955–56, 1965–66, 1975–76, 1985–86, and 1995–96. These are depicted on a line graph to examine chronological changes in delinquency while comparing them with crime occurrence in the young adult stage.

Three categories—brutal crimes, violent crimes, and theft crimes—represent comprehensive crime types and account for over 60% of all penal code offenses by youth. If theft of unsupervised property, such as bicycles, is included, the categories account for over 90% of all penal code offenses. Furthermore, homicide is considered independent of brutal crimes, as it indicates a trend in particularly serious juvenile crime.

The specific procedure is as follows. For example, when considering the 1945–46 BC, we referred to the 1960 official statistics (“Crime Statistics”) for the number of juvenile delinquents aged 14–15 arrested for brutal crimes. This number is divided by the population aged 14–15 for the same year and multiplied by 1,000 to derive the brutal crime arrestee ratio for this BC. Likewise, numbers of arrestees aged 16–17 for 1962, 18–19 for 1964, 20–24 for 1968, and 25–29 for 1973 for brutal crimes are divided by the age level for each year and multiplied by 1,000 to derive the brutal crime arrestee ratio for respective BCs at ages 16–17, 18–19, 20–24, and 25–29. Other BCs are calculated in a similar manner.

Moreover, the reason for which young adult arrestees are classified into only two categories is because the numbers of arrestees published in the “Crime Statistics” are divided into ages 20–24 and 25–29. There are far fewer statistics for those aged 13 and younger (U-14 young offenders) compared with the number of arrestees aged 14 and older. Hence, this statistic was eliminated here because of its relative minimal analytical significance. For the 1985–1986 BC, only values for ages 20–24 (2008) were calculated. For the 1995–1996 BC, only values for ages 16–17 (2012) were calculated.

For each year, the age groups of population are provided based on population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Communications Statistics Bureau.¹¹

¹¹ We used publicly available data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Communications Statistics Bureau website. The URL is <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/> (last accessed June 30, 2013)

Section 3 Results and Discussion

The following figures show each crime category. Special attention should be given to the fact that numerical values on the vertical axes vary depending on the chart to highlight changes in arrestee ratios that accompany age progression.

Brutal Crimes

Fig. 2-3 shows brutal crime arrestee ratios.

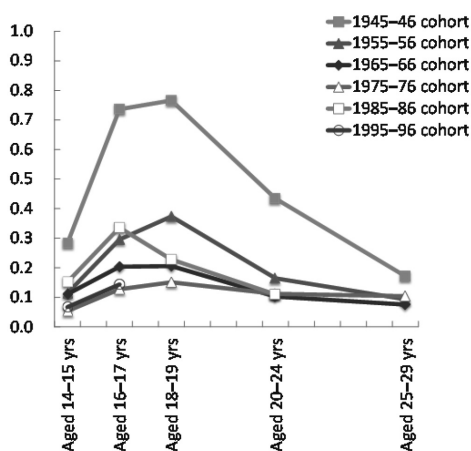


Fig. 2-3. Brutal Crime Arrestee Ratio (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

Noticeably, the arrestee ratio for the 1945–46 BC greatly exceeds that for all age levels. Moreover, by omitting this BC and examining the other five cohorts, relatively large differences between cohorts are observed in ages 16–17 and 18–19.

The number of individuals arrested for brutal crimes at a young age (16–17) in the 1985–86 BC increased compared with cohorts 10 to 20 years before. While 70 to 80% of brutal crimes involve robbery, according to the “Crime Statistics,” the number of arrestees for robbery in the early years for this cohort increased over the previous two cohorts.¹² The only cohort peaking at ages 16–17 with a downward sloping trend toward ages 18–19 is the 1985–86 BC.

¹² The number of individuals arrested for robbery increased rapidly in the latter half of the 1990s. One interpretation of this increase is changes in the definition of robbery by police agencies (Kawai 2004). However, it is difficult to find a clear foundation for determining the validity of this interpretation.

Even more interestingly, when the 1945–46 BC is excluded, all BCs have approximately the same arrestee ratios as in their 20s. Even though this BC has relatively more individuals arrested for committing brutal crimes, such as robbery, in their early years, very few individuals continued to participate in crime after reaching adulthood.

Homicide

The homicide arrestee ratio is shown in Fig. 2-4. First, the peak is early stage at ages 18–19 for the 1945–46 BC; the peak is adulthood and beyond for succeeding BCs. Serious juvenile delinquency was most severe in the 1960s, a period in which those in the 1945–46 BC spent their youth. Taking a long-term view, homicide by juveniles and young adults is at a relatively lower level in recent years.

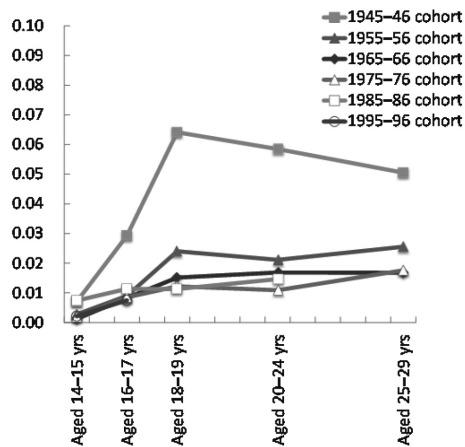


Fig. 2-4. Homicide Arrestee Ratio (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

While juvenile homicide almost consistently increases with age, a clear deviation from this pattern is seen in the 1985–86 BC, which has quite a higher homicide arrestee ratio than previous cohorts (excluding the 1945–46 BC), specifically at ages 14–15. However, this point should not be overanalyzed, as the difference is less than 1 person per 100,000.

