

**CRIME  
&  
JUSTICE  
BULLETIN 4**

**PRISONERS IN GLENDAIRY PRISON**

**NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CRIME PREVENTION  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**

## Foreword

This is the fourth in the series of publications designed to make information about crime and justice easily available to the people of Barbados.

This bulletin has been published so that Barbadians can learn more about the characteristics of prisoners in the one prison of Barbados. The information was collected in 1995 but is still relevant today as the type of people in prison has not changed significantly. We hope that readers will find the bulletin interesting and useful. We always welcome comments on our work.

Christopher Nuttall  
Consultant

**NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON CRIME PREVENTION**

**PRISONERS IN GLENDAIRY PRISON**

The purpose of this report is to give a profile of prisoners in Glendairy Prison, Barbados. Information which is collected routinely by the courts and prisons does not give enough detail about the prisoners to produce profiles. A detailed survey of a sample of prisoners, however, was carried out in 1995 for the National Task Force on Crime Prevention. Some results of this survey have been published in the report “Criminal Risk Factors” but the analysis for that report was carried out without connecting or cross-tabulating the various pieces of data which were collected. I have therefore re-analysed that data to produce this report.

It should be noted that what it is not now possible to do is to provide the other key analytical tool missing from the original survey which would have been to compare the answers given by prisoners to the same data for the non-prisoner population. (For example, this study shows that 13% of the prisoners aged under 25 had been to church in the last two years prior to going to prison. Without knowing the proportion of 16-24 year-olds in the non-criminal population who go to church we cannot say whether this is a risk factor). A further study is under-way, however, which will follow-up the prisoners in the survey and observe which re-offend and which are successful in staying out of trouble.

### **The Survey**

The sample interviewed was 110 men – 100 convicted and 10 on remand. It was a random sample of 15% of the 728 convicted and remanded males in the prison at

the time. 24 out of the 25 women in the prison were also interviewed but no results from this survey have been published.

The interview was long and detailed covering personal history, community involvement, religious involvement, educational background, employment history, criminal background, family background, medical history and substance abuse.

Just over 40% of the answers were coded. A very small number of pieces of factual information (age, gender, offence, convicted or remand and sentence) came from the inmate's file. Everything else came from the interview of the inmate.

As the group interviewed was a snap-shot of the prison population and not of admissions or releases it is not representative of all people sent to prison. A sample of the population will include a much higher proportion of serious offenders and people with long sentences than a sample of admissions.

In the published report each variable examined was described in isolation and no attempt was made to relate or cross-tabulate different variables. This report uses four different cross-tabulations to analyse the sample but it starts by repeating some of the information in the Risk Factors report.

After looking at the group as a whole the male population of Glendairy is analysed in four ways; looking at the population in terms of:

- ◆ age,
- ◆ the employment position of the prisoners on conviction,
- ◆ the type of offence the prisoners had been found guilty of, and;
- ◆ the criminal history of the group.

The female population of Glendairy is too small for the results to be analysed in the same way but as a group they do produce some interesting findings and are included in a separate section.

One last word of caution. The sample of male prisoners (110) is very small and once it is broken into the sub-groups produced by cross-tabulations some of the percentages and comparisons are derived from very small numbers. I have taken 15 in a group as the minimum number to base a percentage on. This does mean that some of the conclusions have to be very tentative.

### **The Population of Males in Glendairy**

(For full details see the report on Criminal Risk Factors).

- 35% of the prisoners were under 25 years old. A further 30% were between 25 and 29 years.
- A third of the population was in prison for burglary or larceny. A further 25% were in for robbery and 14% for sex offences.
- Nearly 10% of the population were on remand.
- 22% of the sentenced population had a sentence of under 2 years. 41% 2-5 years. The remaining 37% over 5 years.
- A third of the prisoners had previously appeared in juvenile court
- For just over a third of the prisoners this was their first term of imprisonment.
- 36% said that this was their first conviction
- 46% said that at some time they had been involved in acts of violence and 45% said they had used a weapon.
- 20% said that they had been involved in group criminal activity
- Nearly 20% of the sample said their crime was to obtain money and 14% said it

was to feed a drug habit.

