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Later Criminal Careers of Occupants of Juvenile Reformatory and Penal Institutions

1. Introduction

The individual consistency of delinquent conduct and its changes during life are an area of interest for modern criminological studies. Data collected on the progress of criminal careers^{*1} greatly complement the general statistics of crime and enable a more exact planning of crime control and prevention measures. For example, committing of criminal offences by an adult usually means that the offending conduct already started in the person's childhood. Paradoxically, a majority of juvenile delinquents do not become criminals in their adulthood, because individual criminal activity usually decreases with age.^{*2} An increase in the level of crime may be due to an increased number of criminally active individuals in the population, an increased frequency of criminal offences committed by the criminally active individuals, or an overall lengthening of criminal careers. Such background variations in the general crime characteristics require a differentiated criminal policy approach and different measures.

This article describes some of the results of a longitudinal study carried out in 1985–1999. The aim of the study was to analyse the patterns and influencing factors of the further criminal careers of persons who committed criminal and other offences as minors. The studied group consisted of males who had stayed in Estonian juvenile reformatory and penal institutions at the beginning of 1985 and who were actually avail-

¹ A criminal career has been defined as the longitudinal sequence of delinquent and criminal acts committed by an individual offender, or an individual's movement through criminal practice and experience. See D. P. Farrington. Human development and criminal careers. – M. Maguire, R. Morgan, R. Reiner (eds.). Oxford Handbook of Criminology. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 511.

² T. P. Thornberry. Introduction: Some advantages of developmental and life-course perspectives for the study of crime and delinquency. – T. P. Thornberry (ed.). Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency: Advances in Criminological Theory. Vol. 7. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997, p. 3.

able and complied with the established criteria.³ At that time, practically every minor who committed criminal offences or systematically broke the law was placed in a juvenile reformatory or penal institution. The study was a representative cohort study of delinquent minors, in which the criminal activity of the individuals was monitored over a period of fifteen years. The social and personal characteristics of the individuals of the sample and their criminal career patterns therefore characterise all the juvenile delinquents and criminals of Estonia at the time to a significant degree.

Analysis of personal files was the main method used to collect objective primary data on each person. Other methods included a survey of respondents for which a special questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections: general data (age, residence, *etc.*); family data (age of parents, their education, job, family relations, *etc.*); information about school and studies (completed years of study, repetition of a school year, change of school, *etc.*); information about spending leisure time (how and with whom the person spent their leisure time); information about harmful habits (smoking, drinking alcohol), and assessments of different spheres of life. Some data were collected in parallel from files and questionnaires so as to appraise the objectivity of the responses.

The aim of the **first stage** of the study (January 1985) was to identify the main social and personal characteristics of the contingent of special educational institutions for minors. The sample consisted of 210 minors from reformatories and 107 minors from special vocational schools, aged 14–17. The **second stage** was carried out in April 1990 when an inquiry was made to the Information and Computing Centre of the ESSR (Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic) Ministry of Internal Affairs about the criminal offences committed and punishments incurred by the individuals of the sample during 1984–1990. Criminal offences and punishments were recorded during this and the following stages on the basis of judgments of conviction. Data on the employment status and residence of the same individuals were obtained from the Passport Service of the ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. The **third stage** was carried out in April and May 1995, when an inquiry was made to the Address Bureau of the National Citizenship and Migration Board to obtain information about the places of residence and work of the individuals. Information on criminal offences and punishments during 1990–1995 was collected from the criminal files of the Information and Analysis Bureau of the Police Board. In the **fourth stage**, a new inquiry was made about the activities of the individuals during 1995–1999. Data collected in the last three stages were added to the earlier data to form a data bank.

2. Juvenile delinquency of individuals of cohort and sanctions applied to them

In order to determine the differences between the persons on whom criminal sanctions or educational measures were imposed as minors and to assess the effect of these on their later criminal careers, the cohort was divided into three subgroups according to the official sanctions:

1. The delinquents' subgroup consisted of individuals who had committed delinquent acts as minors and were placed in a special vocational school by a decision of the Committee for Minors' Affairs (CMA) or the court.⁴ The individuals of this subgroup did not commit officially recorded criminal offences until the age of 18 or were exempted from criminal liability due to their age. Their formal characteristic is the application of the most severe educational measure to them. The subgroup consisted of **65** individuals and they were referred to as the **S-boys**.⁵

