

# **IN SEARCH OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY**

**Satyanshu K. Mukherjee  
R. William Fitzgerald**

**Australian Institute of Criminology**

IN SEARCH OF FEMALE CRIMINALITY:  
ARE WOMEN BAD ENOUGH YET?

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## FOREWORD

It has been difficult so far for the Australian Institute of Criminology to make the kind of pronouncements about crime in Australia which the people seek and politicians like to have for the formulation of criminal justice policy. That is because the build up of data for such studies takes time: and, in this respect, the three or four years of this Institute's operations are short enough.

Dr. Mukherjee and Mr. Fitzgerald have been working to remedy that: and this publication is the first of many which will seek to elucidate the meaning of crime in this country. Here is an account of total crime since 1900 and a cautious analysis about what can really be said about female crime. As befits a scientific approach, allowing for all the inherent defects of statistics, the work is characterised more by restraint than drama. The authors have used only two variables - time and population but these quickly expose the defects of the estimates which have often been made without them. In assessing the value of this work it should be borne in mind that few previous studies have used universes rather than samples - and few countries are in a position to do this. Australia may be the first federal country to have got so far in a national analysis.

As mere "fall out" from a much more ambitious study of total crime against more than two socio-economic variables this enquiry into female crime will serve to raise expectations.

William Clifford

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### REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF PREVIOUS WORK

In recent years there has been a considerable interest in the subject of "crimes by women". Many writers seem to suggest that this subject is an issue warranting further investigation in the context of the changing status of women in society. This interest has coincided with the accelerated momentum of the feminist movement. In the light of the available evidence the seriousness of female crime presented by numerous writers of varied ideological persuasions and theoretical biases, the import of this issue is not adequately substantiated. The analysis and interpretations of evidence by some of the writers are inappropriate and misleading; others have presented purely conjectural opinions.

The earlier works on the subject concentrated mostly on convicted prisoners and delinquent girls in institutions and currently this work is being critically re-examined. Almost all of the work since earlier this century is being labelled as "sexist, racist and classist in its implications"<sup>1</sup> by the so-called 'feminist' and 'radical' criminologists. One must appreciate that the writers of today are as value system bound as their forebears, but that the value systems have changed with time and are now seen to be inconsistent. Thus, to label the earlier work, as Klein has done, is unwarranted and unscholarly. History is replete with incidents in which a particular work was acclaimed when it was written but severely criticised several years later. ,That the feminist

and radical perspectives will meet a similar fate some years from now is highly probable, and this could happen to what we are now writing.

Recent work on female criminality places a greater emphasis on the study of the nature and extent of crime by women. These writers, who have invariably criticised earlier works, are themselves open to similar accusations. In all cases, with the possible exception of Simon<sup>2</sup>, we consider that their selected uses of data, types of analytic techniques employed and derived interpretations are not consistent with the data they present. If the arguments posited by these writers are to be supported or rejected, then data of a larger time span than has been used will be necessary, coupled with more appropriate analysis.

Longitudinal studies on the nature and extent of crime are few and those which relate crime to socio-economic change are fewer still. There is no study to date which has systematically analysed the involvement of women in crime for a length of time that could reasonably be acceptable for trend analysis. Yet, to substantiate that the changes in the status of women are responsible for the increase in criminality by women requires longitudinal data. Moreover, even if we demonstrated an increase in female criminality along with augmented female participation in all spheres of human endeavour, our conclusions would at best lead to an imputation of relationship; causality in the social sciences being indeed a tenuous concept.<sup>3</sup>

Present knowledge on female involvement in crime is inadequate. The literature that existed until recently dealt with the etiology of female crime and delinquency, research on which relied primarily on data gathered from prisons and juvenile institutions. These researchers, while offering various explanations, placed heavy emphasis on biological characteristics of the female sex. Thus, most

writers on the subject of female criminality, from Lombroso<sup>1\*</sup> to Thomas<sup>5</sup> and Pollalc<sup>6</sup>, devoted their investigations to the physiological and psychological aspects of female offenders.<sup>7</sup> This is not to deny the fact that all of them, and Thomas<sup>8</sup> in particular, analysed female delinquency in relation to the interaction between aspects of culture and social environment.

All of these writers have suggested that the nature of violations by women were predominantly promiscuity and prostitution. In this context, and on the basis of abundant case studies presented by the above authors, the modern critics of these works term them as sexist in approach. That the societies in the early part of this century placed heavy sanctions on sexual aberrations by females and that those who sanctioned these aberrations were predominantly males are beyond dispute. Although these earlier works in a sense considered the female sex inferior to the male, they did not necessarily lay the blame for this inferiority on the female sex. Lombroso, for example, in the preface to his book, *La donna Belinquente, la prostituta e la donna normale*, remarks:

Not one of the conclusions drawn from the history and examination of woman can justify the tyranny of which she has been and is still a victim, from the laws of savage peoples, which forbade her to eat meat and the flesh of the cocoanut, to those modern restrictions, which shut her out from the advantages of higher education and prevent her from exercising certain professions for which she is qualified. These ridiculous, cruel, and tyrannical prohibitions have certainly been largely instrumental in maintaining or, worse still, increasing her present state of inferiority and permitting her exploitation by the other sex. The very praises, not always sincere, alas, heaped on the docile victim, are often intended more as a preparation for further sacrifices than as an honour or reward.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, Thomas sees individual aberrations as consequences of the total social environment:

It is only as we understand behaviour as a whole that we can appreciate the failure of certain individuals to conform to the usual standards. And similarly, the unrest and maladjustment of the girl can be treated only as specifications of the general unrest and maladjustment.<sup>10</sup>

All age levels have been affected by the feeling that much, too much, is being missed in life. This unrest is felt most by those who have, heretofore, been most excluded from general participation in life - the mature woman and the young girl. Sometimes it expresses itself in despair and depression, sometimes in breaking all bounds.<sup>11</sup>

Pollak, by contrast, emphatically asserts that "the criminality of women reflects their biological nature in a given cultural setting".<sup>12</sup> This central thesis is further elaborated by comments such as:

The existing characterizations of the ways in which women commit their crimes center around the observation that women offenders are more deceitful than men.<sup>13</sup>

But whether or not woman's body still does force her to concealment, it should be noted that it does actually make it much easier for her to practice deceit than does the body of man. Not enough attention has been paid to the physiological fact that man must achieve an erection in order to perform the sex act and will not be able to hide his failure. His lack of positive emotion in the sexual sphere must become overt to the partner and pretense of sexual response is impossible for him, if it is lacking. Woman's body, however, permits such pretense to a certain degree and lack of orgasm does not prevent her ability to participate in the sex act. It cannot be denied that this basic physiological difference may well have a great influence on the degree of confidence which the two sexes have in the possible success of concealment and thus on their character pattern in this respect.<sup>14</sup>

Almost all criminals want to remain undetected, but it seems that women offenders are much better equipped for achieving this goal than are men. Most of the prevailing beliefs in woman's lower criminality will have to be re-evaluated in the light of this conclusion.<sup>15</sup> \*

Unlike the previous two authors, Pollak does not present any supporting evidence whatsoever to substantiate his own 'self deception'. Lombroso and Thomas have used numerous case studies, albeit with a lack of any contemporary sampling and statistical techniques, whereas Pollak uses neither.

Klein's criticism of Thomas ignores his overall approach to the concept of social change, through the institutionalisation of deviance, for example, "redefinition of the situation". In Thomas' own words:

Every new invention, every chance acquaintance-ship, every new environment, has the possibility of redefining the situation and of introducing change, disorganisation or different types of organisation into the life of the individual or even of the whole world.<sup>16</sup>

Klein is decidedly uncharitable in her comments:

[Thomas] rejects economic causes as a possibility at all, denying its importance in criminal activity with as much certainty as Lombroso, Freud, Davis, Pollak and most other writers.<sup>17</sup>

Quite to the contrary:

The bad family life constantly evident in these pages and the consequent delinquency of children, as well as crime, prostitution and alcoholism, are largely due to the overdetermination of economic interests - to the tendency to produce or acquire the largest possible amount of economic values - because these interests are actually so universal and predominant and because economic success is a value convertible into new experience, recognition response, and security."<sup>18</sup>

Similarly, Lombroso did not reject "economic causes as a possibility at all"<sup>19</sup>; an entire chapter is devoted to the examination of "Influence of Economic Condition/Wealth".<sup>20</sup>

Pollak does not mention economic causes at all.

His idea of women's emancipation, however, is directly related to job opportunities for women. By asserting repeatedly, with inconsistent data from various countries, that criminality of women increased during the war years, Pollak implies that this was so because more women entered the job market. Curiously, his book supplies no corroborative evidence on employment of women. Furthermore, the sort of interpretation that he makes of his data makes him subject to his own criticism that:

... many male attempts to understand women have actually been attempts to rationalise men's treatment of the other sex and have frequently been nothing but self-deceptions.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast, recent authors have examined official criminal statistics to assess the extent and significance of female criminality. Some of these have extended their analyses to encompass the possible effects of the emergence of the feminist movement. Furthermore, a number of authors have noted the paucity of literature in the area.<sup>22</sup> Recent writings have generated interest in the subject but have added very little, if any, to the body of substantive knowledge. Most of the authors have provided some data to support their arguments and ideological underpinnings; few have demonstrated an ability to analyse and interpret the data they present; fewer still, relate crime data to exogenous variables; and none express the increase or decrease of female crime as a function of population.

Pollak<sup>23</sup> is perhaps one of the earliest writers to assert that the criminality of women was increasing; he included in his work statistics from the United States and several European countries. However, his selective use of data, inappropriate analysis, and dubious interpretation based on false assumptions are hardly convincing. The statistics he presents in the numerous tables seldom support his conclusions; an example is Table 1.

Table 1

YEARLY CONVICTION RATES OF WOMEN OFFENDERS IN FRANCE,  
GERMANY, AND HUNGARY, DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR I,  
PER 100,000 WOMEN IN THE RESPECTIVE POPULATIONS

Year	Total Court Convictions in France	Total Court Convictions in Germany	Total Convictions for Major Offenses in Hungary
1914	134	311	103
1915	169	296	164
1916	190	334	186
1917	194	392	227
1918	229	482	-
1919	233	340	-
1920	264	475	-
1921	255	515	239
1922	204	451	308
1923	167	528	379
1924	161	467	357
1925	175	377	282
1926	190	356	236

Source: O. Polla'k, *The Criminality of Women*, Table 6, p. 63.

Data in the above table lead Pollak to conclude that:

... the increase of the general female crime rate in the war years is unmistakable for all the three countries. ... thus the data seem to corroborate the hypothesis of the correlation between the emancipation of women and the rise in female crime rate.<sup>2,1</sup>

We fail to see how the above table supports these conclusions<sup>25</sup>; at least in Germany and Hungary the increase in female crime has been greater during the post-war years than during the war period.

Hoffman-Bustamante<sup>26</sup> with the help of arrest data from the *U.S. Uniform Crime Reports* and *California Crime Statistics* examines the nature of female crime. Although she presents data for 1958, 1964 and 1970 she does not make any attempt to demonstrate changes in the pattern of female

criminality. For interpretation she relies heavily on works on specific offences by earlier writers. Unlike others, she has used proportion of male-female involvement in crime but unfortunately she, like most others, has not computed these proportions on population based rates.

Adler asserts that, "Women are indeed committing more crimes than ever before. Those crimes involve a greater degree of violence."<sup>27</sup> In support of her claim she offers the following:

During the twelve-year period between 1960 and 1972 the number of women arrested for robbery rose by 277 per cent, while the male figure rose 169 per cent. Dramatic differences are found in embezzlement (up 280 per cent for women, 50 per cent for men), larceny (up 303 per cent for women, 82 per cent for men), and burglary (up 168 per cent for women, 63 per cent for men). Except for parity in the categories of murder and aggravated assault, the picture of female arrest rates rising several times faster than male arrest rates is a consistent one for all offences. During the period between 1960 and 1972 the number of females under eighteen arrested for robbery jumped by 508 per cent, while the juvenile male figure rose 250 per cent. Likewise, other figures mounted: larceny (up 334 per cent for girls, 83 per cent for boys), burglary (up 177 per cent for girls, 70 per cent for boys), auto theft (up 110 per cent for girls, 38 per cent for boys). In this area, at least, there is no generation gap. Similar to their adult counterparts there was no significant difference in the arrest increase for murder between males and females, suggesting that economic goals take precedence over violent ones for little sister also.<sup>28</sup>

Her analysis is somewhat simplistic, and if we view the rise of female criminality in isolation then we cannot but agree that it is increasing. However, a simple percentage change in crime (as used by Adler) leads to an overstatement of the fluctuations in crime; a more precise and appropriate measure is to express crime data in relation to population, for example, rate per 100,000 population. Wolfgang expresses this more succinctly:

There is nothing new or esoteric about expressing changes of any phenomenon by rates per population unit. ... but they remain as the only appropriate and meaningful way to indicate the basic "facts about changes in criminal offenses over space and time. ... But in reporting rudimentary criminal statistics, the simple rates per population unit are both sufficient and necessary. To continue publishing the traditional *UCR* expression of percent changes in volume of crime from one year or decade to another is to perpetuate almost meaningless measures. These percent changes would be useful only if the population capable of contributing to the phenomenon were perfectly stable. Such percent changes can only serve to alarm the public by creating an image of increasing crime that is either fictional or exaggerated. ... The primary concern of all is whether crime is in fact increasing, decreasing, or remaining stable. Unless population is static, only a population-based rate of crime can validly provide the kind of information desired.<sup>29</sup>

If we want to demonstrate the increase in female criminality in comparison to male criminality (as Adler intends) it seems to us that a more appropriate method will be to compare proportions (preferably computed from rate per 100,000 population) of total crime ascribed to male and female; since crime by women is numerically small any increase will produce an inflated picture in percentage terms.