- Nearly 80% of the prisoners said they would not get back into trouble.
- 92% of the men were single and less than 4% were married.
- Nearly 60% of the men were in some form of informal union.
- 53% of the men said they had children.
- Almost a quarter of the prisoners belonged to a club.
- 92% of the prisoners had gone to church as a child but only a quarter had gone to church in the 2 years prior to this imprisonment.
- 29% of the men had attended composite or senior school. 71% had been to secondary school.
- 62% of those attending secondary school had no school leaving certificates.
- 32% had left school before 16.
- 50% of the men said they had been employed at the time of conviction.
- Nearly half said that someone in their family had been charged with a crime.
- For 90% of the group corporal punishment was the main form of family punishment.
- Nearly 30% had been treated in a psychiatric hospital, 38% said there was alcoholism in the family and over 85% said they had taken illicit drugs.

### **Analysis 1: The Relationship Between the Prisoners Age and other factors**

For the first analysis of inter-relationships between different factors I have examined the relation between the prisoners' age and other variables i.e. whether prisoners of different ages have different characteristics in terms of offence type, likelihood of re-offending etc.

The group was divided into three age bands: 16-24 years, 25-29 years and 30 years or older. These three bands produced roughly equally sized groups (39, 32, 39). I will call them the young, middle and older groups.

### **Criminal Background**

There are clear differences in the offences committed by the three groups as the table below shows:

	<b>AGE</b>		
<b>OFFENCE</b>	<b>16-24 Yrs.</b>	<b>25-29 Yrs.</b>	<b>30 + Yrs.</b>
B/E, Theft	18	41	41
Robbery	51	16	5
Homicide	18	3	13
Sex Offences	2	25	15
Drugs	3	3	9
Wounding	3	3	3
Other	5	9	14

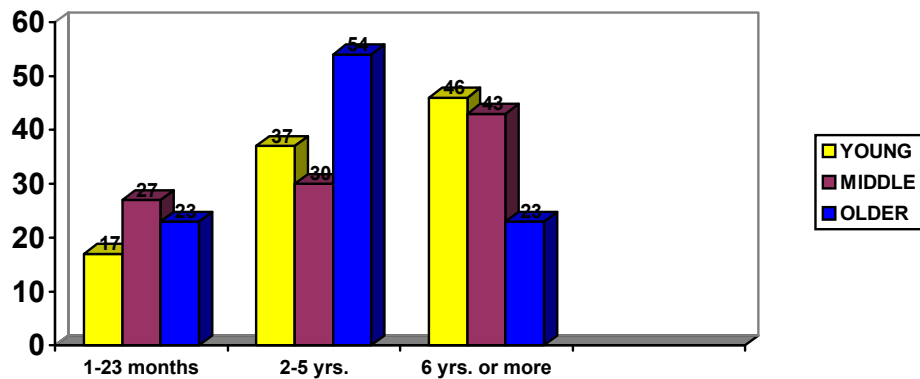
Total	100%	100%	100%
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The middle and older groups are much more likely than the young to be in for burglary or theft, while the young are more likely to be in prison for robbery or homicide. The middle group is more likely than either the young or older groups to be in prison for a sex offence.

The sentences received by the three groups are shown in the chart below.

**Chart 1**

**Proportions of different age groups serving different sentences**



The older group had the smallest proportion of violent offences (about 40%) and 23% had sentences of 6 years or more.

About 50% of the middle group had committed a violent offence and 43% of their sentences were 6 years or more.

46% of the young group had a sentence of over 6 years. But as three-quarters of them had committed a violent offence this might indicate they were being treated slightly more leniently by the courts.

A very high proportion of each group said they had prior arrests. It ranged from 84% of the middle group to 90% of the young.

Clearly some of the older group had come to crime relatively late in their lives. Over a third of them had not been imprisoned before age 30 and only 18% had appeared in juvenile court. This compares with 48% of the young group and 37% of the middle group who had appeared in juvenile court.

However this does not mean the older group was new to crime. 77% of them said they had past convictions compared with 66% of the middle group and 44% of the young group.

There were interesting differences between the groups when asked whether they

had ever taken part in acts of violence. 55% of the young and middle group said yes compared with 31% of the older group. The proportions who said they had ever used a weapon were approximately the same.