Violent Crime

Next, Fig. 2-5 shows the violent crime arrestee ratio.

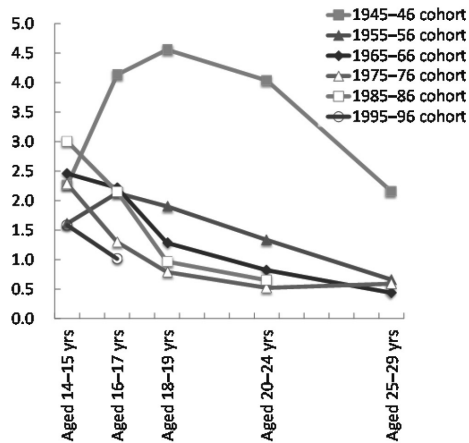


Fig. 2-5. Violent Crime Arrestee Ratio (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

Overall, violent crime demonstrates a pattern that is quite different from brutal crime. First, the 1945–46 BC demonstrates a pattern totally different from other BCs, and as is the case with brutal crimes, peaks at ages 18–19. Compared with subsequent BCs, the 1955–56 BC also maintains a relatively high arrestee ratio from the ages 18–19 to the early 20s.

BCs subsequent to the 1965–66 BC form a similar trajectory, with each showing a decrease in arrestee ratio corresponding with increased age. The situation with violent crime in the age brackets 18–19 and 20s does not change much in recent years and maintains a stable trend at low levels.

For the 1985–86 BC, the high values for ages 14–15 predominate, with another characteristic being a rather considerable downward sloping trend thereafter. For the 1995–96 BC, low levels are maintained at both the age levels 14–15 and 16–17.

Theft Crimes

Lastly, theft crime arrestee ratios are shown in Fig. 2-6.

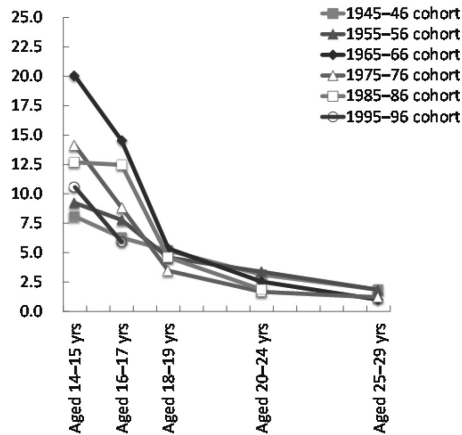


Fig. 2-6. Theft Crime Arrestee Ratio (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

Similar to violent crime, trends for theft crimes show overall decreases in arrestee ratios corresponding to increases in age. With the age 18 as the cutoff, there are major differences in arrestee ratios before and after. All BCs show about the same values from the ages 18–19 through the 20s, with only ages 14–17 showing variations in values.

Characteristic of the 1985–86 BC show a flat line from the age levels 14–15 to 16–17, with a sudden decrease at ages 18–19. In contrast, the 1995–96 BC has a large decrease in arrestee ratios from ages 14–15 to 16–17.

Section 4 Summary

The following summarizes the research results presented above.

First, in BCs subsequent to the 1965–66 BC, there is no evidence of the arrestee ratio maintaining a certain level from the juvenile stage through initial adulthood. With the exception of homicide, a decrease in arrestee ratio is observed for all crime types after reaching the age 20 (from ages 18–19, depending on the crime type). Conditions wherein generations with relatively more delinquency in the juvenile stage formulate groups of potential future criminals, with more participating in crime after adulthood than other generations, are not observed after the 1965–66 BC.

Furthermore, from comparisons of the 1985–86 BC with previous BCs, the following changes are evident in the 2000s: transition of the peak age for all brutal crimes from ages 18–19

to 16–17; a clear trend toward gradual increase in homicide associated with increased ages in the teens is no longer evident; a slight increase in violent crimes at ages 14–15 and theft crimes at ages 14–17. However, when observing the arrestee ratios for each crime type for the 1995–96 BC at ages 14–15 and 16–17, these trends do not necessarily continue. I wish to focus here on future trends of the 1995–96 BC.

When considering general conformity with popular discourse on juvenile delinquency, increasing brutality of delinquency is clearly not observed in any form. With regard to decreasing age, it is partially true regarding violent and theft crimes in the 21st century.

Still, the most common theft crimes are shoplifting and bicycle theft. Because these crimes often go unreported (dark figure of crime), it is especially important to pay sufficient attention to future trends before concluding that theft crimes are being committed at a younger age.

Chapter 3 Popularization of Delinquency and Recidivism—Research Based on Longitudinal Delinquency Record Data in Prefecture A¹³

From this chapter to the fifth chapter, I wish to further our consideration of current delinquency conditions, according to delinquent careers, by directly analyzing official statistics on crime (National Police Agency statistics), comprised mainly of police department delinquency record data.