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the *UCR* crime data for the years 1960 and 1972 (used by Adler) in terms of the three basic methods of describing changes: percentages based on absolute numbers (column 7 - *UCR* presentation), sex-specific rates per 100,000 population (column 8), and proportion of male to female participation based on sex-specific rates per 100,000 population (column 9).

Percentage change within sex is a convenient method of demonstrating changes in the absolute numbers. It cannot provide a comparison of volume of participation in crime between sexes. Also, by definition, percentage

Table 2  
ASSESSMENT OF CHANGE IN ARREST DATA FOR FEMALES  
FOR SERIOUS CRIMES, UCR 1960 AND 1972

	Number of Crimes		Crime Rate/100,000		Proportion of Total		UCR A %	Rate A %	Prop. &»
	1960 (1)	1972 (2)	1960 (3)	1972 (4)	1960 (5)	1972 (6)	(60-72) (7)	(60-72) (8)	(60-72) (9)
Murder	740	1585	1.96	3.61	.165	.154	114.2	84.2	-1.1
Manslaughter	173	196	0.46	0.45	.100	.130	13.3	-2.2	3.0
Robbery	1423	5368	3.78	12.22	.046	.065	277.2	223.3	1.9
Agg. Assault	7459	14191	19.80	32.31	.141	.135	90.3	63.2	-0.6
Burglary	3545	9505	9.41	21.64	.030	.049	168.1	130.0	1.9
Larceny	30199	121759	80.10	277.21	.160	.297	303.2	245.8	13.7
Auto Theft	1904	4736	5.05	10.70	.036	.055	148.7	113.5	1.9
Total	45443	157340	120.63	350.22	.101	.177	246.2	197.0	7.6
Population	37672020	43923240							

Table 3  
ASSESSMENT OF CHANGE IN ARREST DATA FOR MALES  
FOR SERIOUS CRIMES, UCR 1960 AND 1972

	Number of Crimes		Crime Rate/100,000		Proportion of Total		UCR A I	Rate A %	Prop. A*
	1960 (1)	1972 (2)	1960 (3)	1972 (4)	1960 (5)	1972 (6)	(60-72) (7)	(60-72) (8)	(60-72) (9)
Murder	3589	8354	9.92	19.80	.035	.846	132.8	99.6	1.1
Manslaughter	1502	1273	4.15	3.02	.900	.870	-15.2	-27.2	-3.0
Robbery	28519	73990	78.79	175.33	.954	.935	159.4	122.5	-1.9
Agg. Assault	43606	87170	120.48	206.58	.859	.865	99.9	71.5	0.6
Burglary	108930	177417	300.96	430.41	.970	.951	62.9	39.7	-1.9
Larceny	152157	277419	20.30	657.30	.840	.703	02.3	56.4	-13.7
Auto Theft	49200	78397	135.93	105.77	.964	.945	-59.3	36.7	-1.9
Total	387503	704020	1070.61	1660.28	.899	.823	81.7	55.8	-7.6
Population	36194686	42200760							

- Notes:
1. Between 1960 and 1972 the national population growth was 15.254% and we assume the same rate of population growth in reporting agencies.
  2. Since no population data is reported in the 1960 UCR, we have used as our base the 1972 figures and worked our way backward using compound yearly rate of decline up to 1960 at a rate of 1.27% per year. The population presented in the 1972 UCR was 86,124,100 and by the above method of calculation the 1960 population comes to 73,866,706.
  3. The average male:female ratio in the population from 1960 to 1972 is 49:51.

Source: United States Uniform Crime Reports 1972, Table 30, p. 124.

change will always be positive unless there has been a drop in the absolute numbers. Furthermore, the size of percentage change is directly related to the size of the absolute numbers. The above points are likely to be exacerbated by the seemingly haphazard selection of time span.

The major weaknesses of using percentage change as a measure of the changing volume of crime, which Adler and Simon<sup>30</sup> do not seem to be aware of, is that it cannot be used to compare criminality between sexes. Standardising the absolute crime data to sex-specific rates per 100,000 population insures comparability. What the standardised crime rates do not produce, however, is a quantification of the relative participation by males and females in this changing volume of crime. This relative participation can be expressed by using proportions. Furthermore, these proportions, if based on sex-specific rates per 100,000 population, offer a powerful and clear tool for the analysis of the relative participation in crime by the sexes. Thus, rates and proportions used as two distinct measures of the volume of, and relative participation in crime respectively, provide a much more meaningful assessment of the changing character of crime than do simple percentages.

Following the above discussion, if we pause to examine Tables 2 and 3 we observe a somewhat different picture to that presented by Adler and Simon. Both authors, by using simple percentage change, suggest that the volume and relative participation in crime by women have increased substantially. Adler maintains that between 1960 and 1972 the number of women arrested for robbery rose by 277 per cent.<sup>31</sup> The change in the volume of robbery by women, based on percentage change in rates, is only 223.3 (Table 2, column 8); this has been matched by a proportional increase of only 1.9 per cent, in the number of women arrested (Table 2, column 9). The figures for men arrested for robbery are 159.4 per cent, 122.5 and -1.9 respectively (Table 3, columns

7, 8 and 9). The increase or decrease in rates does not necessarily reflect a concomitant change in proportions in the same direction; a case in point is manslaughter for males and females.<sup>32</sup> Data in these two tables also demonstrate that except for larceny, the male-female participation in crime has remained fairly stable within the range of approximately  $\pm 3.0$  per cent; the overall change in proportion for index crimes during this period was only approximately  $\pm 7.6$  per cent.

Crites<sup>33</sup> is the only contemporary writer who has identified similar flaws to those pointed out by the present authors in the interpretation given to official statistics by Adler and Simon. She recognised that "we can more appropriately examine the issue by analysing changes in the female percentage of total arrest"<sup>34</sup>, for example, proportions. By amassing data from a number of studies she disputes the relationship between "the rise in female crime and the women's liberation movement"<sup>35</sup> and she observes that, "the movement appears to have had little effect on female offenders and their peers."<sup>36</sup> Crites further suggests that the benefits of the movement:

for equal employment opportunities accrue predominantly to white, middle class females. The women's rights movement has largely swept over the sub-population group of poor, minority females into which the female offender falls.<sup>37</sup>

It must be noted, however, that Crites uses the three terms, women's rights movement, women's liberation movement and feminist movement, synonymously although there are discernible functional and ideological differences between the three.

A review of the recent literature on female criminality would not be complete, without references to the works of some of the proponents of feminism and radical criminology, for example, Klein and Kress<sup>38</sup> and Smart.<sup>39</sup> Their contributions to the sparse body of substantive

knowledge on female criminality are at best marginal; these works are characterised more by flowing rhetoric than by hard evidence.

Here in Australia there are no comparable works in the area. The literature which exists deals with the Australian woman in an historical perspective<sup>110</sup>, and wherever reference is made to the criminality of women it is concerned either with women as convicts<sup>111</sup> or women in prison.<sup>112</sup>

## THE PRESENT STUDY

### THE DATA

The impetus for this study came from both the current controversy surrounding the subject of female criminality and a major project on the *Patterns and Trends of Crime in Australia (1900-1976)*<sup>k3</sup> presently being undertaken by the authors. It is not the intent of the present study to test any theories on female criminality, nor does it endeavour to establish a relationship between crimes by women and their participation in activities which have until recently been the prerogatives of men. This study simply makes a modest contribution to the knowledge on the criminality of women during the past several decades.

Our study is based on official crime statistics. Undoubtedly there are limitations to these statistics; which are well documented in the literature. In spite of these limitations, researchers have consistently used such statistics for comparison purposes. Nonetheless, until better methods of record-keeping become practicable and other means of assessing the phenomenon of crime (for example, victim surveys) become viable, the existing official statistics are the best sources of data.

An examination of the changing patterns of crime in Australia, with particular emphasis on the nature and extent of crimes by women, is the central issue in this paper. The two general hypotheses to be tested are that

(i) female crime has increased since the turn of the century and that (ii) this rate of increase has been greater than that for men. These two hypotheses will be tested in relation to offence type and jurisdiction.

Since the study utilises all cases appearing before Magistrates' Courts for each year 1900 to 1975, this constitutes the universe of cases; thus, the need for sampling procedures is obviated. Considering this unique characteristic of the data, some of the statistical procedures required for sampled data, for example, tests of significance and association, are not only unnecessary but inappropriate.

To address the dual concept of measuring the volume of, and relative participation in crime, our analysis will be based upon sex-specific crime rates per 100,000 population, and proportions across sex.

The study covers four States of Australia, that is, New South Wales (N.S.W.), Queensland (Qld.), South Australia (S.A.) and Western Australia. The States of Victoria (Vic.) and Tasmania (Tas.) have not been included because the data are still being collected and verified. The Northern Territory (N.T.) and the Australian Capital Territory (A.C.T.) have been excluded because they came into existence as separate entities in 1911 and the incompleteness of statistical records. Table 4 provides essential population characteristics of the jurisdictions.

The study encompasses the first 76 years of the twentieth century, that is, 1900 to 1975. This long time span enables us to examine a period in Australian history which has been transgressed, like many other countries, by the following major events:

World War I

The Great Depression  
 World War II  
 The Post-war Economic and Baby Booms  
 The Recessions of the 1960s and the 1970s

Table 4

## POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1975

Jurisdiction	Percentage Population	Population Density/km <sup>2</sup>	Masculinity
N.S.W.	35.43	6.01	99.83
Qld.	14.80	1.17	101.39
S.A.	9.11	1.26	99.53
W.A.	8.36	0.45	104.01
Vic.	27.11	16.46	99.68
Tas.	3.01	6.03	100.02
N.T.	0.70	0.07	118.21
A.C.T.	1.48	83.82	103.43
Aust.	100.00	1.77	100.51

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra,  
 Unpublished data.

The selection of Magistrates' Courts'<sup>115</sup> data in preference to police statistics was dictated by the following considerations:

- (i) the data relating to cases brought before the Magistrates' Courts have been available in a fairly consistent manner for the entire period under study for all the four jurisdictions;
- (ii) these statistics provide a broad spectrum of analytic possibilities because they include:

all cases in which charges were laid and persons brought before the courts by arrest, summons and private prosecution;  
sex distribution of cases;  
type of disposition, for example, convictions, committals to higher courts, and discharges.<sup>46</sup> (No sentencing data have been compiled.)  
an almost identical classification of offences into five major categories'<sup>47</sup> across the four jurisdictions.

Police statistics (crimes known to police) contain none of the advantages outlined above. Specifically, they contain no sex-specific data, they do not exist in all the four jurisdictions for the entire period under study for all offences and in a comparable manner.<sup>48</sup>

We are aware that, "the value of a crime rate for index purposes decreases as the distance from the crime itself, in terms of procedure, increases."<sup>49</sup> As neither crimes known to or cleared by police have sex-specific data, the next procedural level for which consistent data are available is arrest. The Magistrates' Courts' data include all cases cleared by arrest or summons, along with additional privately instigated cases. In other words, the Magistrates' Courts are the closest procedural stage to the crime itself.

The yearly offence data for all the Magistrates' Courts include both adults and juveniles; these data have been organised, for the purposes of the paper, into the following categories:

- (i) offences against the person  
(excluding rape)<sup>50</sup>
- (ii) offences against property<sup>51</sup>

- (iii) offences against good order<sup>52</sup>
- (iv) total offences (i to iii above)\*

From our analysis we have excluded the entire category "other offences", which are generally violations of State laws such as maintenance laws, liquor laws, gambling, gaming and lottery laws, broadcasting and television acts, income tax and revenue laws, railways acts, traffic and transport laws, etc. It must be pointed out that the violations of traffic and transport laws constitute, especially since the early 1950s, a substantial majority of the "other offences".

We felt that the inclusion of these offences would have seriously confounded our analysis. The traffic offences presented in the court statistics include minor traffic offences, most of which could have been settled out of court. The annual reports of police administrations indicate that a much larger number of such offences are settled out of court in each jurisdiction by payment of on-the-spot fines of which no detailed statistics are maintained. Serious traffic offences, for example, auto theft and those resulting in death or injury, are incorporated in offences against property and person respectively.