A major difference between the groups was the proportion saying they had taken part in group criminal activity. 36% of the young group, 16% of the middle group and only 5% of the older group said 'yes'.

71% of the young group, 53% of the middle group and 66% of the older group said to the interviewer that they had committed the crime they were in prison for.

The low proportion of the middle group admitting the offence may reflect the fact that 25% of the group were sex offenders – a group which tends to deny their culpability.

There were some interesting differences given as to the reasons they had committed the crime.

28% of the young group said they had done it for money compared with 10% of the older group. However 20% of the older group said they had done it to support a drug habit compared with only 2.5% of the young group.

Between two-thirds and three-quarters of the prisoners said that nothing had been done in Glendairy to help them stay out of trouble. The older group was slightly more likely than the other groups to say they had been helped (20% v 12%)

It appears that there is a difference between the illicit drug use of the three groups. 95% of the young group, 84% of the middle and 77% of the older group admitted

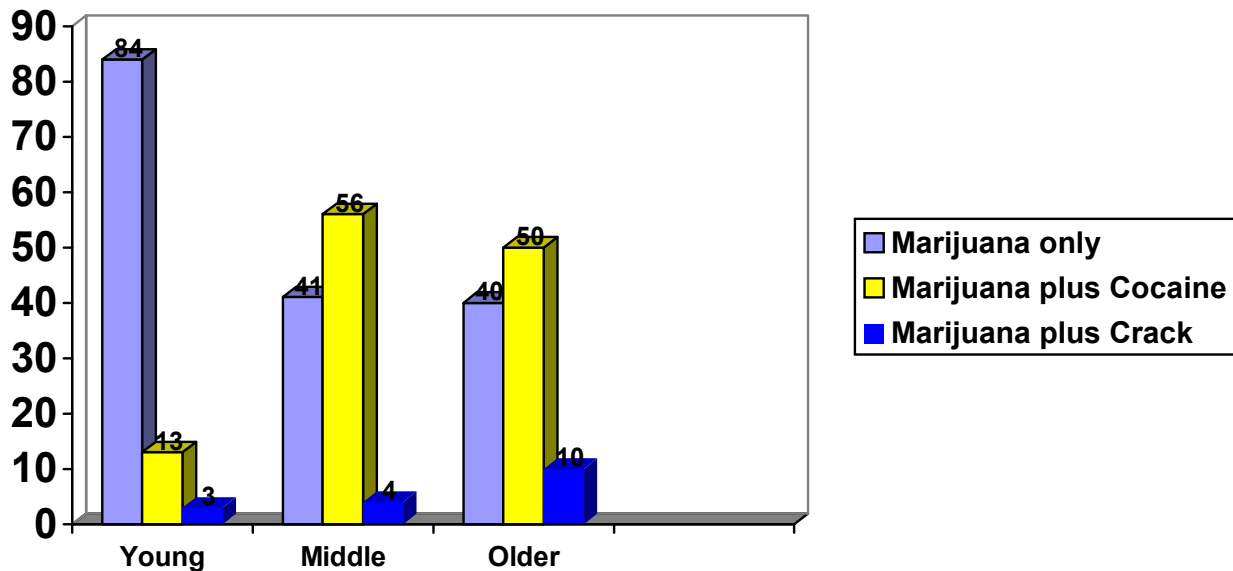
to such use.

But there was a big difference of type of drug used (see Chart 2).

- 84% of the young group said it was marijuana only compared with 40% of the older group
- 60% of the middle and older group drug users said they used cocaine/crack plus marijuana compared with only 16% of the young group.

**Chart 2**

**Proportion using different kinds of Drugs by Age**



### **Social Background**

97% of both the young and middle groups said they were single compared with 82% of the older group. However only 5% of the older group said they were still

married.

Nearly two-thirds of the middle and older groups said they were in informal unions compared with 50% of the young group.

38% of the young group had children, 56% of the middle group and 64% of the older group.

Club membership and church attendance seem to be related to age.

- 30% of the young group and 28% of the middle group belonged to a club (mostly sporting) compared with 15% of the older group
- 13% of the young group said they had been to church in the two years prior to prison compared with 34% of the middle group and 31% of the older group.

### **Education**

Approximately 30% of all three groups went to composite or senior school.