The utilization of delinquency record data enables analysis of longitudinal patterns not found directly in official statistics for juvenile delinquency occurrence of a given BC. This includes the extent of individuals actually committing delinquent acts within a given period of time (extent of the popularization of delinquency) and the extent the same juvenile repeats delinquent acts (extent of recidivism). It is also possible to clarify the number of repeat offenses and changes in crime type associated with recidivism for repeat offenders. (Chapter 4 discusses changes in crime type associated with recidivism.)

Section 1 Previous Research

Longitudinal research that tracks and analyzes crime and delinquency history using specific BCs as subjects, based on police department records, has been conducted for quite some time in

¹³ In this chapter, the prefecture that provided data is not disclosed because, at the time data was provided, we did not receive the provider's permission for publication of research results by name.

Japan.

As far as the author was able to research, the 1963 report from the Police Headquarters of Osaka Prefecture (Police Headquarters of Osaka Prefecture 1963) is the first study that clearly recognizes BCs. This survey depicted randomized subjects from the 1937 BC who had committed delinquency as juveniles and then analyzed the link between juvenile stage delinquency and criminal history during a five-year period after reaching adulthood. While the research methods were primitive, the data was quite valuable from a historical perspective.

Subsequent research using the 1942 BC as subjects was presented by Mugishima and Matsumoto (1965, 1966, 1967), followed by a report pertaining to the 1950 BC by Mugishima and Matsumoto (1973), analysis using the 1932 BC by Takahashi et al. (1979), and a discussion pertaining to the 1957 BC by Kiyonaga (1982, 1984). In the 1990s, the following studies were conducted based on theoretical elaboration of research of criminal careers in the Western countries as characterized by Blumstein et al. (1986); Harada (1990, 1991) as well as Harada and Suzuki (1993) using the 1970 BC; Yonezato and Harada (1997) as well as Harada and Yonezato (1997) using the 1977 BC.

Analysis in Chapters 3–5 relies on the framework of Blumstein et al. (1986), using the 1986 BC as the participants, (born nine years after the 1977 BC—the most recent cohort from the previous reports listed above). Furthermore, characteristics observed in recent juvenile delinquency will be discussed by conducting partial comparisons with the 1978 BC.

Section 2 Analysis Framework and Research Questions

Analysis Framework

According to criminal career theory¹⁴ proposed by Blumstein et al. (1986), analyses of criminal careers are broadly categorized into four different dimensions: “participation,” “frequency,” “seriousness,” and “career length.”

Of these, the career length dimension pertains to issues such as average lengths of time from embarking on crime until relinquishing crime, or rather, the extent that individuals who have committed crimes in their youth continue after reaching adulthood. Since these studies include criminal career after adulthood, a mindset of long-term survey and observation is a

¹⁴ Because concepts such as “criminal career(s) perspective,” “criminal career(s) concept,” “criminal career(s) approach,” and “criminal career(s) paradigm” are often used synonymously, this paper follows Harada (1989a: 57) in using the term “criminal career theory.” Research pertaining to criminal career theory is exemplified by Tracy and Kempf-Leonard (1996), Harada (1999), Laub and Sampson (2001), and Piquero et al. (2003, 2007).

premise. However, this study does not deal with criminal careers after adulthood because of an absolute lack of analyzable data for present conditions. Hence, we decided to focus on the other three analytical dimensions. Of these, participation and frequency will be dealt with in this chapter, and seriousness will be discussed in the next chapter.

In this chapter, I wish to clarify the two analytical dimensions of participation and frequency.

Participation focuses on the extent that participants are embroiled in the world of crime. Hence, an important query involves how many people within a specific group (or, in the case of this paper, a specific BC) have participated in crime at least once. In contrast to the cumulative number of arrestees generally included in official statistics, the question here pertains to the actual number of individuals. The two relevant indicators are the cumulative number of actual arrestees (cumulative actual arrestee ratio) and the actual number of arrestees (actual arrestee ratio) within a given period.

The cumulative number of actual arrestees is the number of individuals who have been arrested at least once by a certain time (generally, by a certain age) and the ratio that this number of individuals occupies among the total relevant cohort population. In this paper, these concepts are referred to as “cumulative number of actual arrestees” and “cumulative actual arrestee ratio.” They are indicators for an increasing number of people committing crime.

The actual number of arrestees is the number of individuals who have been arrested at least once during a certain specified period. In analysis using cohorts as participants of research, the actual number of arrestees is often calculated by age, by one-year units. In this paper, the actual number of individuals arrested during a one-year period at age 16 is referred to as “actual number of arrestees during the 16th year of age.” The ratio of this number within a total relevant cohort population is referred to as “actual arrestee ratio during the 16th year of age.” These are indicators of whether arrestees are concentrated in a certain age.

In contrast, frequency focuses on the number of times the criminal repeats a crime. In criminal career theory, a question is often asked regarding the number of crimes (or the number of arrests) repeated by a single criminal within a given period.

While various methods of analysis have been proposed, characteristic questions asked in such research pertaining to all individuals with criminal careers include “the total number of annual arrests per single individual” within the tracked period and “the number of arrests per individual” at a certain age level.

Furthermore, the degree that a crime is repeatedly committed within a certain observation

period often becomes a matter of scrutiny. This is generally referred to as the “recidivism rate.”