A further methodological point is that in the "other offences" category there have been significant changes in the content of offences because of the introduction of automobiles, television, etc., which have given rise to a large number of offences which were not possible in the early part of this century; the inclusion of these,

It is important for the reader to note that in the context of this paper this aggregation of offences which will be studied will be referred to as *total offences*, whereas the term *all known offences* will be used to represent the totality of crimes in the generic sense.

therefore, would make a false comparison over time.

This study will therefore deal only with major offences and those minor offences traditionally presented in the criminal statistics.<sup>53</sup> "Other offences" tend to inflate the crime statistics as they form a substantial proportion of *all known offences*; this is demonstrated in Table 5.

Table 5

"OTHER OFFENCES" AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL KNOWN  
OFFENCES CHARGED BY SEX, STATE AND  
DECENNIAL YEAR: 1910-1975

	N.S.,W.		QLD		S.,A.		W., A.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
10	25.6	16.3	18.6	14.3	27.1	13.3	22.9	20.3
20	41.7	23.2	27.1	26.8	44.9	41.3	23.4	20.3
30	47.2	26.8	35.4	20.8	63.7	58.0	55.4	46.9
40	52.2	32.6	51.0	34.0	69.2	66.8	67.9	56.9
50	42.6	27.6	26.9	11.9	68.7	70.7	60.4	41.2
60	56.2	38.0	54.9	59.4	80.1	82.1	70.3	58.5
70	64.1	50.9	59.9	70.3	81.1	77.1	57.2	49.6
75	na	na	60.5	61.6	83.7	73.3	65.4	49.6

A data set of this magnitude necessarily presents problems which may arise because of record-keeping procedures, offence classifications, etc. In this context the paramount consideration was to ensure the consistency of data over time and across jurisdictions. The task was accomplished by meticulously scrutinising the offence content of the major categories in each jurisdiction for each year. Wherever we observed a change in the content of the major categories, we have rectified the discrepancy.

## RESULTS

The analysis of data in relation to the three major categories of offences and the two general hypotheses, stated earlier, will proceed in terms of the following:

- (i) Volume of crime;
- (ii) Relative participation of males and females; and
- (iii) Conclusions.

(i) Volume of Crime

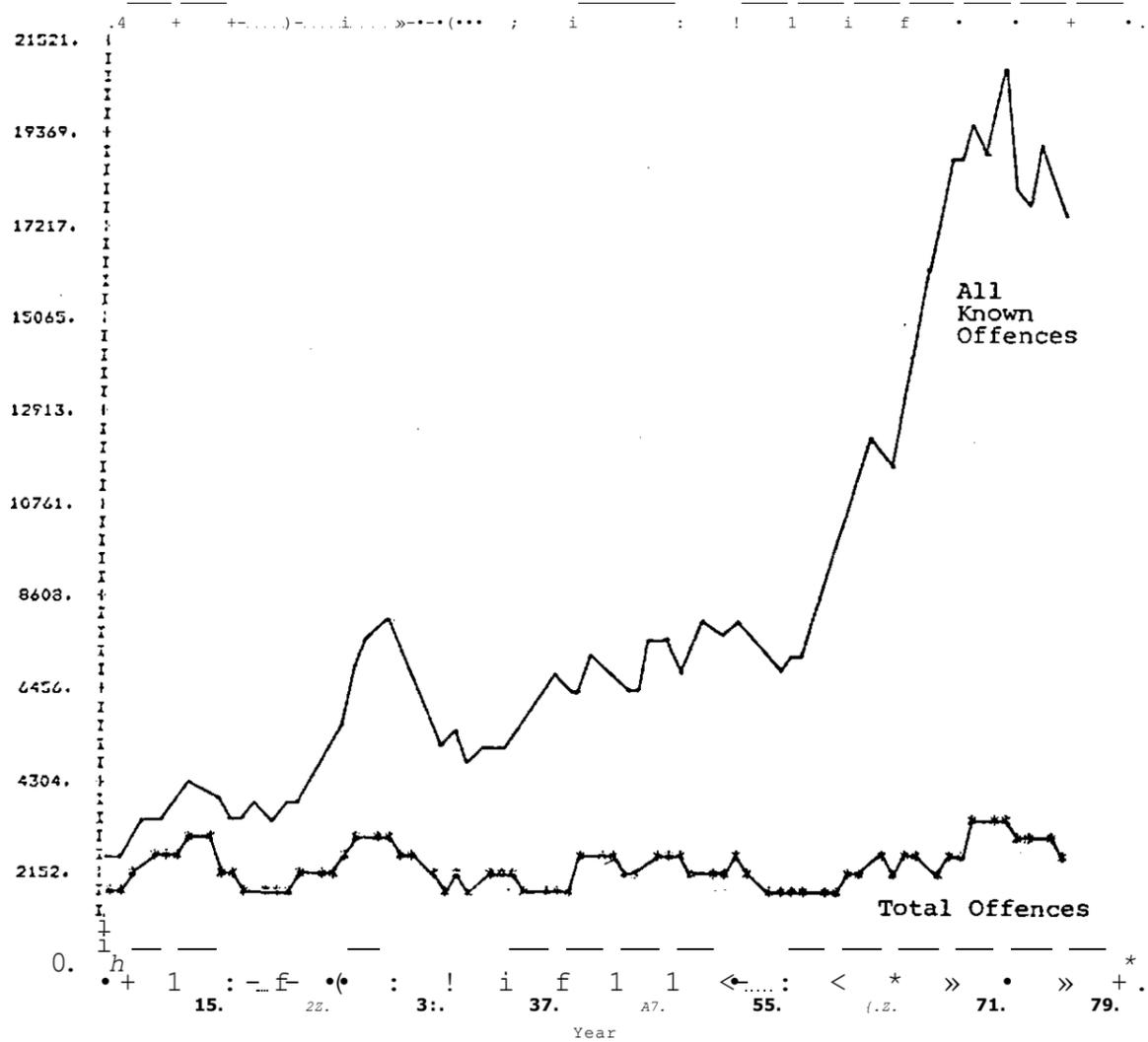
An initial examination of the data for the four States yields the impression that the volume of crime in Australia<sup>54</sup> is about the same in recent years as it was at the turn of the century. If one were to consider the total picture of crime, especially during the last two decades, to be represented by the totality of *all known offences*, one could not escape the conclusion that crime was on the increase. However, as demonstrated by the data in Table 5, the rise in these offences in Australia has been primarily because of violations of traffic and other State laws. In every modern society this set of *known violations*, which could not be considered as crimes in the strict sense of the word, is dealt with differently from *known crimes* such as theft, assault, disorderly conduct, etc. In this respect, our previous arguments on the confounding influences of these violations are highly relevant. A vivid example of the contribution of *total offences* to *all known offences* is presented in Figure 1.

Clearly, therefore, these violations, such as traffic violations, have made up a substantial and increasing proportion of *all known offences*, and this increase has been explosive since the mid 1950s.

An examination of the data relating to total offences shows that the rates of crime have not been the

Figure 1

RELATIONSHIP OF TOTAL OFFENCES TO ALL KNOWN OFFENCES:  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MALES, 1907 TO 1975



highest during recent years in all parts of Australia; this is true for both males and females. The data also indicate that crime has not increased in a linear or monotonic fashion. In each of the four States the first two decades of this century show high crime rates followed by some of the lowest rates in this century for the next 20 to 30 years.

Figures 2 through 9 illustrate offence rates for the four States by sex and by offence categories. Considering the total offences in each State for males and females we observe no monotonic or linear patterns. However, the crime rates for females produce a discernible U-shaped distribution over the years and across jurisdictions. By contrast, such a pattern emerges for males only in Western Australia. It is interesting to note that for females the bottom of the curves fall between 1933 and 1940, approximately during the middle of the study period.

Initially we set out to test the hypothesis that female crime is increasing. With regard to total offences by females, in all States, it is difficult to accept or reject the hypothesis. If we were to study the pattern of crime during the first three decades of the century, we could not but come to the conclusion that female crime was declining. Equally, if we study the period 1940 to 1976, we would have most probably confirmed the hypothesis. Just as we would have been completely mistaken to predict that female crime would continue to decrease in the case of the former, we could be wrong in predicting that female crime will continue to increase in the latter case.

On the basis of our data we see several possible scenarios for female crime: (a) a repeat of the U-shaped cycle (the recurrence of the U-shaped cycle may be sudden or gradual depending upon the proximity of the end point of the present cycle and the origin of the incoming cycle, in time) as may already be evident in the case of New South Wales