Of the remainder who went to secondary school 93% of the young group, 65% of the middle group and 75% of the older group left without CXC passes.

### **Family Background**

- 50% of all the prisoners were brought up in single parent families. There were no significant differences between the age groups.
- Nearly 50% of the young and middle groups were brought up in families where other members had been charged with criminal offences. 38% of the older group was.
- A third of the younger and middle groups and a quarter of the older group said they were brought up in disputatious families.

- 92% of the younger and older groups and 81% of the middle group said that the method of punishment in the family was corporal punishment.
- There were no significant differences between the proportions of the groups which said they had been brought up with an alcoholic in the family (it was around 40%).

## **Conclusion**

The under 25s make up 35% of the population of Glendairy. They tend to be imprisoned for acquisitive crimes although their acquisitiveness is much more likely to involve violence, in the form of robbery. They also have a high incidence of homicide but are less likely to have committed sex or drug offences.

Nearly a third said their crime was committed for money but few said it was to support a drug habit. The vast majority admitted to taking drugs but for all but a few this was restricted to marijuana.

The 25-30 year olds make up a further 30% of the population and more than half have committed acquisitive crimes. These, however, are largely theft and burglary rather than robbery.

Drug taking is a little lower in this group but worryingly half were using cocaine.

The older group (30 years and more) make up the remaining 35%. Less than half of this group offences are acquisitive and they are almost exclusively burglary or theft – there are few robbers in this group.

A small proportion of those in the older group who had committed acquisitive offences said they did the crime for money, most said it was to feed a drug habit.

For this group the illicit drug of choice was mostly cocaine.

These profiles suggest that:

- Drug addiction is a serious problem and it particularly needs to be tackled for the older prisoners as most of them use cocaine. They also are much more likely to commit their crimes to feed a drug habit than the younger ones who almost exclusively use marijuana.
- There is an issue around the younger ones moving onto harder drugs while inside or with contamination by older offenders. It could be that this underlines the necessity for a separate young offender institution.
- The very high proportion of all groups that had been corporally punished as children reinforces other evidence that corporal punishment cannot be assumed to be effective in reducing crime.

### **Analysis 2: The relationship between employment status on conviction and other factors**

The second set of cross-tabulations related whether the prisoners said they were employed or not on conviction with the other variables.

Overall 50% of the prisoners said they were unemployed at conviction.

There appears to be a fairly strong relationship with age.

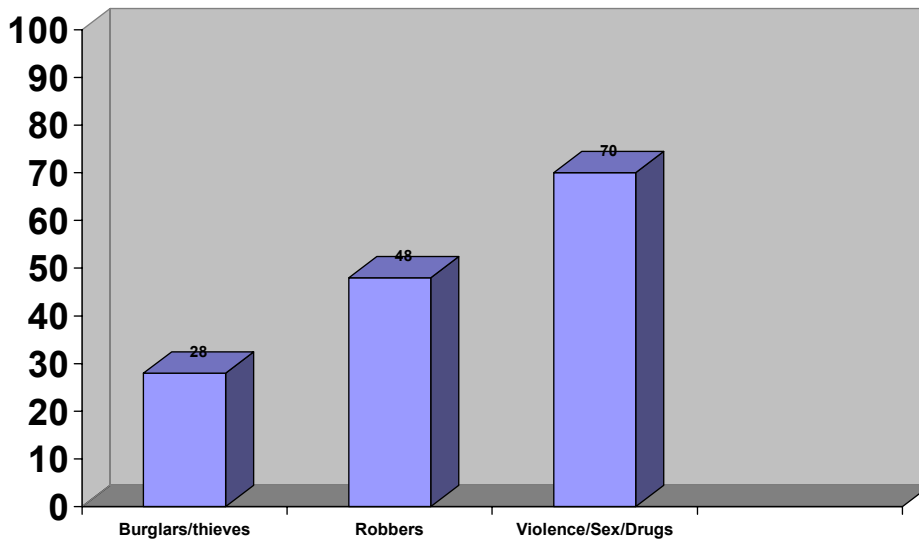
64% of 20-34 year olds were employed. This compared with 37% of 16-19 year olds and 29% of those 35 and over. The numbers are small but the differences are fairly large.