Research Questions

Summarizing this chapter’s research questions together with correspondence relations with the above analytical dimensions results in the following:

- (1) Is delinquency more common in the 1986 BC compared with the 1978 BC? Further, what types of crimes have become more common? (Participation)
- (2) What characteristics are found in delinquency occurrence patterns by age? Are changes evident in the 1986 BC as compared with the 1978 BC? (Participation)
- (3) To what extent is delinquency being repeated? Are there links between age and the number of times that delinquency is repeated? (Frequency)
- (4) How high are recidivism rates? Do recidivism rates vary by crime type? (Frequency)

Section 3 Research Method

Data

Analysis was conducted using delinquency record data maintained by the police department in a given prefecture (“Prefecture A”). Prefecture A boasts of a large city and has one of the highest delinquency incidences nationwide. The delinquency records include registration of birth date, crime type, and name of the juvenile for each arrest within Prefecture A.

Data is provided to the main research body, the National Research Institute of Police Science, after undergoing processing that includes officials in Prefecture A’s police department replacing names with a series of numbers. The author was a principal researcher.

In this paper, the subjects of analysis are all individuals born between January and October 1986, who also have penal code violations recorded by the day preceding the individual’s 17th birthday (i.e., in 2003). The actual number of individuals is 5,207, and the number of records (cumulative number of arrestees) is 7,536. The tracking period of delinquent careers is 17 years from the birth date of each juvenile; attention is required regarding missing data for ages 17–19.

Moreover, in Chapters 3 and 5, partial comparisons were conducted with data obtained by the same method for individuals born between January and October 1978 in Prefecture A. The tracking period is also 17 years; and the total number of individuals and records is 5,914, and 8,326, respectively.

Due to data limitations, movements of the population to prefectures outside Prefecture A were not considered in the analysis. However, limited numbers of those under the age of 17 moved to and from other prefectures, and it was determined that such movements could be safely disregarded. This point also applies to analyses conducted through Chapter 5.

While a relevant cohort population is needed to calculate cumulative actual arrestee ratios, analysis in this chapter utilizes population by age in Prefecture A, included in censuses conducted in 1990 and 2000. The cohort populations included delinquents aged 14 years in 2000 according to the 2000 census for the 1986 cohort, and aged 12 years in 1990 according to the 1990 census for the 1978 cohort—each multiplied by 10/12.¹⁵

Significance of Comparing Two BCs

Here, the significance of comparing the 1986 BC with the 1978 BC is discussed.

The graph in Fig. 3-1 depicts Penal Code arrestee ratios (nationwide) by age group for each BC from 1970 to 1992. The graph includes a peak (1986 BC) and a valley (1977–78 BC). In other words, according to official statistics (showing cumulative numbers of individuals), there are relatively fewer arrestees for the 1978 BC compared with the relatively high number of arrestees for the 1986 BC.¹⁶

¹⁵ The following two points have been confirmed:

(1) According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare “Overview of ‘Birth Statistics’ for 2005”; (<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/saikin/hw/jinkou/tokusyuu/syussyo05/> (last accessed June 30, 2013)), there are almost no differences in birthrates by birth month after 1970. In other words, it is safe to simply multiply values by 10/12 in this case.

(2) According to the population statistics of Prefecture A, annual changes in population of the same BCs (e.g., the difference between the population aged 14 for a given year and that aged 15 the next year) are small enough to be disregarded for this paper’s scope of analysis. Hence, for the two censuses referenced, it is safe to use population aged 12 for one and 14 for the other.

¹⁶ As mentioned previously, data analysis parameters show higher statistics for the 1978 BC than for the 1986 BC, while the differences in population are reversed in terms of proportion (more population in the 1986 BC than in the 1978 BC).

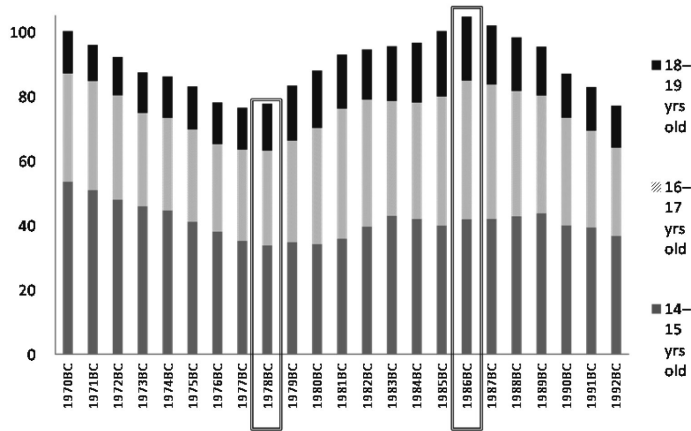


Fig. 3-1. Criminal Juvenile Penal Code Arrestee Ratio by BC (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

This difference is confirmed in Fig. 3-2, which shows annual changes in juvenile crime-related Penal Code arrestee ratios. The number of 14+ juvenile offenders shows a temporary downward trend after the peak period around 1982–1983 (the third wave); this downward trend ends in the early 1990s. In other words, the period that could be labeled a “third valley” overlaps with the period in which juveniles in the 1978 BC reached ages 15–16, that is, when juveniles of this cohort constituted a principal portion of arrestees.