Figure 2

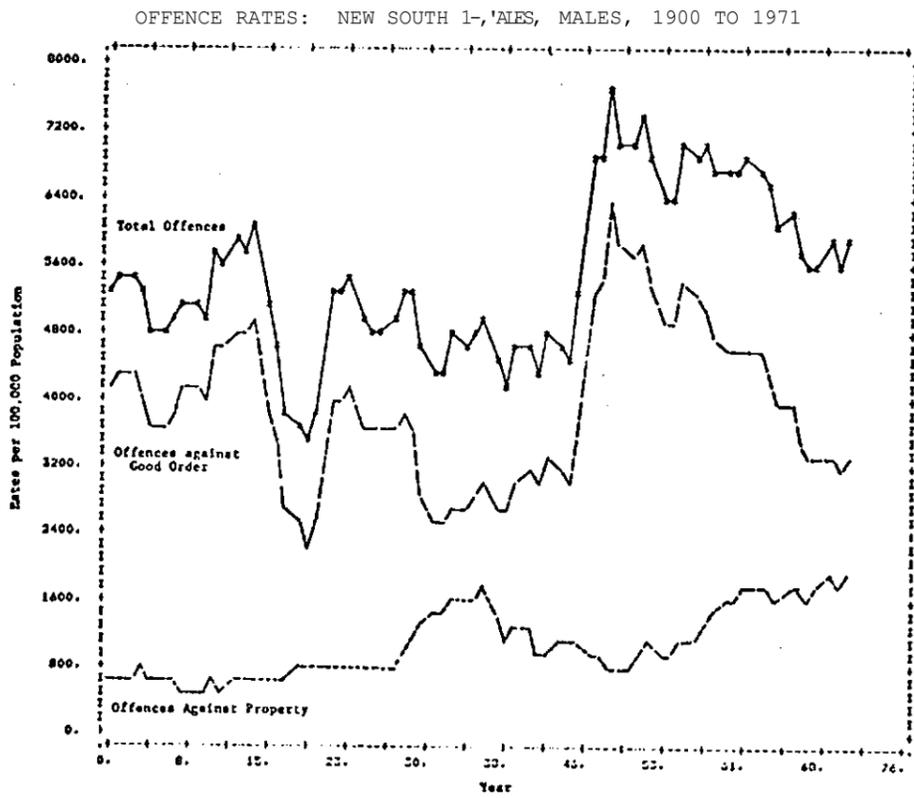


Figure 3

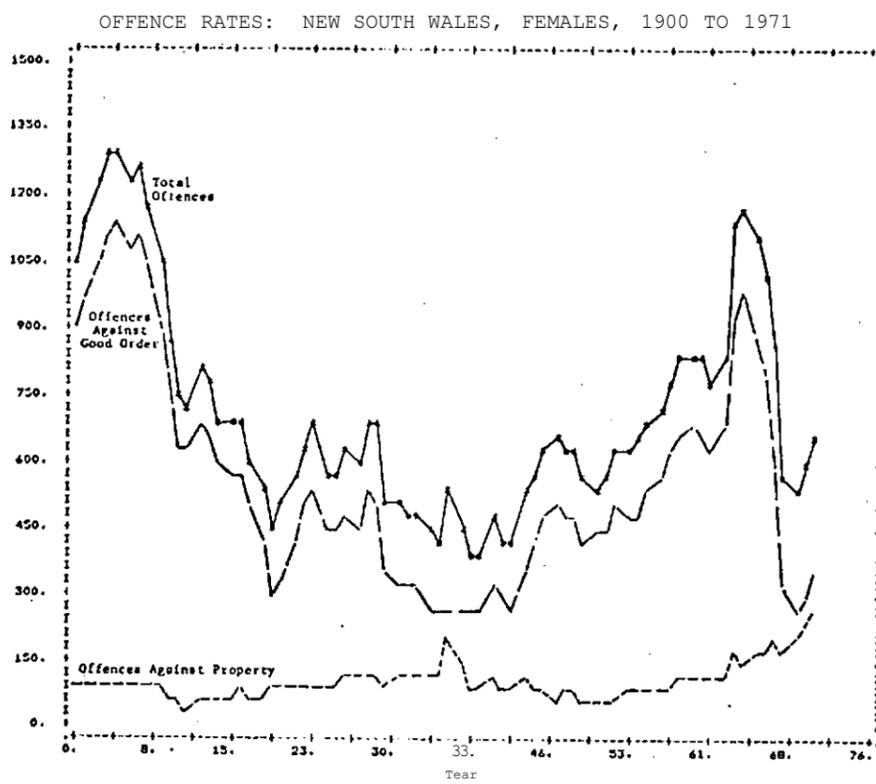


Figure 4

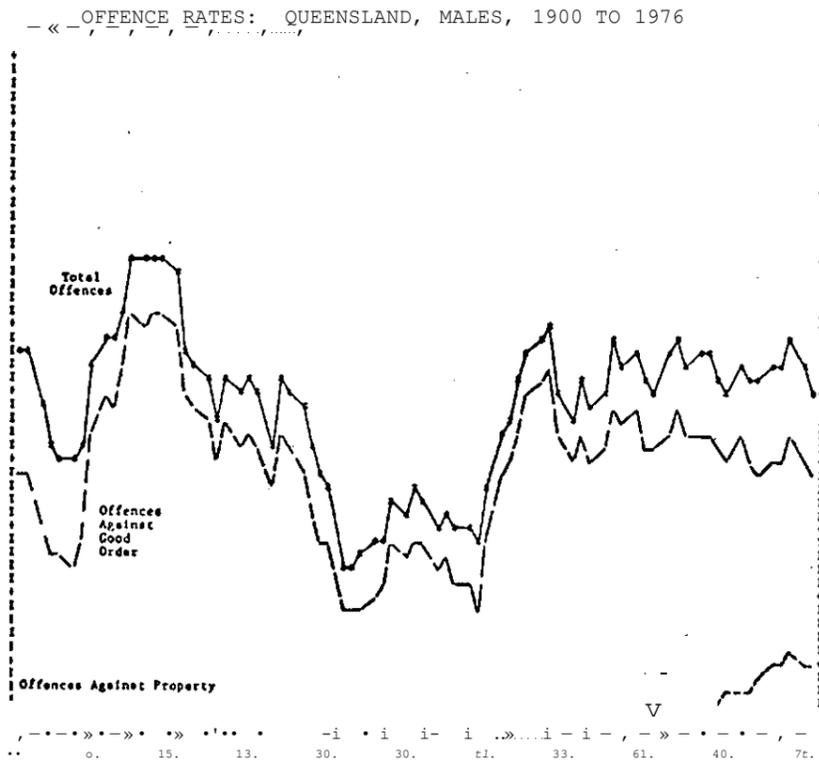


Figure 5

OFFENCE RATES: QUEENSLAND, FEMALES, 1900 TO 1976

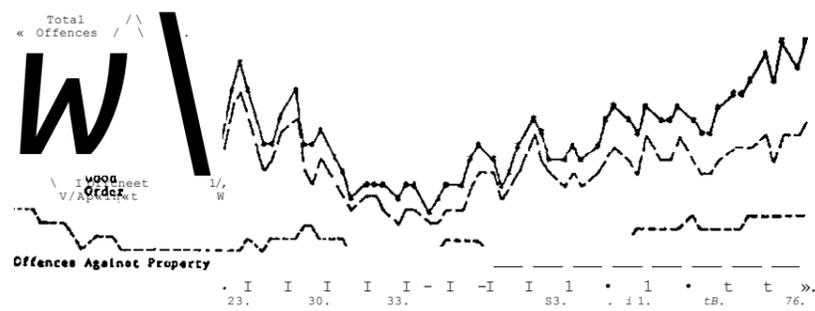


Figure 6

OFFENCE RATES: SOUTH AUSTRALIA, MALES, 1907 TO 1975

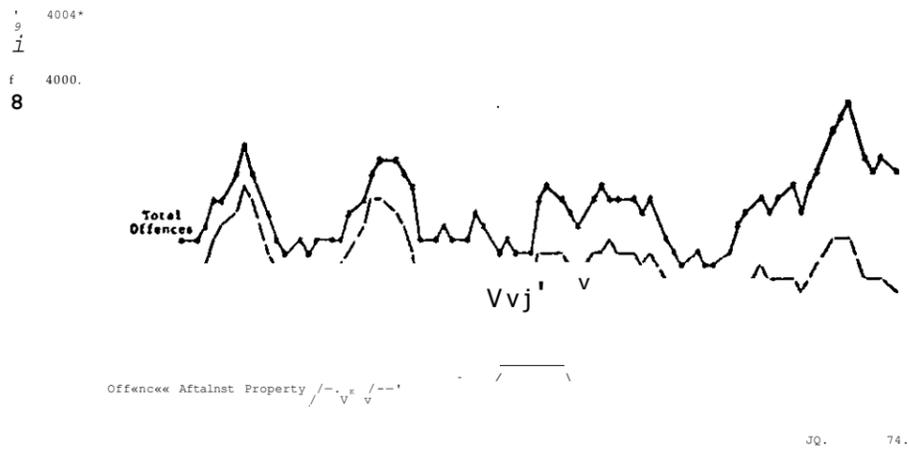


Figure 7

OFFENCE RATES: SOUTH AUSTRALIA, FEMALES, 1907 TO 1975

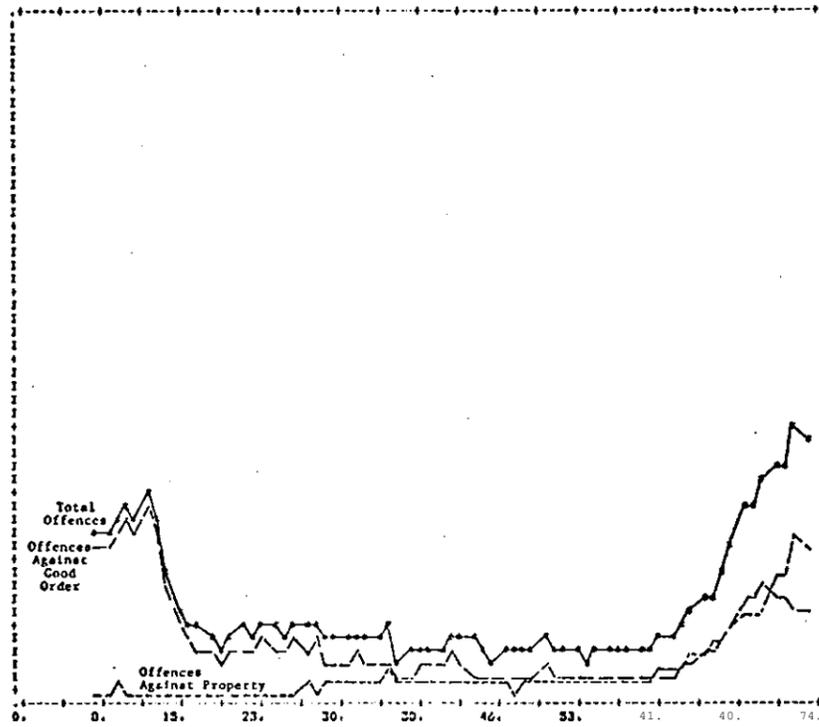


Figure 8

OFFENCE RATES: WESTERN AUSTRALIA, MALES, 1904 TO 1975

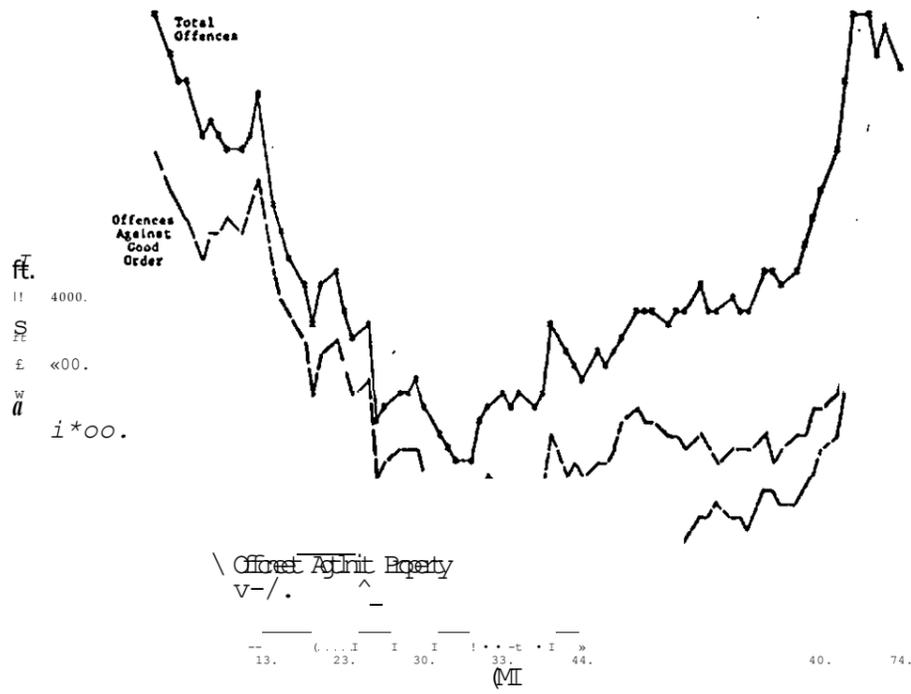
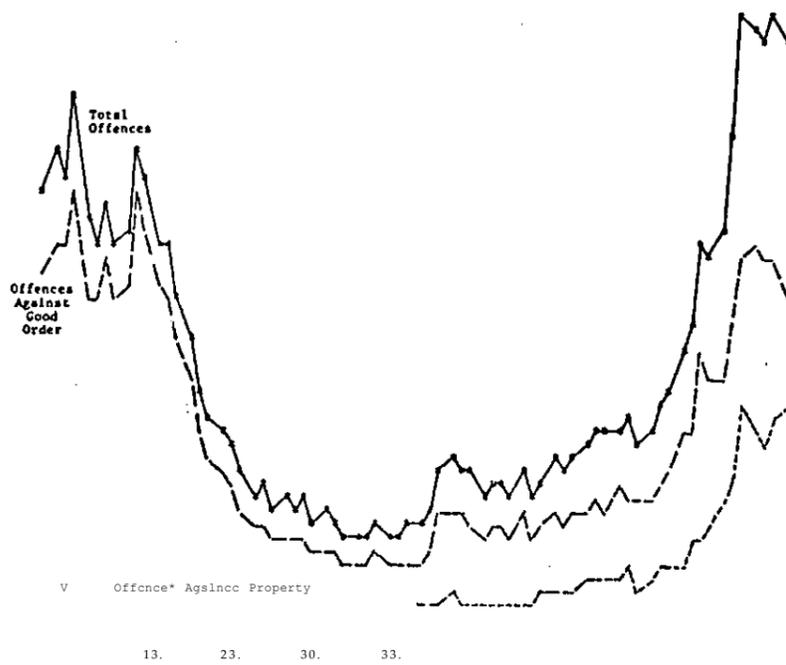


Figure 9

OFFENCE RATES: WESTERN AUSTRALIA, FEMALES, 1904 TO 1975



after the early 1960s (this pattern is similar to the one observed after 1907); (b) a plateauing effect as roughly demonstrated in the other three States during the 1970s; (c) a continuing increase, etc.

The above scenarios not only demonstrate the severe limitations of using attenuated time-spans, but also suggest that a much more meaningful scenario could be drawn if data for a longer time period than our own were available.

With regard to males, the pattern of crime does not show the same consistency across jurisdictions as was observed for the females. Western Australia shows a U-shape distribution, New South Wales and Queensland show a declining pattern and plateau effect respectively, since the late 1940s, and South Australia shows a pattern of erratic fluctuations. The major increases or decreases, however, occurred simultaneously in all of the four States.

As may be observed, the volume of crime for the females has been consistently lower than that for males for the entire period and in every State. The highest female crime rate ever recorded was 1400.7 in Western Australia in the year 1974. This, however, was much lower than the lowest crime rate ever recorded for males, which was 1854.8 in South Australia in 1958.

The question of whether female crime is increasing at a faster rate than male crime may be answered only if we have agreed that female crime has been increasing; this we cannot definitively assert from the data for total offences. We feel that the two general hypotheses could be tested more meaningfully by examining the three offence categories.