### **Criminal Background**

There is a very strong relationship between offence type and employment status.

### **Chart 3**

Percentage Employed by Offence



As can be seen from the chart 28% of the burglars and thieves were employed, 48% of the robbers and 70% of the violence/sex/drugs offenders.

This is consistent with the notion that there is a relationship between unemployment and acquisitive crime whereas employment status is less relevant when it comes to violent and sex offences. It is interesting that the robbers, who are both violent and acquisitive had an employment rate midway between the other two groups.

Given that the sex and violence offenders had a high employment rate it is not surprising to find that those with long sentences (6 years and above) also had a relatively high employment rate (60%). Only 23% of men with a sentence of less

than 2 years were employed (reflecting the low employment rate of the burglars and thieves).

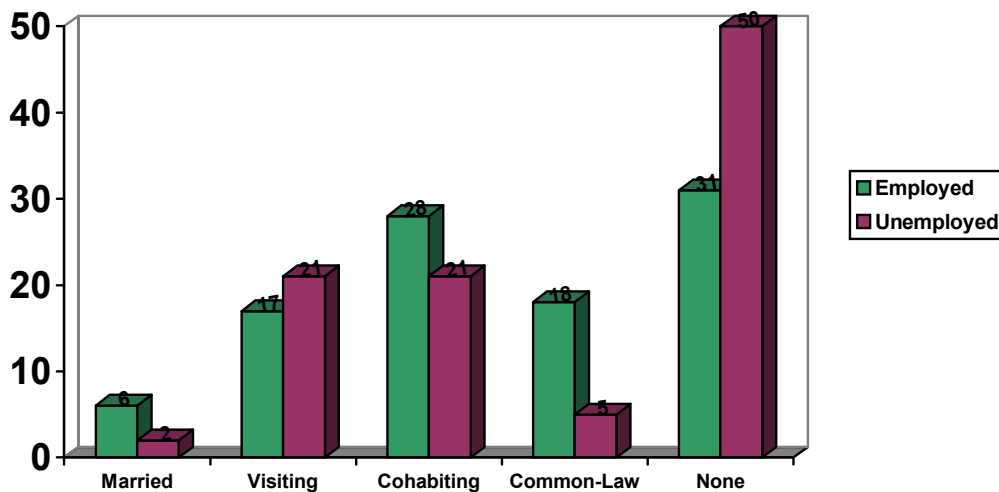
- 85% of those with no prior arrests were employed compared with 44% with prior arrests.
- There was no difference in the employment rates of those who had or had not been to juvenile court.
- Two-thirds of those for whom this was the first time in prison were employed.
- 36% of those who admitted guilt and 64% of those who did not were employed on conviction.
- 25% of those who said their crime was to feed a drug habit or was for money were employed at the time of conviction.
- 76% of those who were employed said that not enough was being done in prison to help rehabilitation compared with 62% of those who were unemployed.
- 44% of those who admitted to illicit drug use were employed compared with 81% of those who did not.

### **Social Background**

There does appear to be a relationship between having a formal or informal union and employment.

### Chart 4

**Percentage of prisoners in different forms of union by employment status**



As can be seen from Chart 4, 69% of those who were employed on conviction were in a union compared with 50% of those who were unemployed. The conventional conclusion from this would be that the men who were in a union are the sort of people who would also have a job or they were employed because they were in a union. But it could well be that they were in a union because they were employed.

- There was no significant relationship between club membership and employment status.
- 33% of the employed went to church in the two years prior to prison compared with 18% of the unemployed.

### **Education**

- 62% of those who had some CXC certificates were employed compared with

42% who did not have any certificates.

- 28% of those who left school before 16 were employed compared with 61% of those who left at 16 or older.

### **Family Background**

- there were no differences in the employment rates of those brought up in one parent families compared with those brought up by both parents.
- 49% of those living in the city were employed as were 62% of those living in rural areas.
- 32% of those who had been treated in psychiatric hospital were employed compared with 56% of those who had not.
- there were no differences in the employment rates of those brought up in an alcoholic family compared with those who had not.