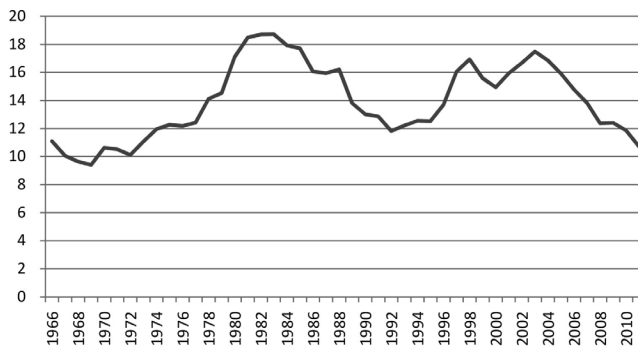


Fig. 3-2. Annual Changes in Juvenile Crime-Related Penal Code Arrestee Ratio (Unit: per 1,000)

Note: Prepared by the author using population statistics from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Statistics Bureau and the “Crime Statistics.”

In contrast, the number of arrestees demonstrates another rising trend after reaching the lowest in the early 1990s. A peak is reached temporarily in 1998, followed by a gradual downward trend, followed by another peak in 2003. The period with a relatively large number

of arrestees compared with the “third valley” period overlaps with the period when juveniles of the 1986 BC reached ages 15–16.

In other words, according to official statistics related to the number of arrestees, the 1978 BC had a relatively small number of arrestees (docile cohort) when compared with the 1986 BC, which has a relatively high number of arrestees (active cohort). In this sense, these cohorts are located on opposite ends of the spectrum, and there is major significance in comparing these cohorts.

Section 4 Results and Discussion

Popularization of Delinquency

Fig. 3-3 shows cumulative actual arrestee ratios by gender for 1986 and 1978 BCs. The cumulative actual arrestee ratios at age 16 for the 1986 BC is 10.1% and 4.1% for males and females, respectively. This calculation shows that 1 in 10 males and 1 in 24 females have been arrested by their 17th birthday.

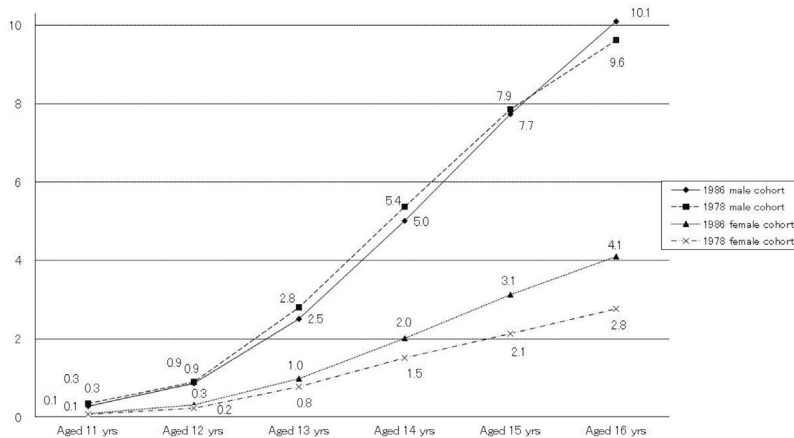


Fig. 3-3. Cumulative Actual Arrestee Ratio by Age for 1978 and 1986 BC (Unit: %)

For females, the cumulative actual arrestee ratio for the 1986 BC exceeds that of the 1978 BC, which can be said to indicate that delinquency is becoming more common. In contrast, the values for males in both cohorts are about the same until about age of 16. In other words, there is no evidence that delinquency footprint has become more common for males in the 1986 BC compared with the 1978 BC.

To understand which types of delinquency are more widespread, the cumulative actual

arrestee ratios for each age group in the 1986 BC were calculated by crime type in Fig. 3-4 (males) and Fig. 3-5 (females). The number of arrestees for bicycle and unsupervised property theft was clearly high (until age 16: 4.7% of males, 2.1% of females). For males, motorbike theft was relatively prevalent, with the cumulative actual arrestee ratio exceeding 2.5% before the age 16.

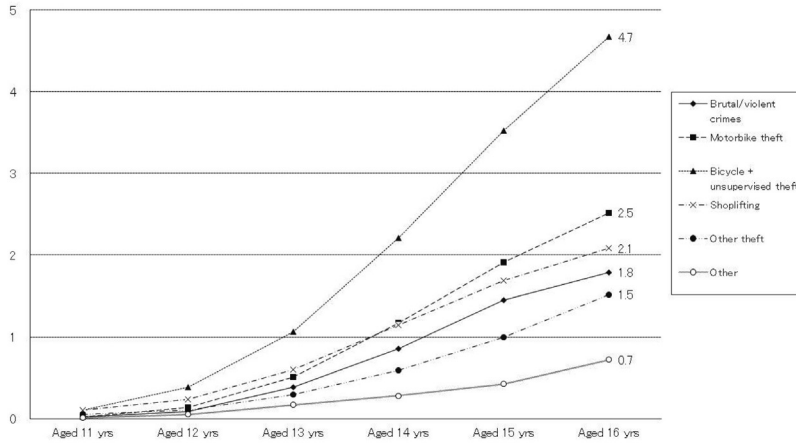


Fig. 3-4. Cumulative Actual Arrestee Ratio by Crime Type for Each Age for 1986 BC (Males) (Unit: %)
 Note: "Unsupervised theft" in the legend above refers to theft of unsupervised property