The pattern for the offences against the person (Figures 10 and 11) exhibit similar characteristics to those

Figure 10

POLYNOMIAL CURVES OF BEST FIT FOR OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON: HALES

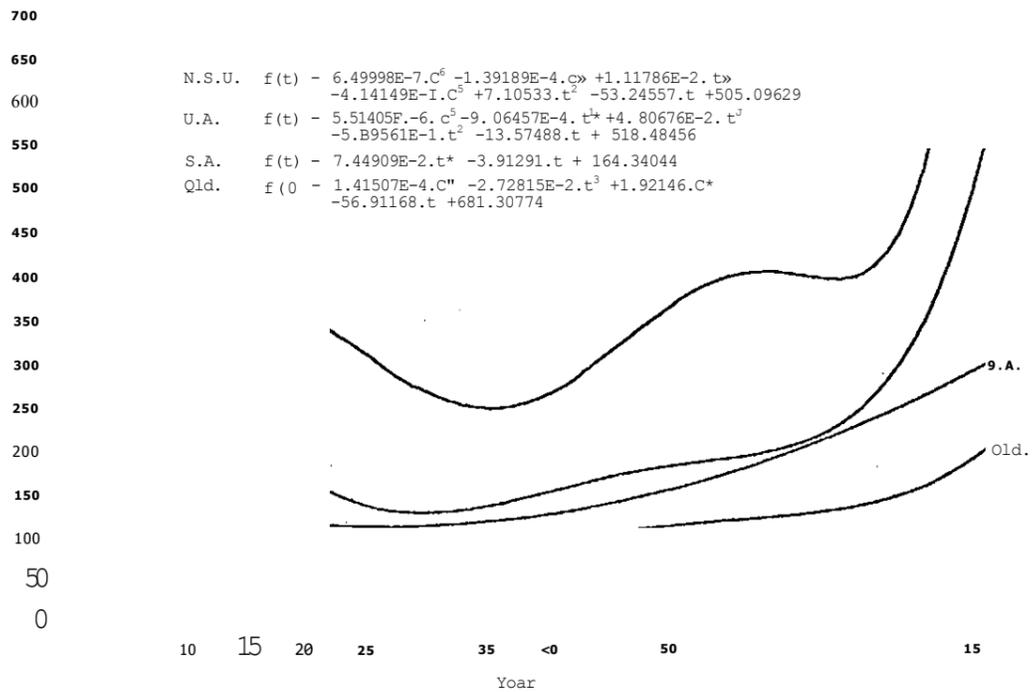
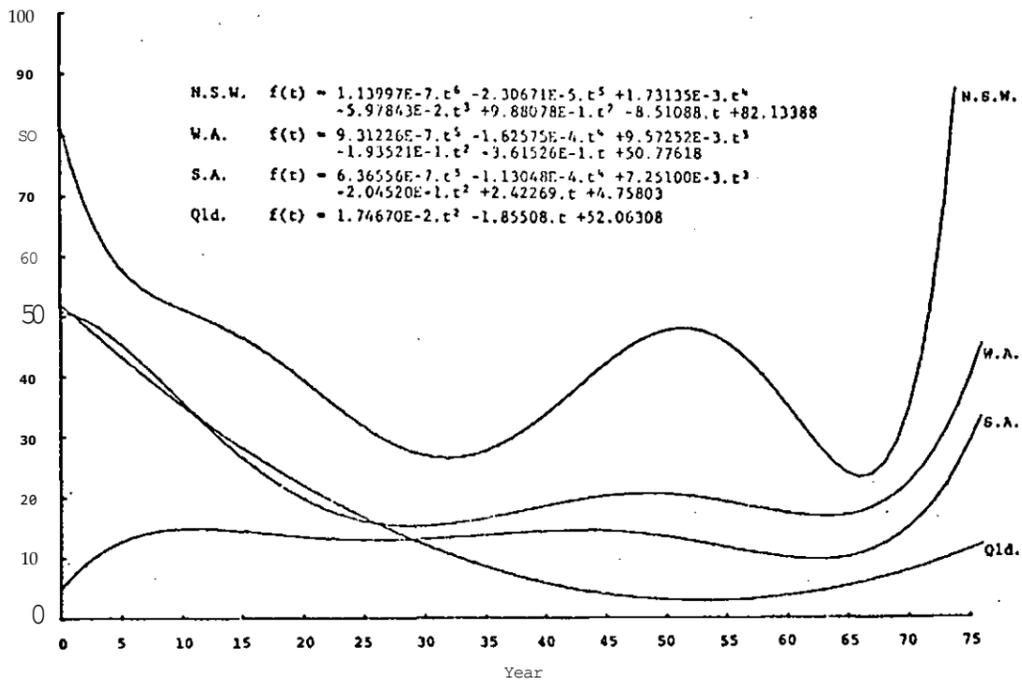


Figure II

POLYNOMIAL CURVES OF BEST FIT FOR OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON: FEMALES



observed for total offences, that is, the volume of crime in recent years is returning to levels comparable to those at the turn of the century. Notwithstanding these similarities, the curves for the offences against the person are far less complex in their behaviour. We could not fit a polynomial curve of a reasonable order in the case of total offences; the offences against the person were far more amenable in this respect.

In a study like this with a long time-span, it is always possible that the spread of the data might require a high order of polynomial to obtain a good fit. Our aim was to use the lowest order of polynomial which produced the highest F-ratio of regression and explained variance.

Referring to the first hypothesis that "female crime has increased since the turn of the century", the polynomials presented in Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the difficulties of testing this hypothesis for the entire period; we cannot accept or reject the hypothesis. It is possible, however, to test the hypothesis using time segments derived from the first differential of the equations to the curves.

The data in Table 6 identify distinct stationary points or turning points which divide the curve into time segments (at which  $f'(t) = 0$ , and  $f''(t) \neq 0$ ). It may be noted that for some of the curves, the number of stationary points are fewer than the order of the polynomial suggests; the possible number of stationary points is equal to the order minus one. A polynomial may have turning points which do not fall within the time-span under study. A case in point is the curve for South Australia (Figure 10, Table 6) in which only one turning point occurs in the entire period.

In relation to the first hypothesis, by reference to Figure 10, it can be seen that in the three States,

Table 6

MEASURES OF THE GOODNESS OF FIT AND POLYNOMIAL  
STATIONARY POINTS FOR OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON

State	Sex	F-ratio of Regression:		Order of f(t)	Polynomial Stationary Points:
		$F_{df_1, *t}$ * $df_2$	$r^2$		f'(t) Year
W.A.	F	61.51266	0.82332	5	1900 1930 1949 1964
	M	271.50566	0.95364	5	1930 (1893)
S.A.	F	10.20763	0.44756	5	1912 1927 1943 1963
	M	127.77166	0.79474	2	1926
Qld.	F	89.6067M	0.70776	2	1953
	M	328.531t2	0.94806	4	1931
N.S.W.	F	52.70565	0.82950	6	1932 1952 1965
	M	88.506e5	0.89095	6	1908 1915 1936 1958 1964

df<sub>1</sub> and df<sub>2</sub> are the degrees of freedom of the regression and residuals respectively.

t All the F-ratios are significant at less than 0.001.

Western Australia, South Australia and Queensland, the curve for offences against the person by males reached the lowest point in the century between 1926 and 1931, and since then, it has been gradually increasing. New South Wales by contrast experienced a series of alternate decreases and increases, and reached the lowest point in the entire century in 1936.

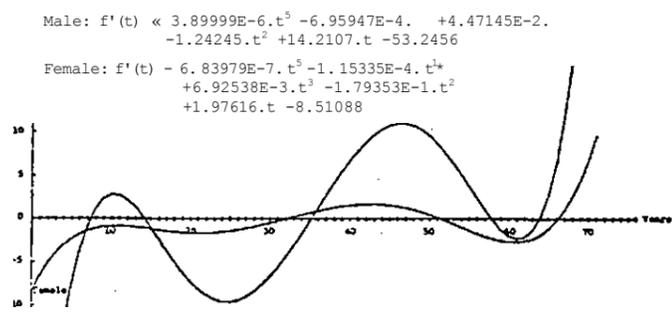
With regard to females, all the States exhibit a varying number of time segments coinciding with alternate increases and decreases. Irrespective of the number of time segments, all the curves show an increase in the rate of crime since the most recent turning point which occurred between 1963 and 1965 in all States except Queensland. Furthermore, in New South Wales and Western Australia the present volume of crime is returning to the level experienced in the earlier part of the century, whereas in Queensland, it is far below the level at the turn of the century. Only in South Australia is the present volume of crime higher than at any time during the entire period.

Thus, for the entire century we reject the hypothesis. However, in terms of time segments, we can reject or accept the hypothesis depending on the segments chosen. For example, if we were to examine offences against the person by females since the mid 1960s, we can accept the hypothesis for New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia. Figure 12 can also be used to verify the above conclusions.

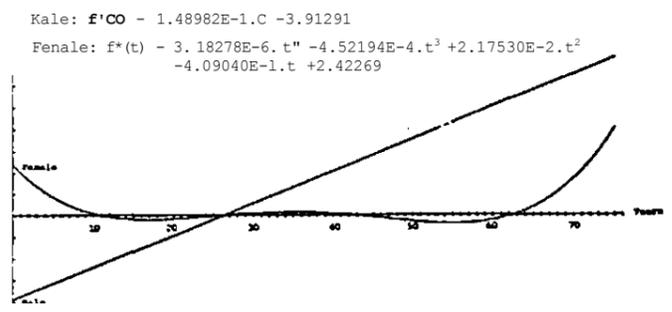
Figure 12 represents the slopes (value of the first derivative,  $f'(t)$ ) of the polynomial curves in Figures 10 and 11. These are especially helpful in testing the second hypothesis, that is, "the rate of increase in female crime has been faster than that for males". The y-axis represents the rate of change; if the value is positive then the crime

Figure 12

SLOPES OF THE POLYNOMIAL CURVES (VALUE OF f(t)) FOR OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON



**NSW**  
New South Wales

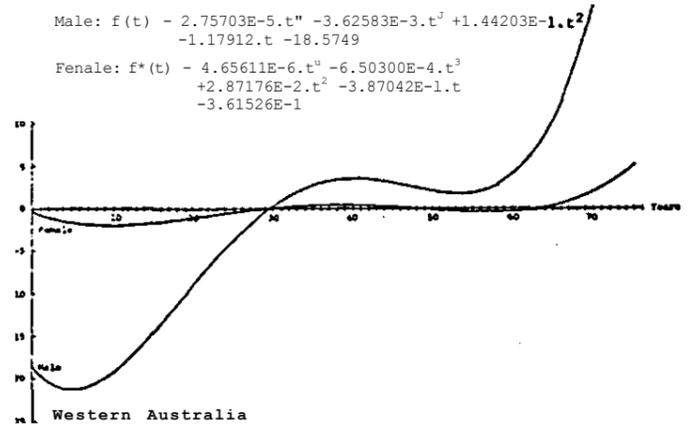


South Australia

Male:  $f'(t) - 5.66029E-4.t^3 - 8.18445E-2.t^2$   
 $+ 3.84293.t - 56.9117$

Female:  $f'(t) - 3.49340E-2.t - 1.85580$

Queensland



Western Australia

rates are increasing, if it is 0 then there is no change, and if it is negative, the rate of crime is decreasing. From Figure 12, as in the case of the first hypothesis, we reject the second hypothesis for the entire time period. If, however, we read the y-axis as a continuum of the rate of increase (a legitimate technique) then the female rate of increase was faster than the male rate of increase for the period 1900 to 1926-31 in Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia, and for the remainder of the century the male rates of increase were faster than those for female. Using a similar analogy in the case of New South Wales, we can also conclude that the male rate of increase was faster than that of females since 1936 and during the period 1908 to 1915.

A similar analysis of property offences as illustrated in Figures 13 and 14 and Table 7 indicates that these crimes by females have been increasing in the most recent time segments and have reached their highest level this century in all four States. For males, both Western Australia and New South Wales have reached levels of crime higher than at any time during this century. While crimes by females in Western Australia have been increasing since 1928, New South Wales experienced a constant increase during the entire period of the study. In the remaining two States, the most recent period of increase has come to an end; the slope for both States is 0 in 1975 and the crime rate is about to decline. Thus, we reject the hypothesis for females in all States and males in all States except New South Wales. Figure 15 can also be used to verify the above conclusions.