### **Conclusion**

About half the prisoners in the survey were employed at the time of conviction. 20-34 year olds were most likely to be employed, the youngest prisoners (under 20) nearly half as likely and the oldest group (35 and over) even less likely. But it is interesting that so many of the violence/drugs/sex offenders were employed as they tend to include older offenders whose overall employment rate is lower. This suggests a very low employment rate for older thieves and burglars.

**This also suggests that while tackling unemployment may be effective in reducing non-violent acquisitive crime it will have a more limited effect on robbery and even less on non-acquisitive violence.**

### **Analysis 3: The relationship between type of current offence and other factors**

The next set of analyses relate the current offence of the prisoner with other variables.

I have divided the crimes for which the offender was sent to prison into two groups – acquisitive crimes (burglary, larceny and robbery) – and all the others. This produces one group of 63 and another of 47.

There is research which suggests that acquisitive criminals have features in common and are different from violent and sex offenders. But in considering the results it is important to remember that robbery also involves violence and that 74% of the younger acquisitive offenders had committed robbery.

### **Criminal Background**

Overall 57% of the offenders interviewed were in prison for acquisitive crimes.

There is a strong relationship between crime type and age. 69% of those under 25 were in for acquisitive crimes (mostly robbery), 55% of those 25-34 and 47% of those 35 and over.

Men guilty of acquisitive crimes tend to get shorter sentences. 75% of sentences for such crimes were under 6 years compared with 36% of the sentences for other offences.

- There were no differences in the proportion who had been through juvenile court (about a third).
- But there were big differences in their criminal records – 76% of the acquisitive offenders said they had previous convictions compared with 43% of the others and 81% of the acquisitive offenders had been to prison before compared with 38% of the others.
- There was no difference in the proportions of the groups who had used violence at some time in the past nor were there differences in the proportions who had used a weapon.
- There was a very large difference in the proportion who admitted guilt. 75% of the acquisitive group did so compared with 46% of the others. This will partly be a reflection that the “other” group contains the sex and homicide offenders. These prisoners tend to deny guilt more than others. (It may also, of course, be that some people in the “other” group really were not guilty).
- There was one major difference between the groups in the reason given for the crime. 45% of acquisitive offenders said the crime was for money, gear or drugs as opposed to 21% of the other group. 87% of those who said it was to feed a drug habit came from the acquisitive group.
- The proportion of each group who said their offences was caused by anger was small: 6% of acquisitive offenders and 8% of the others.
- The acquisitive group were less optimistic about their future. 23% said they might or would get back into trouble compared with 4% of the other! (Evidence suggests that the follow-up study will find both groups to have been

unrealistically optimistic – although we would expect a significantly higher re-conviction rate among the acquisitive group).

- 60% of the acquisitive group said that Glendairy did not have adequate rehabilitation programmes compared with 81% of the others.
- 92% of the acquisitive group admitted to illicit drug use compared with 77% of the others.

### **Social Factors**

- None of the acquisitive group was married.
- The ‘other’ group was slightly more likely to be in an informal union (64% v 55%) and to have children.
- The acquisitive group was a little less likely both to belong to a club or to have gone to church in the two years before prison.
- There was no difference in the proportion going to composite or senior school (both about 30%).
- Exactly the same proportion of both groups left school before 16.
- Two-thirds of the acquisitive group were unemployed on conviction compared with one-third of the others. (This had been commented on in the last section).

### **Family Background**

- There were no differences in the proportions brought up in one-parent families.
- There were no differences in the proportions who had a criminal parent or sibling.
- 35% of the acquisitive group said that there were family disputes compared with 23% of the others.
- There were no differences in the proportions who had been corporally punished (about 90% for both).
- There were no differences in the proportion who said there was alcoholism in

the family.

## **Conclusion**

This section has confirmed what we showed in the last section – that is a majority of acquisitive offenders were unemployed, they were likely to have done the offence for money or to feed a drug habit and they have many previous convictions and imprisonments. The majority of non-violent acquisitive offenders tended to be older while the majority of robbers (i.e. violent acquisitive offenders) were younger.

The level of offences involving sex or violence is a matter of particular concern. Including robbery, over 50% of the sample fell into this category.