³ Some words should be said about the system of juvenile reformatory and penal institutions in the context of this article. There were five such institutions in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic in the 1980s: Tapa Special School, Puiatu Special School, Special Vocational School No. 1 (at Kaagvere), Special Vocational School No. 2 (at Paikuse), and the Juvenile Reformatory (in Viljandi). Special schools were subordinated to the ESSR Ministry of Education and were intended for male minors (Russian-speaking minors at Tapa Special School and Estonian-speaking minors at Puiatu Special School) whose behavioural problems could not be solved in an ordinary school. The lower age limit for special schools was 14 years and one could stay at the school up to the age of 16. Special vocational schools were subordinated to the ESSR State Committee for Vocational Education and were intended for minors aged 14 to 17 (included) who had systematically broken the law. Special Vocational School No. 1 was for girls and Special Vocational School No. 2 was for boys, both Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking. The Juvenile Reformatory was subordinated to the Reformatories Administration of the ESSR Ministry of Internal Affairs and male minors who had committed a criminal offence were placed in the reformatory to serve a sentence imposed by a court judgment. Individuals often went through different institutions — a special school in childhood and a special vocational school and/or reformatory as a minor. All these institutions, administered by different central governmental bodies, acted as a complete system that was collectively referred to as juvenile reformatory and penal institutions.

⁴ Committees for Minors' Affairs were public executive bodies that dealt with children's and minors' problems. Among other things, the committees imposed sanctions involving material restriction of liberty, such as placement in a special school or special vocational school. See ENSV Ülemnõukogu ja Valitsuse Teataja (Gazette of the Supreme Council and Government of the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic) 1977, 32, 359 (in Estonian).

⁵ The name derives from the location of the special vocational school in the Pärnu district near the town of Sindi.

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2. The subgroup of juvenile criminals consisted of individuals who had committed at least one criminal offence as minors and had served a custodial sentence for it. The formal characteristic was their placement in a reformatory by a court. Individuals of this subgroup did not manifest systematic delinquent conduct as minors before they committed a criminal offence, *i.e.* they were not occupants of a special vocational school before the offence. The subgroup was composed of **178** individuals and was referred to as the **V-boys**.⁶
 3. The third subgroup consisted of individuals who had exhibited delinquent conduct as minors and were placed in a special vocational school. They had also committed at least one recorded criminal offence as minors. Their criminal offences had taken place before, during or after their placement in the special vocational school, but before they became 18 years old. The formal characteristic is the application of educational measures as well as criminal punishment to the individuals of this subgroup. The subgroup consisted of **74** individuals who were collectively referred to as the **Chronic Offenders**.⁷

The individuals of the subgroups differed by most of the characteristics used, and the characteristics of the S-boys and V-boys were generally better than those of the Chronic Offenders. Early behavioural problems, worse conditions for socialising in childhood, and school problems were most characteristic of the Chronic Offenders subgroup. At the same time, this group accorded the lowest rating to the relations of their parents and their own relations with their parents; they had the most frequent constant quarrels with parents, they had few chores, they seldom spent their leisure time with their parents, and they did not intend to go to another school or learn a new profession after their release (although they denied their intention of working in the profession they were acquiring). It was prognosticated on the basis of the objective conditions and subjective estimates of childhood that the criminal careers of the Chronic Offenders would be the longest compared to the other subgroups and that the Chronic Offenders would commit a greater number of and more severe criminal offences.

The most positive aspect of the S-boys is that they had not incurred official criminal punishments as minors. When comparing the socialising characteristics of this subgroup's individuals to those of the Chronic Offenders, the position of the S-boys was better in most of the cases (except for the beginning of alcohol consumption and the high alcoholism level of their parents). However, when comparing their socialising characteristics with those of the V-boys, the results were not so good. This was evidenced by the behavioural problems that started at a relatively early age (*e.g.* an earlier record with the Committee for Minors' Affairs, a larger percentage of those who were placed in a special school). The S-boys were further characterised by a large number of children in the family, a larger percentage of births in single-parent families, and a lower level of education of fathers. Special vocational schools were chiefly intended for minors with a generally poor behaviour and unfavourable family background. Those minors who were placed in the reformatory were from relatively better social conditions and many of them did not exhibit delinquent conduct. The further life and criminal career prognosis of the S-boys was therefore lower than that of the V-boys because of the socialising characteristics.

3. Changes in sample up to 1999

During the 15 years of the study, changes took place in the composition of the sample, which had to be taken into account in assessing the final results. On the one hand, it was an ordinary occurrence that some of the individuals who belonged to the sample at the beginning of the longitudinal study did not belong to it in the final stages. The reasons for this were: leaving the country (administrative unit), death, or lack of data in registers, collectively understood as "non-availability of an individual". Because of the lack of relevant data on these individuals that would have characterised the time dynamics of their behaviour, most of them they had to be excluded from the final cohort to avoid "noise".