Figure 15 indicates that if we consider the entire period of study we can reject the second hypothesis for all States except Western Australia. But as we have emphasised earlier, we must look into time segments. The analysis of the figure shows that we cannot make categorical statements. These slopes for property offences by males and females show

Figure 13

POLYNOMIAL CURVES OF BEST FIT FOR OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY: MALES

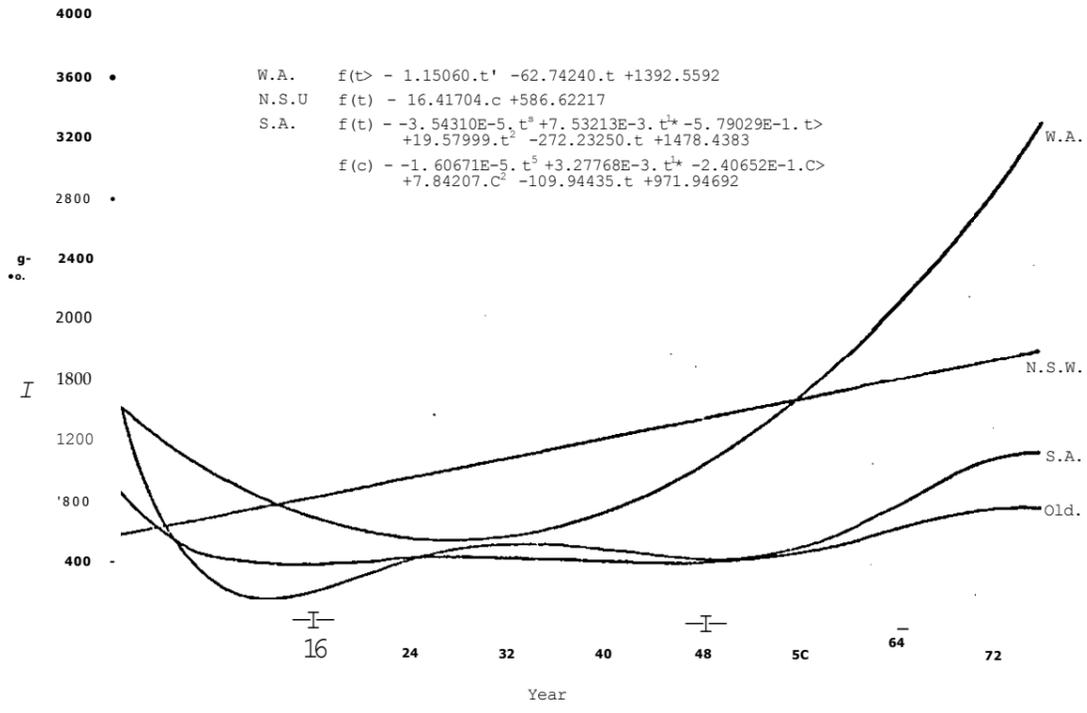


Figure 14

POLYNOMIAL CURVES OF BEST FIT FOR OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY: FEMALES

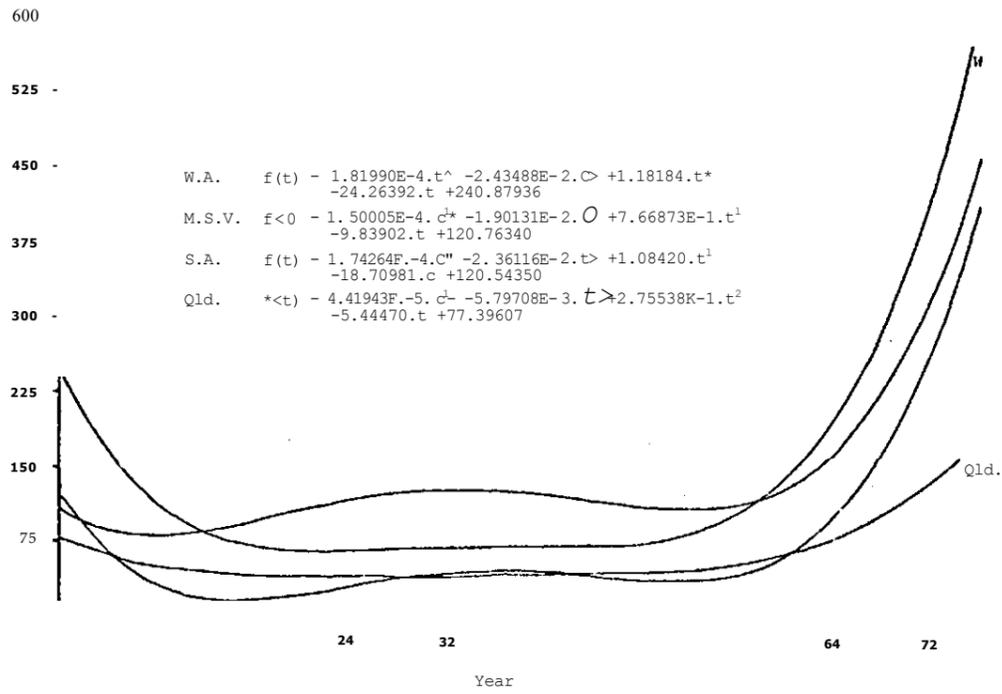


Table 7

MEASURES OF THE GOODNESS OF FIT AND POLYNOMIAL  
STATIONARY POINTS FOR OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY

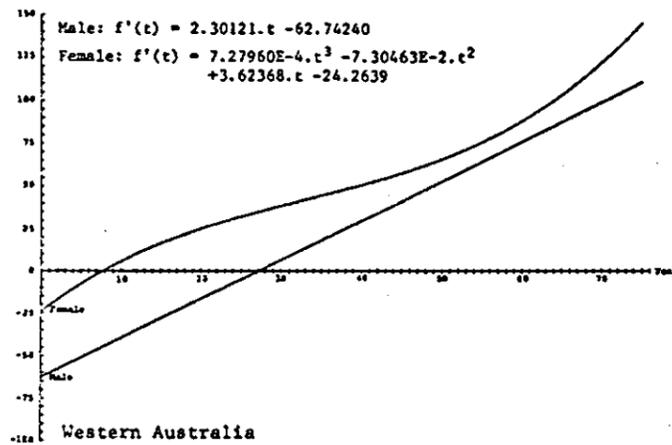
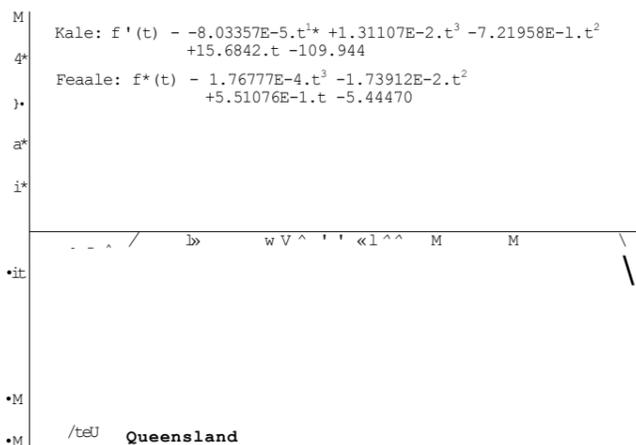
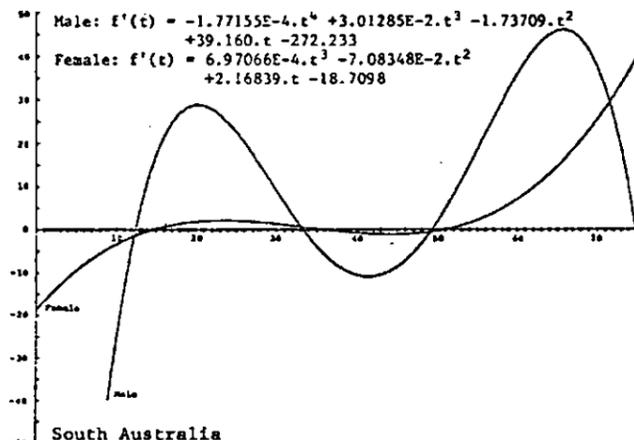
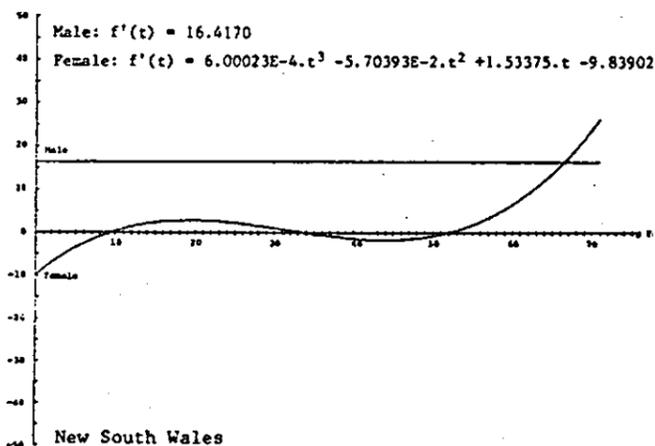
State	Sex	F-ratio of Regression:		Order of f(t)	Polynomial Stationary Points:
		$F_{df_2}$	$r^2$		f'(t) Year
W.A.	F	366.21667	0.95626	4	1908
	M	403.8551 <sub>9</sub>	0.92130	2	1928
S.A.	F	730.805iU	0.97858	4	1915 1937 1951
	M	217.27263	0.94519	5	1913 1934 1950 1975
Qld.	F	246.16372	0.93186	4	1920
	M	72.76771	0.83672	5	1914 1930 1946 1975
N.S.W.	F	76.23267	0.81986	4	1910 1934 1952
	M	134.60370	0.65787	1	

\* df1 and df2 are the degrees of freedom of the regression and residuals respectively.

+ All the F-ratios are significant at less than 0.001.

Figure 15

SLOPES OF THE POLYNOMIAL CURVES (VALUE OF  $f'(t)$ ) FOR OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY



that in Western Australia the rate of increase in property crimes by females has always been higher than those for males and we can definitively assert that property crimes by females have been increasing at a faster rate than property crimes by males during the entire period under study. The State of New South Wales presents a completely reverse situation until 1967, that is, a higher rate of increase for males. The remaining two States of Queensland and South Australia demonstrate a complex picture. At the beginning of this century, property crimes by females increased faster (that is, declined slower) than males; a similar pattern is observed during the period between 1930 and 1950. In the last time segment, however, we notice an interesting phenomenon. While in the first part of this time segment property crimes by both males and females increased, male rates being faster than female rates, in the later part of the time segment the male rate of increase declined and the female rate continued to increase to the extent that in the early 1970s the female rate of increase surpassed that of males. We could reasonably argue that the comparatively higher rate of increase for property offences by females is because of the decline in the rate of increase for males.

These findings are also subject to the limitations imposed by the varying lengths of the recent time segments; these are less constraining than those for the offences against the person. Although the lengths of the most recent time segments cause great concern in our making definitive statements, other writers at times have used not only shorter time-spans but have even gone to the extent of projecting future trends in crime on the basis of their scant data. We cannot be as authoritative as they.

This leaves us with the offences against good order. This offence **category** constitutes the largest proportion of total offences and by and large these have shaped the pattern of total offences, across jurisdiction,

sex and over time (see Figures 2 through 9). During very recent years, however, the gap between the total offences and offences against good order has shown a tendency to become wider; this gap, in most cases, is accounted for by the changes in the offences against property and person.

Table 8, read in conjunction with Figure 16, shows the pattern of offences against good order. Except for South Australia, the pattern for males in all the States shows movements of much greater magnitude than those observed for females. Similar to our conclusions with regard to offences against the person and property, in the case of the present offence category we reject the hypothesis that "female crime has increased since the turn of the century". But if we look at the most recent time segment we do not obtain as consistent patterns as we have observed for the other two offence categories; in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia there was an increase in crimes by females whereas in New South Wales it declined.

Considering the rate of increase in female crime, we observe no single pattern for the entire period under study in any jurisdiction and thus we reject the second hypothesis. In New South Wales and Queensland the magnitude of the changes in slope for males is always larger than that for females. By comparison, the changes in females have been far more gradual as reflected in the distance between turning points and the magnitude of the slopes. Since the mid 1950s the rate of increase for females has been faster than for males but in recent years this pattern is reversed in New South Wales. In Western Australia the male rate of increase has been faster than the rate of increase for females since the late 1940s. In the case of South Australia, although the figure shows that the rate of increase for females in crimes against good order has been faster than that for males since 1930, we must exercise caution in making this statement. As can be seen from Table 8, the explained variance of the