What is particularly worrying is the extent to which this violence is “instrumental” i.e. deliberately carried out to achieve a particular result, as opposed to non-instrumental, i.e. the result of alcohol or anger. Instrumental violence includes all the robbery offences and will include some of the homicides. While anger management or cognitive skills training may be effective for prisoners who have committed non-instrumental violence, a different approach may be needed for the other.

## **Analysis 4: The relationship between Persistent Offending and the other factors**

The final analysis of the data was done in terms of persistence of offending. In all studies of offending behaviour it has been found that the best single predictor as to whether an offender will be reconvicted is the number of previous convictions or arrests they have. In order to get groups of sufficient size to analyse I divided the prisoners into those with 2 or fewer previous arrests (62 prisoners) and those with 3 or more (45 prisoners). We did not have information on 3 prisoners, so the total sample is 107.

I will call the groups the 'infrequent' and the 'frequent' groups.

There was a tendency for the proportion of prisoners in the infrequent group to decrease with age. 69% of the 16-19 years olds were in the infrequent group, while 51% of those aged 30 or more were in the same group (overall 56% were in the infrequent group).

### **Criminal Background**

There was little difference in the offence types in the two groups. Only murderers were distinguishable – 8 out of 10 were in the infrequent group.

Sentence length did not seem to be strongly related to persistence, although 63% of those serving under two years were in the infrequent group.

- 26% of the infrequent group had appeared in juvenile court compared with 45% of the frequent.
- 55% of the infrequent group were in prison for the first time compared with

only 13% of the frequent.

- Similarly 55% of the infrequent group had not been convicted before compared with 13% of the frequent i.e. even though they had been arrested at least 3 times this was their first conviction.
- There were no differences between the groups as to whether they admitted to acts of violence or, as to whether they had ever used a weapon.
- The frequent group was somewhat more likely to have taken part in group criminal activity (27% compared with 13%).
- There were no differences in the proportions admitting guilt.
- There were no differences in the reasons given for their crime.
- There were no differences in their views on the efficacy of rehabilitation efforts in Glendairy.
- The frequent group was much more likely to admit to illicit drug use. 98% said they had used drugs compared with 76% of the infrequent group.

### **Social Factors**

- 47% of the infrequent group were in an informal union compared with 73% of the frequent group. This will be partly explained by the fact that the infrequent group was younger than the frequent group.
- However just over 50% of both groups said they had children.
- There were no differences in the proportion of the groups saying they belonged to clubs.
- There were differences in church attendance. 32% of the infrequent group said they had been to church in the last 2 years compared with 16% of the frequent.

### **Education**

- The frequent group was a little more likely to have gone to a composite or

senior school (36% v 26%).

- Of those who did go to a secondary school there was no difference in the proportion who got a CXC pass.
- There were no significant differences in the proportions of the two groups who were unemployed on conviction.

### **Family Background**

- There were no significant differences in the proportions brought up by single parents.
- There was a slight tendency for the frequent group to have a criminal family (49% v 40%).

Interestingly the social/family factors which distinguished the two groups most were related to family disputes.

Whereas 19% of the infrequent group said they were disputes in the family 40% of the frequent group said there were.

And perhaps even more interestingly while a quarter of the infrequent group said the disputes were either settled by altercation or were unresolved three-quarters of the frequent group said this.

- There were no significant differences in the proportion of the groups who were corporally punished. If anything the infrequent group was less likely to be punished this way (85% v 93%).
- 19% of the infrequent group said they had an alcoholic father compared with 31% of the frequent.

## **Conclusion**

This section is as interesting for the differences it does not show between frequent and infrequent offenders as for those it does.

Frequent offenders are more likely to take drugs and to have appeared in juvenile court. They are also much more likely to have been convicted before and to have been in prison before. We can also see that more younger offenders are in the infrequent group, although it will only be a matter of time for some to go on to become persistent offenders.

But we would also have expected to have seen differences in employment rates, educational achievement and other factors.

What is interesting and unexpected about this analysis, however, are the results for family background. The differences between the proportions of each group which had disputatious families and where the disputes were settled by altercation or unresolved, are significant. They deserve further consideration and we will be paying careful attention to them in the follow-up study.

### **The Women in Glendairy**

Whereas a 15% sample of the men in Glendairy was interviewed there were so few women in prison that all of them were approached. 1 out of the 25 refused to be interviewed.