A total of 18 individuals or 5.7% of the sample, including 17 non-Estonians, had left Estonia by 1999. Only one individual left the country in 1986 in relation to ordinary mobility within the country; the others changed their permanent residence in the 1990s, most of them after Estonia regained independence. The intensity of emigration was the highest in 1992 when five persons left Estonia. The last emigration occurred in 1997, when two persons moved away (see Table 1). Of the 36 persons who were born outside Estonia, 14 or 39% had left Estonia by 1999, in most cases for their place of birth.

⁶ The name derived from the location of the juvenile reformatory in the city of Viljandi.

⁷ The Chronic Offenders' subgroup consisted of 66 individuals who were serving sentences in the reformatory at the beginning of 1985 and 38 occupants of special vocational schools who incurred criminal punishments later before the age of 18.

Table 1. Time of leaving Estonia

Year	1986	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total
Number of individuals	1	2	1	5	2	1	2	2	2	18

There was a somewhat larger share of S-boys (8%) and smaller percentages of Chronic Offenders and V-boys (about 5% in each subgroup) among those who emigrated (see Table 2). Although the differences are not large, criminal punishment as a minor seemed to play a certain role, *i.e.* the proportion of those who did not incur criminal punishment as minors was relatively greater among the emigrants. Those who emigrated were also characterised by a relatively low offence rate in adulthood. The average number of punishments per individual among the emigrants was 1.6 (the cohort's average was 2.6), and most of the custodial sentences imposed on these individuals were conditional. The summed custodial sentence of only one person exceeded 15 years.

Table 2. Juvenile delinquency of individuals who left Estonia

Subgroups	Number and percentage of individuals who left Estonia	Percentage of individuals who left Estonia within the subgroup
S-boys	5 (27.8)	7.7
V-boys	9 (50.0)	5.1
Chronic Offenders	4 (22.2)	5.4
Total	18 (100.0)	5.7

Most of the non-Estonians who left Estonia had settled here in a single place and had committed few criminal offences. Apparently, this was a contingent among the non-Estonian former juvenile offenders and criminals whose social adaptation was rather successful and who found that residing outside Estonia would be more suitable for them. Another reason could lie in the consistent citizenship and migration policy of Russia, which has so far limited the immigration of Russian citizens who have committed offences from the former territory of the Soviet Union to Russia. At the end of 2001, Estonian prisons held 155 persons who were citizens of a foreign county (mostly Russia).⁸

Twenty persons or 6.3% of the cohort had died by 1999. Non-Estonians, who formed less than 40% of the entire cohort, prevailed among those who died (14 or 70%). This is a very high mortality rate for persons aged up to 30, which is why a strong correlation can be suspected to exist between mortality and the specific lifestyle and status of the persons. Indeed, manslaughter was the first among the causes of death: seven events, of which two occurred in prison. Three deaths were caused by illness (epilepsy, tuberculosis, lesion of the cerebral blood vessels), three by suicide (including two in prison), two by lethal car accidents and two by other accidents. No exact data were available on the remaining three deaths (see Table 3).

Table 3. Causes of death

Causes of death	Number and percentage of individuals	Percentage of cohort
Manslaughter	7 (35.0)	2.2
Accident	4 (20.0)	1.3
Illness	3 (15.0)	0.9
Suicide	3 (15.0)	0.9
Unknown cause	3 (15.0)	0.9
Total	20 (100.0)	6.3

⁸ J. Saar, A. Markina, A. Ahven, A. Annist, J. Ginter. Kuritegevus Eestis 1991–2001 (Crime in Estonia 1991–2001). TPÜ Rahvusvaheliste ja Sotsiaaluuringute Instituut, EV Justiitsministeerium. Tallinn: Juura, 2002, p. 310 (in Estonian).

Analysis of the distribution of deaths across the subgroups did not reveal any remarkable correlations to juvenile delinquency. The Chronic Offenders were represented to a somewhat higher degree (8%) than the S-boys and V-boys (about 6% each) (see Table 4). The correlation between mortality and later criminal career was also small or even negative. The subgroup of unpunished individuals was represented by three deaths: one suicide, one illness and one traffic accident. Four of them had been punished once and only one person, who died in prison after an accident in 1995, had pursued a lengthy criminal career (five punishments). The average number of punishments in the group of dead individuals was 1.8, remaining below the average of the cohort (2.6).

Table 4. Juvenile delinquency of dead individuals as minors

Subgroups	Number and percentage of dead individuals	Percentage of dead individuals within subgroup
S-boys	4 (20.0)	6.1
V-boys	10 (50.0)	5.6
Chronic Offenders	6 (30.0)	8.1
Total	20 (100.0)	6.3

A surprising fact was the lack of new information on the unlawful conduct, residence, and field of activity of 15 persons (4.7% of the sample). The latest data on nine of these persons date back to the 1980s or the period when registration of residence was mandatory for all inhabitants. One individual was declared to be a fugitive in 1992 (in connection with suspected manslaughter). Although only five persons have been officially declared missing, the registers did not contain newer data on the location of the rest of them. As registration of residence is not currently mandatory, one need not register one's stay in Estonia. Unless a person has contacts with police or is sought by relatives, such an illegal period may last for years.