Table 8

MEASURES OF THE GOODNESS OF FIT AND POLYNOMIAL  
STATIONARY POINTS FOR OFFENCES AGAINST GOOD ORDER

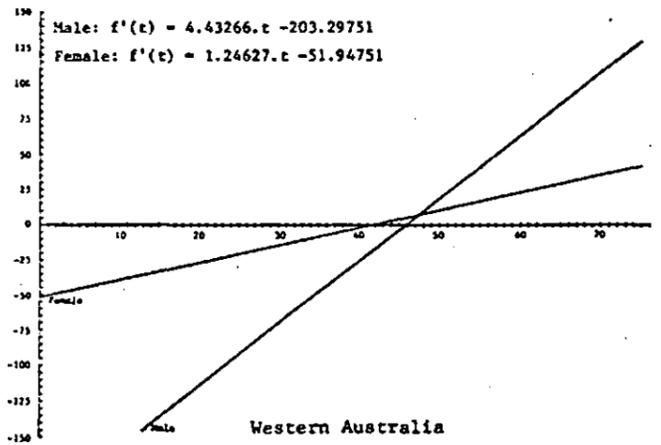
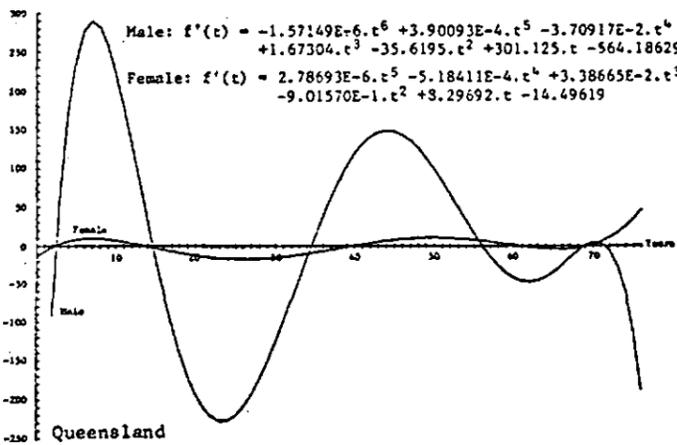
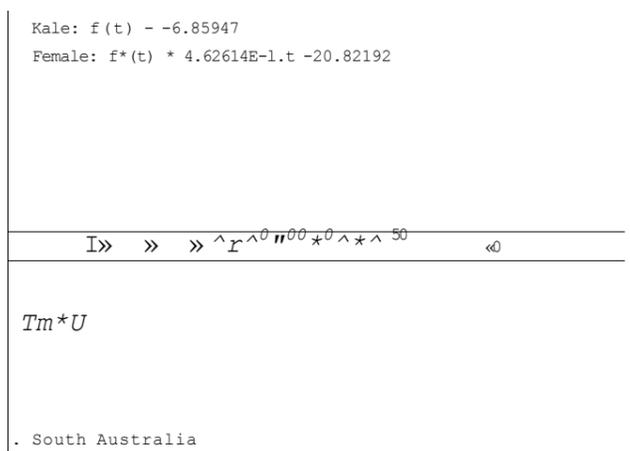
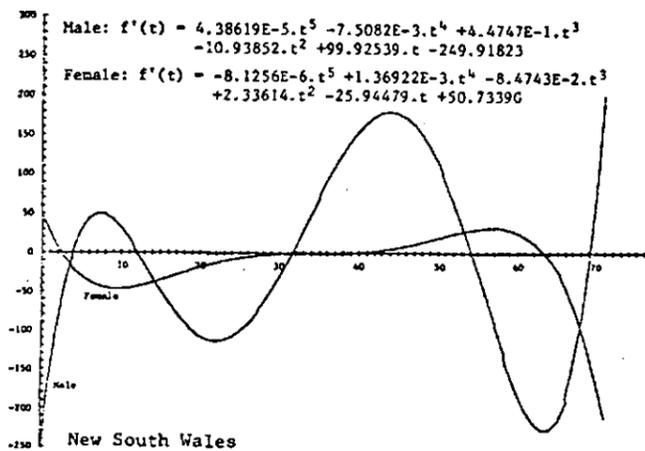
State	Sex	F-ratio of Regression:		Order of f(t)	Polynomial Stationary Points:
		$\frac{vdfi \cdot t}{df2}$	$r^2$		f'(t) Year
W.A.	F	238.817 $\oplus$	0.87377	2	1942
	M	213.86769	0.86109	2	1946
S.A.	F	125.160 IG	0.79135	2	1945
	M	10.599t7	0.13659	1	
Qld.	F	32.96370	0.73859	6	1903 1914 1940 1961 1970
	M	34.005 69	0.77527	7	1903 1915 1935 1956 1969 1972
N.S.W.	F	59.532is	0.84604	6	1903 1939 1964
	M	18.944g5	0.63619	6	1904 1912 1932 1954 1971

dfi and df2 are the degrees of freedom of the regression and residuals respectively.

t All the F-ratios, except South Australia males, are significant at less than 0.001. The F-ratio for South Australia males is significant at less than 0.05.

Figure 16

SLOPES OF THE POLYNOMIAL CURVES (VALUE OF  $f'(t)$ ) FOR OFFENCES AGAINST GOOD ORDER



04

curve to the male data is only one-sixth that of the curve to the female data, which seriously jeopardises any comparison between males and females.

(ii) Relative Participation of Males and Females:

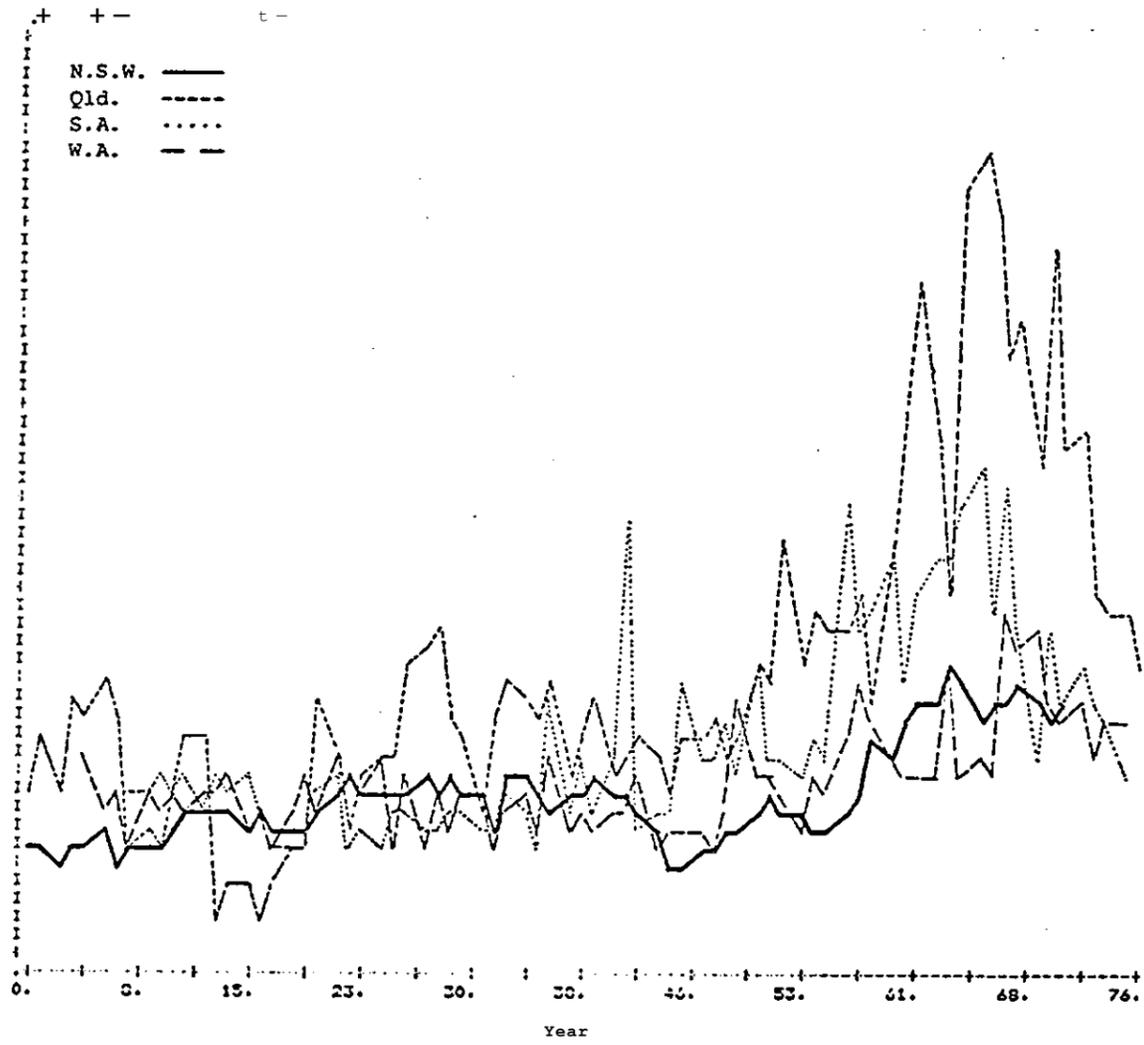
In the above section we have demonstrated that the two hypotheses could not be verified for the entire time period under study. Our findings showed that a more meaningful result could be obtained by examining the specific time segments. Having analysed the dynamics of the volume of change in crime it might also be useful to link these dynamics to the relative participation of the males and females in crime.

Figure 17 presents the female to male ratio in offences against the person for the four States during this century. It is unmistakably clear that the relative participation of females has been declining since the end of the Second World War and that the ratio of female to male since then is lower than any that existed prior to the mid 1940s. (A higher female to male ratio means fewer males per female and *vice versa*.) It is interesting to note that the lowest female to male ratio in offences against the person occurred in all the four States during the mid 1960s and although in most recent years a higher ratio is obtained, this is still lower than most of the years under study.<sup>55</sup> The highest and lowest female to male ratios in these offences are presented in Table 9.

In the earlier section of the volume of offences against the person, we have shown that the rate of crime for both sexes has been increasing during recent years and that the male rate of increase was faster than the female rate in all the States since the early 1930s. The lower female to male ratio in all the States since the Second World War is quite consistent with the above findings. Before the early

Figure 17

RELATIVE FEMALE-MALE PARTICIPATION IN OFFENCES AGAINST  
THE PERSON FOR THE FOUR STATES/ 1900 TO 1976



to

1930s the rate of increases for both males and females declined; the female rate of decline being slower than that of male. This is reflected in the higher female to male ratio for the period (Figure 17).

Table 9

FEMALE TO MALE RATIO IN OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON:  
1900 TO 1976

State	Highest		Lowest	
	Year	Value	Year	Value
N.S.W.	1945	5.732	1963	16.011
Qld.	1913	2.370	1965	44.606
S.A.	1918	6.135	1965	28.000
W.A.	1947	6.175	1967	19.434

The offences against property, on the other hand, demonstrated a reverse pattern, that is, a higher female to male ratio since the Second World War (Figure 18). Furthermore, the period since the mid 1960s experienced the most rapid and sustained rise of the female to male ratio in all the States for the entire century. This is consistent with the high relative rate of increase in crimes against property by females, as shown in Figure 15.

The relative participation of males and females in offences against property and person remained fairly close up to the mid 1950s. Since then this participation in offences against property has increased and presently is more than twice as high as in offences against the person.

For offences against good order the female to male ratio has in recent years returned to the level experienced

Ratio of Number of Male per Female  
(based on rates per 100,000 population)

8

during the first decade of the century in all jurisdictions (Figure 19). This pattern is distinctly different from those observed in the other two offence- categories. Except for South Australia we did not observe any substantial changes in the relative participation of males and females in offences against good order in the entire period under study.

(iii) Conclusions:

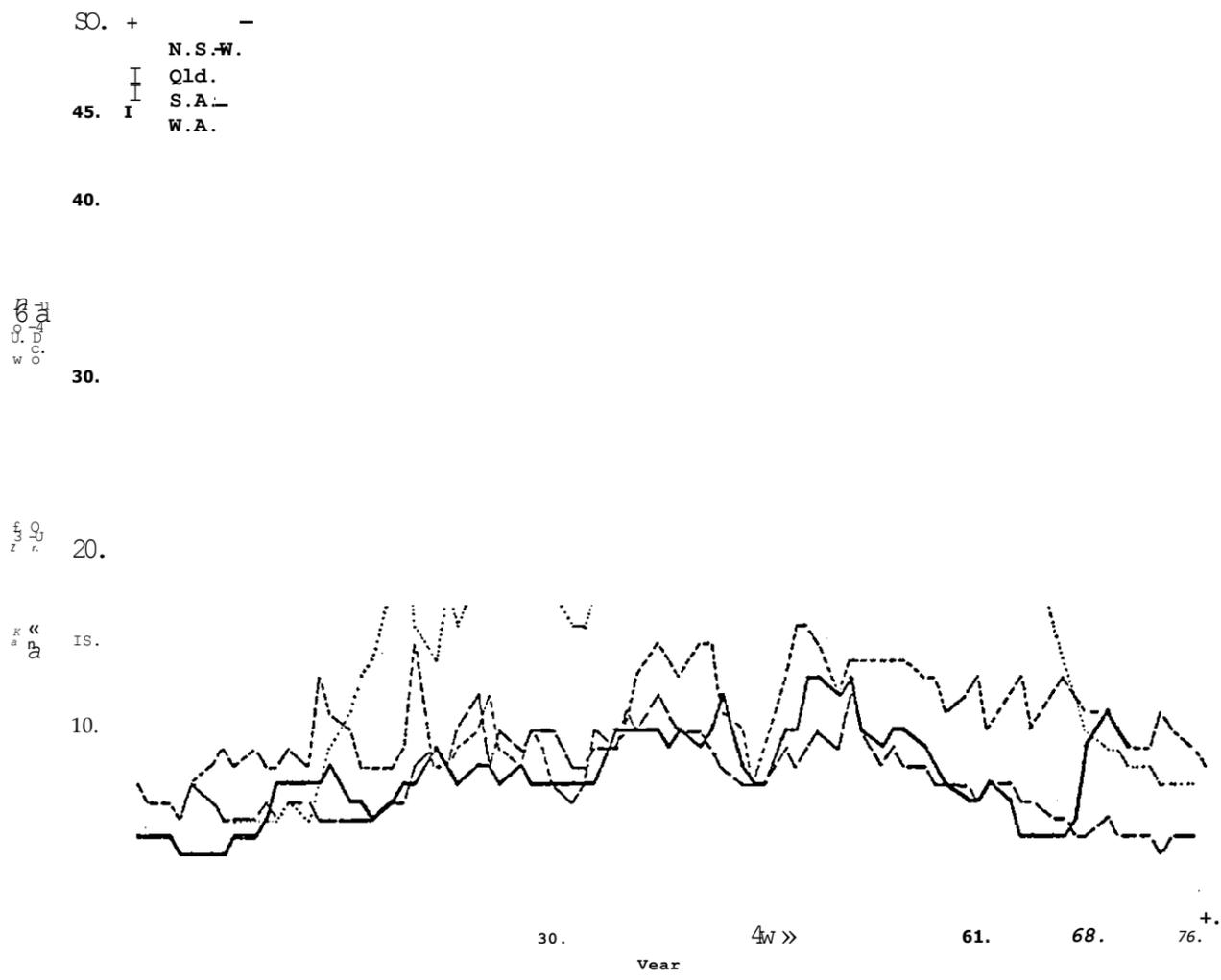
Issues relating to crime and criminal justice have never been so prominent in a nation's affairs as they have been in recent years. Increasing criticism of the functioning of the criminal justice system and debates on new legislation and other measures are but a few of the indicators of concern. This concern focusses on the extent of criminality which in many quarters is felt to be unprecedented. Although there have been increases in crime in recent years, the present volume of crime, in all States, is returning to levels experienced earlier in the century. In most instances we have observed that the volume of crime was highest at the beginning of the century and it has reached its present level after a series of major and minor fluctuations. These general observations apply equally to offences by males as well as females.