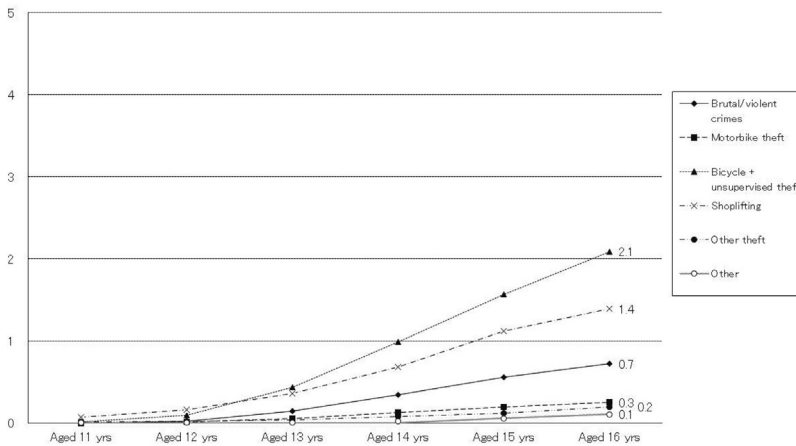


Fig. 3-5. Cumulative Actual Arrestee Ratio by Crime Type for Each Age for 1986 BC (Females) (Unit: %)
 Note: "Unsupervised theft" in the legend above refers to theft of unsupervised property

Although figures for the 1978 cohort are omitted, obvious differences when comparing the 1986 and the 1978 male BC are a decrease in cumulative actual arrestee ratio for motorbike theft after the age 14 (22.1% reduction by the age of 16); and an increase in the cumulative actual arrestee ratio for shoplifting after the age 14 (36.1% increase by the age of 16) for the 1986 BC

when compared with the 1978 BC. In addition, the cumulative actual arrestee ratio for brutal crimes at the age 14 was 0.02 for the 1978 BC and 0.09 for the 1986 BC. A similar pattern of higher ratios for the 1986 BC continues for subsequent ages, with ratios of 0.02 and 0.15 at the age 15, and 0.06 and 0.29 at the age 16, respectively. The cumulative actual arrestee ratio for robbery is considered to be the main cause of these increased ratios.

Annual actual arrestee ratios by age are shown in Fig. 3-6. The 1986 BC peak for both males and females is at the age 15. Just by observing the single year at the age 15, 3.6% of the whole cohorts for males and 1.4% of the whole cohort for females would have undergone one or more arrests according to the calculations.

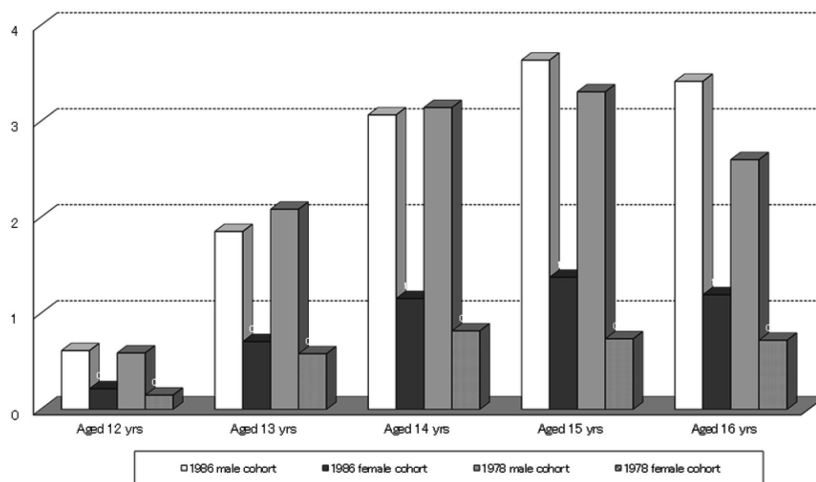


Fig. 3-6. Actual Arrestee Annual Ratios by Age (Unit: %)

One characteristic of actual annual arrestee ratio trend for the 1978 male BC is a sharp decrease at age 16 compared with the 1986 BC. On the other hand, actual annual arrestee ratios for the 1986 female BC increased from 1.5- to 2-fold at each age from 14 to 16, compared with the 1978 BC.

Recidivism

Fig. 3-7 shows the total number of arrests per analyzed subject in the 1986 BC. Over 70% of males and 80% of females were arrested only once. Around 90% of both males and females were arrested only once or twice. The average number of arrests was 1.5 (standard deviation = 1.13) for males and 1.3 (standard deviation = 0.61) for females. Fig. 3-8 shows the distribution of annual arrestee ratios per individual and averages by each age group for all male juveniles

arrested before the age 16. The figure shows that each individual was arrested an average of 0.4 times per year from ages 14 to 16 and that the tendency for recidivism is strongest at the age of 15. For females, 15 is the peak age for repeat offenses (the figure showing female statistics is omitted).