The final group of 24 is much too small for sub-analysis, but some of the differences between the women and the men were so stark that it is worth describing them.

The results of the interviews with the women have not been published before.

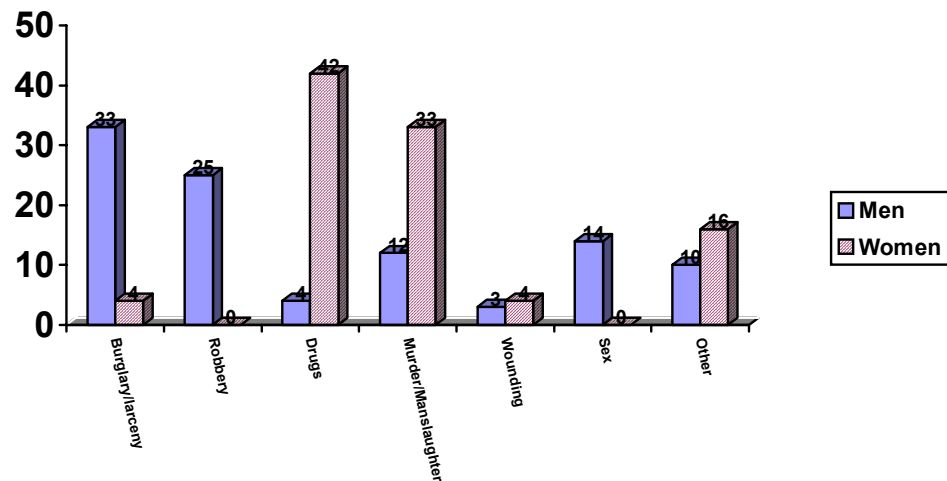
- The women were older than the men. 29% were over 35 compared with 18% of the man.

### **Criminal Background**

There were vast differences in the types of offences the women and were in prison for. These can be seen clearly in the chart below.

## Chart 5

**Percentage in Prison for Different Offences by Gender**



- 42% of the women were in for drug offences compared with 4% of the men.
- 33% of the women were in for homicide compared with 12% of the men.
- 1 woman was in for theft (4.2%). No women were in for robbery. Of the men 58% were in for robbery, burglary or theft.
- 21% of the women had sentences of 6 years or more. This compared with 31% of the men.
- 98% of the men were Barbadian compared to 58% of the women. This reflects the fact that most of the women in for drug offences were foreign “drug mules” who were trying to smuggle drugs into or out of Barbados.
- 87% of the men had prior arrests compared with 54% of the women.
- 35% of the men had appeared in juvenile court. Only 1 woman had.
- This was the first imprisonment for 83% of the women compared with 36% of the men.
- 80% of the women admitted guilt.

- 50% of the women said they had committed an act of violence at some time. This compares to 46% of the men!!
- Women were more likely than the men to think that enough was being done to rehabilitate prisoners (33% v 15%)
- Of those women who had committed an act of violence 67% said they had used a weapon. This compares to 98% of the men.
- None of the women said they had taken part in group criminal activity 20% of the men said they had.
- 38% of the women said they had done the crime for money. 18% of the men gave this as the reason.
- 85% of the men said they had taken illicit drugs compared with 58% of the women.

### **Social Factors**

- 25% of the women said they had no active relationship. This compares with 41% of the men.
- 87% of the women said they had children compared to 53% of the men.
- 25% of both women and men were in a club.
- 45% of the women said they had been to church in the two years prior to prison. This compares with 25% of the men.
- 46% of the women and 49% of the men were in employment on conviction.

### **Education**

Since nearly half the women were educated out of Barbados it is not possible to compare their education with that of the men.

### **Family Background**

- The same proportion of men and women were brought in one parent families.
- 45% of the men and 25% of the women said that family members were

criminal.

- 12% of the women and 30% of the men said they were brought up in families which argued and fought.
- 67% of the women said they were subject to corporal punishment at home. This compares with 90% of the men.

### **Conclusion**

The differences between the backgrounds of the men and the women are stark – in particular the differences between the offences which brought them to prison.

It will be very interesting to discover whether the offence differences reflect different offending patterns or differential sentencing. I would expect it to be both.

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