*Total crime:* One of the phenomenon which we observed frequently in all States and across sex, was that the volume of crime declined rather sharply during the first two decades of the century. As compared to this, the current increase in the volume of crime demonstrates a completely reverse pattern. The rate of change in both instances has not only been equally rapid, but the most rapid.

*Offences against the person:* Our findings are that while these offences by both sexes have been increasing since the mid 1930s, the rate of increase for males has been much faster than the rate of increase for females in all

Figure 19

RELATIVE FEMALE-MALE PARTICIPATION IN OFFENCES AGAINST  
GOOD ORDER FOR THE FOUR STATES/ 1900 TO 1976



States. Furthermore, the magnitude of the rate of change for males was far larger than females. These findings are contrary to those of some recent writers. Data on relative participation convincingly support the above findings, that is, the female to male ratio since the end of the Second World War has been declining and is the lowest this century.

*Offences against property:* Here we observed a different pattern to that of offences against the person. Since the early 1950s, the volume of offences against property by both sexes and in all States have been increasing continually. Except in the case of Western Australia, the rate of increase for females has been faster than males only since the mid 1960s; in Western Australia the female rate of increase has always been faster than that of males. The relative participation by females in this offence category is the highest this century since the mid 1960s in all States.

*General:* The present study covers a period of three-quarters of a century. In spite of this extensive data set we have desisted from making any forecasts of crime, although one could reasonably expect some indications of criminality in society from such a study and other writers have done so with far less data at their disposal. Our main reservation for not predicting future patterns of crime in the four selected States is that we have taken into account only two independent variables, that is, time and population. We believe that the phenomenon of crime is sensitive to socio-economic and political changes which constitute a large set of exogenous variables outside the scope of the present study. If one disregards the relationship between exogenous variables and crime, which is entirely unacceptable, and predicts on the basis of curves fitted to the available data the predictions will be merely artifacts of the curve fitting equations.

In a forthcoming publication, we intend to examine criminal statistics in relation to a range of exogenous variables. This exercise would hopefully lend itself to the development of a model for predicting criminality. Some of the earlier writers<sup>56</sup> on the subject of criminal statistics have noted the effect of certain major historical events, for example, world wars, depressions, etc., on criminality. It would be possible to examine our own data set in terms of major historical events in this century. An economic history of Australia testifies that unemployment reached an all time high of 20 per cent during the Great Depression of the 1930s. If the relationship between crime and unemployment observed by many writers has any validity, intuitively we would expect some impact of the Depression on criminality to be reflected in the criminal statistics. Similarly, during the height of the Second World War, there were approximately 720,000 young Australians, mostly males, fighting the war outside Australia this represents a very high proportion of the then Australian population. Again, intuitively, one would expect some impact of the absence of this population group to be manifested in the criminal statistics.

Data for the major study of which the present study is an offshoot, will take into consideration the effect of these historical events. However, there are many major methodological hurdles to be overcome, least of which is the effect of time lag<sup>57</sup>; an initial analysis of our own data suggests that females are lagged three years behind males. To localise the lag effects to their source it is necessary to examine the interaction of crime with other major socio-economic variables.

The study suggests that the claim that there has been a substantial increase in the volume of crimes by females in recent years is somewhat tenuous. Certainly in the case of offences against the person and good order, volumes of female crime comparable to present levels have

been observed at other times. The volume of property offences by females, on the other hand, has reached the highest level in all States in recent years; this is also the case for males.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. D. KLEIN, *The Etiology of Female Crime: A Review of the literature*. ISSUES IN CRIMINOLOGY, Vol. 8, No. 2, Fall 1973, pp. 3-30.
1. R. SIMON. WOMEN AND CRIME (1975).
3. A. KAPLAN. CONDUCT ON ENQUIRY (1964).
4. C. LOMBROSO. THE FEMALE OFFENDER (1895).
5. W. THOMAS, THE UNADJUSTED GIRL (1923).
6. O. POLLAK, THE CRIMINALITY OF WOMEN (1950).
7. There are several others whose works are of for example, S. FREUD, FEMALE SEXUALITY (1931), and NEW INTRODUCTORY LECTURES ON PSYCHO-ANALYSIS (1933) ; S. and E. GLEUCK, FOUR HUNDRED DELINQUENT WOMEN (1934); K. DAVIS, PROSTITUTION in R.K. MERTON and R.A. NISBET (eds.) CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS (1961); J. and V. COWIE, E. SLATER, DELINQUENCY IN GIRLS (1968); D.A. WARD, MAURICE JACKSON and R.E. WARD, CRIMES OF VIOLENCE BY WOMEN, in D.J. MULVIHILL, *et al.*, CRIMES OF VIOLENCE, Vol. 13 (1969). Because of limitations of space and considerations of direct relevance to the paper in hand, these works have not been reviewed; extensive reviews of these authors appear in D. KLEIN, *supra* note 1; C. SMART, WOMEN, CRIME AND CRIMINOLOGY (1976); and J.G. WEIS, *Liberation and Crime: The Invention of the New Female Criminal*. CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, Fall/Winter 1976, pp. 17-27.
8. THOMAS, *supra* note 5.
9. C. LOMBROSO with GUGLIELMO FERRERO, LA DONNA DELINQUENTS, LA PROSTITUTA E LA DONNA NORMALE, Turin: Bocca, 1903. Extracted from G. LOMBROSO-FERRERO, CRIMINAL MAN (1972), p. 294.
10. THOMAS, *op. ait.*, p. 2.

- 11 *Id.*, p. 72.
- 12 POLLAK, *op. cit.*, p. 161
- 13 *Id.*, p. 8.
- 14 *Id.*, p. 10.
- 15 *Id.*, p. 11.
- 16 THOMAS, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
- 17 KLEIN, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- 18 THOMAS, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
- 19 Our emphasis.
- 20 C. LOMBROSO, *CRIME: ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES* (1968).
- 21 POLLAK, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
- 22 D.A. WARD, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 847; F. HEIDENSOHN, *The Deviance of Women: a critique and an enquiry*, BRITISH JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1968, p. 160; C. SMART, *op. cit.*, p. 1; D. KLEIN and J. KRESS, *Any Woman's Blues: A critical overview of women, crime and the criminal justice system*, CRIME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, Spring-Summer, 1976, pp. 34-35.
- 23 POLLAK, *op. cit.*
- 24 *Id.*, pp. 63-64.
- 25 Among many other inconsistencies the following two serve to illustrate:

- (a) Convictions of Women in Denmark (Offences Against the Penal Code) and Sweden (Serious Offences)

Year	Denmark		Sweden	
	Women	Index	Women	Index
1937	520	100	498	100
1938	576	111	533	107
1939	548	105	510	102
1940	654	126	658	132
1941	1,069	206	1,114	224
1942	1,698	326	1,559	313
1943	2,097	403		

Source: Adapted from O. POLLAK, *THE CRIMINALITY OF WOMEN* (1950), Tables 11 & 12, p. 68.

Pollak concludes from the above data that, "the volume of female convictions in Sweden rose by about 200 per cent and in Denmark by 300 per cent." *v. id.*, p. 68. Two obvious points of criticism must be made:

- (i) he compares two distinctly different sets of data, total offences against the Penal Code in Denmark and only serious offences in Sweden (which by definition will be numerically less than total offences); and
  - (ii) the data for both countries show a similar rise of about 200 per cent between 1937 and 1942. The 300 per cent rise in Denmark takes place in 1943 for which year Pollak does not provide Swedish data.
- (b) Yearly Averages of Convictions of Women Offenders in the Arrondissement Utrecht for Selected Time Periods

Year Groups	Yearly Averages of Female Convictions
1910-14	57
1915-18	85
1919-20	108

Source: O. POLLAK, *THE CRIMINALITY OF WOMEN* (1950), Table 10, p. 67.

Once again he concludes that, "the rise of female crime in neutral Holland during World War I appears convincingly from these figures." *v. id.*, p. 67. This may as well be because of the unequal year groupings of the data.

- 26. D. HOFFMAN-BUSTAMANTE, *The Nature of Female Criminality*, *ISSUES IN CRIMINOLOGY*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Fall 1973, pp. 117-136.
- 27. F. ADLER, *SISTERS IN CRIME* (1975), p. 3.
- 28. *Id.*, pp. 16-18.
- 29. M.E. WOLFGANG, *Uniform Crime Reports: A Critical Appraisal*, *UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA LAW REVIEW*, Vol. 111, No. 6, April 1973, pp. 728-739.
- 30. SIMON, *op. cit.*
- 31. ADLER, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

32. The absolute percentage change for women was 13.3 but as the rise in female population was 15.2548 per cent during this 12 year period, the per cent rate change is -2.2.
33. L. CRITES, WOMEN OFFENDERS: MYTH VS. REALITY, in L. CRITES (ed.) THE FEMALE OFFENDER (1976), pp. 33-44.
34. *Id.*, p. 35.
35. *Id.*, p. 36.
36. *Id.*, p. 38.
37. *Id.*, pp. 36-37.
38. D. KLEIN and J. KRESS, *op. cit.*
39. C. SMART, *op. cit.*
40. M. DIXON, THE REAL MATILDA (1976) and A. SUMMERS, DAMMED WHORES AND GODS POLICE (1975).
41. P. ROBINSON, WOMEN AND THE LAW: THE FIRST FORTY YEARS. Unpublished paper presented at the Women and Law Conference, Sydney University, August 1978.
42. A. SUMMERS, *op. cit.*
43. The study on *Patterns and Trends of Crime in Australia* was initiated in mid 1977. This study, utilising police, court and prison statistics for the period 1900 to 1976 in every State of Australia, examines crime in relation to selected socio-economic variables, The study is expected to be completed by the end of 1979.
44. Australia presently consists of six States and two Territories; the population of Australia, as at the 1976 census, was 13,991,059.
45. Including Courts of Summary Jurisdiction, Petty Sessions and Children's Courts, but excluding Coroners Courts.
46. Discharges include withdrawn, dismissed, not guilty, remanded, etc.
47. The five major categories are: offences against the person; offences against property; forgery, uttering and other currency offences; offences against good order; and other miscellaneous offences.
48. As far as we have been able to ascertain the

jurisdictions started publishing police data in the years set out below and containing the following information:

S.A.	1913-14	All reported offences.
N.S.W.	1953	Only serious reported offences.
Qld.	1970-71	All reported offences excluding traffic and street offences.
W.A.	1964	Selected crimes reported.

49. T. SELLIN, *The Basis of a Crime Index*, JOURNAL OF CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINOLOGY, Vol. 22, September 1931, p. 346.
50. These include: murder, attempted murder, manslaughter, manslaughter by driving, assault, unnatural offences, etc.
51. These include: robbery, break and enter, larceny, wilful/malicious damage, fraud, false pretences, forgery, uttering, other currency offences, etc.
52. These include: drunkenness, disorderly conduct, public mischief, riotous or indecent behaviour, offensive behaviour, etc.
53. Thus the offences examined in this study are the offences against the person, property and good order; and the term "total offences" represents the total of the above three offence categories.
54. Henceforth Australia will be used to describe all the four States under study.
55. During the period 1913 to 1919 in Queensland, the female to male ratio for this offence category was the highest for any State at any time. A careful scrutiny of the raw data in conjunction with prison statistics revealed that an unspecified number of offences, usually placed in offences against good order, were inexplicably included in the offences against the person category. We were unable to rectify this recording aberration.
56. T. SELLIN, RESEARCH MEMORANDUM ON CRIME IN THE DEPRESSION (1937); T.R. GURR, *et al.*, THE POLITICS OF CRIME AND CONFLICT (1977); P.N. GRABOSKY, SYDNEY IN FERMENT (1977); H. BRENNER, ESTIMATING THE SOCIAL COSTS OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY: IMPLICATIONS FOR MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH, AND CRIMINAL AGGRESSION (1976).
57. H. BRENNER, *op. cit.*; J.A. FOX, FORECASTING CRIME DATA (1978).