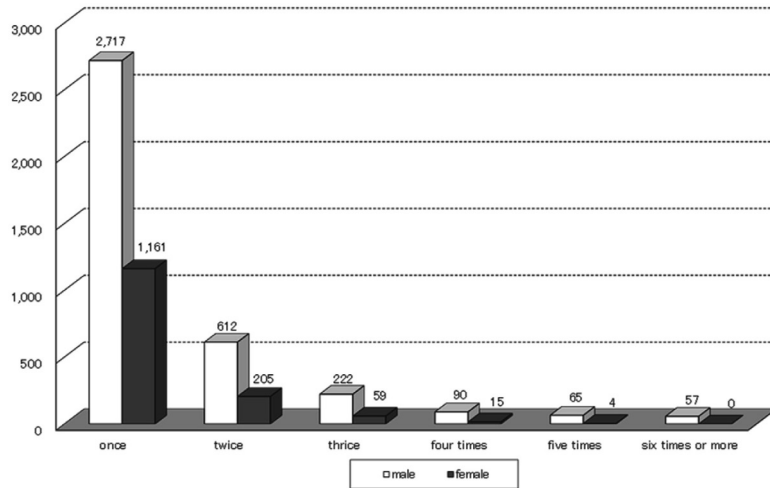


Fig. 3-7. Distribution of Total Arrests per Individual for 1986 BC (Unit: individual)

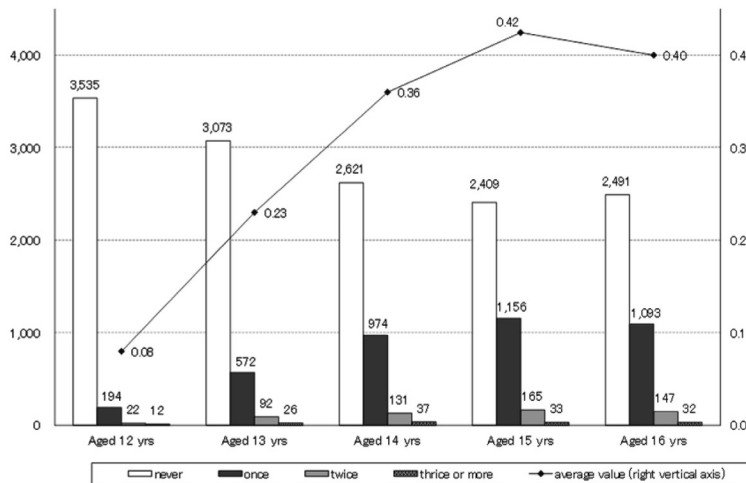


Fig. 3-8. Distribution of Annual Arrests (Unit: arrests) and Average Arrests (Unit: individuals) by Age for Each Male in the 1986 BC

Fig. 3-9 shows the distribution of the same values by age group in percentages. Data for the 1978 BC is also shown. Annual arrests at age 12 show similar distributions for both cohorts; however, for ages 13–14, the 1978 BC shows what could be interpreted as a trend toward a higher ratio of repeat offenders. In contrast, recidivism is higher for ages 15–16 year in the 1986 BC.

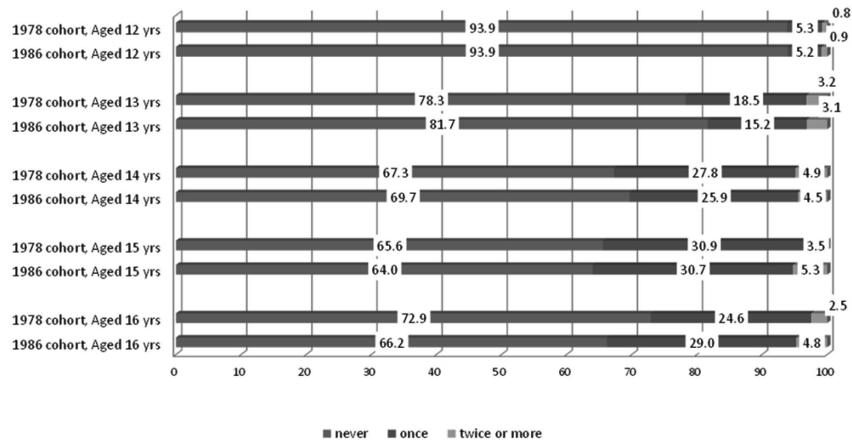


Fig. 3-9. Distribution of Annual Arrests per Individual at Each Age for Male 1978 and 1986 BC (Unit: %)

Fig. 3-10 uses 1986 male BC data for those first arrested at the age of 15 or younger to show the ratio of individuals among those again arrested within a certain period, categorized by crime type of the initial offense.¹⁷ This figure shows both the recidivism rate calculated regardless of the second offense’s crime type and the recidivism rate calculated using only arrests for the same crime category as at initial arrest.

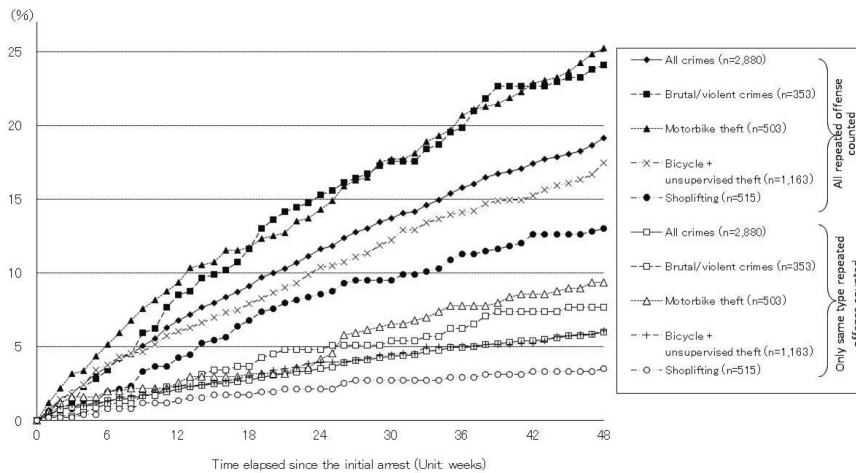


Fig. 3-10. Recidivism Rate by Crime Type at Initial Arrest for Juveniles Under Age 15 at the Time of Initial Arrest (males, by time elapsed since initial arrest)

Note: The value of “n” in the legend is the actual number at the time of initial arrest. “Unsupervised theft” refers to theft of unsupervised property. The number of arrests for crime types “Other Theft” and “Other” were omitted.

¹⁷ Crime types are separated into the six categories shown in Fig. 3-4. However, cases in which the initial arrest was for “Other theft” or “Other” were omitted in Fig. 3-10.

When the re-offense crime type is not considered, less than 20% of the total were rearrested within 48 weeks. Among these, the recidivism rate was high when the initial arrest was for brutal crimes, violent crimes, or motorbike theft. On the other hand, youth rearrested for crimes in the same category were approximately 6% of the total.

Of those arrested for brutal/violent crimes at the age of 15 or younger, 20.8% of the 1978 BC and 24.1% of the 1986 BC were rearrested for some type of crime within 48 weeks. Furthermore, 2.9% and 7.6%, respectively, were rearrested for brutal/violent crimes within 48 weeks.¹⁸ Evidently, then, the recidivism rate for juveniles arrested for brutal/violent crimes by the age of 15 was higher for the 1986 than the 1978 BC.¹⁹

Section 5 Summary

In this chapter, delinquency records from Prefecture A were used to analyze delinquency careers of the 1986 BC. Answers to the research questions posed in the beginning of this chapter can be summarized as follows:

- (1) The cumulative actual arrestee ratio at the age of 16 for the 1986 BC was 10% for males and 4% for females. While there is no specific evidence of delinquency becoming more common compared with 1978 BC for males, there is evidence of delinquency becoming more prevalent for females. When viewed by crime type, the actual numbers of persons arrested for bicycle or unsupervised property theft were relatively high for both males and females.
- (2) The actual number of arrestees by age peaked at the age of 15 for both males and females in the 1986 BC. The pattern of rapid decrease at the age of 16 for males seen in the 1978 BC was not observed for the 1986 BC. The actual arrestee annual ratio by age, from ages 14–16 for females in the 1986 BC was more than 1.5 times higher than that in the 1978 BC.
- (3) Regarding total number of arrests, over 70% of males and 80% of females were arrested only once. The average number of total arrests per individual was 1.5 for males and 1.3 for

¹⁸ Although not shown in the figure, of the males arrested for brutal crimes by age 15 (7 from the 1978 BC and 42 from the 1986 BC), none of those from the 1978 BC were rearrested for some type of crime within 48 weeks, while 6 (14.3%) from the 1986 BC were rearrested. For the 1986 BC, 1 out of 42 individuals (2.4%) was rearrested for brutal crimes within 48 weeks.

¹⁹ Punishment including incarceration in correctional facilities, such as youth homes, and the length of incarceration differ greatly depending on crime type. For example, the possibility of referral to a correctional facility is much higher for brutal crimes than for other crime types, and incarceration periods are relatively longer. Because re-arrest is unlikely during incarceration, attention should be given to the impact of incarceration and its duration in the study of recidivism rates.

females. The number of repeat offenses for both males and females peaked at the age of 15. It is considered that juveniles arrested multiple times during this period increased the cumulative number of arrestees of the total cohort.

- (4) The rate of recidivism within 48 weeks from initial arrest for males first arrested by the age of 15 was just under 20% when irrespective of the crime type at time of re-arrest, and approximately 6% for arrests for the same crime type. Rates of recidivism were high for brutal crimes, violent crimes, and motorbike theft.

The following important points are evident from the above results.

There is no substantial increase in male arrestees within the 1986 BC compared with those in 1978 BC. Moreover, when viewed by crime type, many juveniles were arrested for “gateway crimes,” such as bicycle theft, unsupervised property theft, and shoplifting. There is also clear evidence that 70% to 80% of the total ended their delinquency careers after only the first arrest.

As mentioned in Section 3 of this chapter, the 1986 BC has a relatively higher number of arrestees. It is necessary to note the fact that, in spite of this, delinquency cannot be said to have become more common with this cohort compared with the previous cohorts. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that the number of repeat offenders increased in the 1986 cohort compared with the previous cohorts. This point is worthy of further attention, and recidivism factors will be discussed in Chapter 8.

(To be continued in the next number.)

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