Most of the unregistered persons were non-Estonians (nine persons), of whom six were last unregistered upon imprisonment and their terms of punishment ended at the end of the 1980s. At that time, sentences were often served outside Estonia and it is possible that these persons did not return to Estonia or came back to their former place of residence illegally. Therefore, it is not impossible that some of the unregistered individuals are staying in Estonia illegally.

Although the percentage of unregistered persons is somewhat higher among the Chronic Offenders and V-boys (5% each) compared to the S-boys (3%), the differences across the subgroups were relatively small (see Table 5). The missing persons had committed relatively few criminal offences; three of them had not committed any registered criminal offences and four had been convicted for criminal offences as minors. The average number of punishments per person in the missing individuals' group was 1.5, which was much lower ($p < 0.01$) than the average of the cohort (2.6).⁹

Table 5. Juvenile delinquency of unregistered individuals

Subgroups	Number and percentage of missing individuals	Percentage within subgroup
S-boys	2 (13.3)	3.1
V-boys	9 (60.0)	5.1
Chronic Offenders	4 (26.7)	5.4
Total	15 (100.0)	4.7

For different reasons, 53 persons or 16.7% of the respondents were withdrawn from the initial cohort up to the year 1999 and the final cohort consisted of 264 individuals (see Table 6). The progress of the criminal careers and lives of only these individuals could be observed from the beginning to the end of the study.

⁹ ANOVA analysis was used in this study to determine the significance level of variance of the average data: $p < 0.05$ stands for significant variance at a 95% level and $p < 0.01$ stands for significant variance at a 99% level.

Table 6. Changes in sample in 1985–1999

Reasons for withdrawal from sample	Number of individuals in cohort in 1985	Number of individuals in cohort in 1990	Number of individuals in cohort in 1995	Number of individuals in cohort in 1999
Individuals who left Estonia	0	3	14	18
Dead individuals	0	3	17	20
Unregistered individuals	0	13	15	15
Total withdrawn	0	19	46	53
Sample size	317	298	271	264

Such a great loss of individuals from the sample is somewhat surprising, considering Estonia's small territory and the compactness of the population. Most of the persons who were withdrawn from the cohort for various reasons were non-Estonians, who formed a majority of the emigrated, dead, and unregistered persons (nearly 90%, 70%, and 60%, respectively). There were 13 Estonians and 40 non-Estonians among those who were withdrawn from the cohort. It is interesting to note that the changes in the cohort by the nationality characteristic were essentially identical to the changes that took place at the same time in the entire population of Estonia. According to the census of 1979, Estonians formed 61.7% of the country's population, while their percentage of the cohort was 60.6% at the beginning of the study.^{*10} According to the census of 2000, there were 67.9% Estonians among the country's population, and their percentage of the cohort reached 67.8% by 1999.^{*11}

4. Grouping of individuals by criminal careers

The cumulative indicator of participation in criminal activity was 93.2% (246 individuals) in the tidied sample (264 individuals), *i.e.* 18 individuals had not committed any criminal offences. Comparison of the participation of the individuals of the final sample in criminal activities as minors and adults revealed a higher participation rate as minors (79.5% and 71.6%, respectively). The Chronic Offenders committed criminal offences the most frequently in their adulthood (80%), followed by the V-boys (71%) and S-boys (65%). Criminal punishment as a minor increased the likelihood of the person's criminal punishment as an adult.

The individuals who remained in the sample were grouped according to the number of criminal punishments inflicted on them up to the year 1999. The division was as follows.

Group 1 consisted of 18 individuals on whom no criminal punishments had been imposed during the observed period, *i.e.* they had no official record of a criminal career. The main characteristic of this group is juvenile delinquency, but no criminal punishments in childhood or adulthood. These individuals formed 5.7% of the entire cohort and were referred to as **Desisters**.

Group 2 consisted of 53 individuals on whom one criminal punishment had been inflicted up to 1999. They formed 16.7% of the cohort and most of them pursued a short criminal career that had ended by 1999. The group was divided into two depending on whether the single criminal offence was committed in childhood (42 individuals) or adulthood (11 individuals). The group was referred to as **Occasionals**. Two of the Occasionals were serving custodial sentences at the time of the last stage of the study. The punishments imposed on this group's individuals (53 punishments) formed 6.4% of the punishments imposed on the entire cohort.

Group 3 consisted of 59 and 51 individuals who had been punished two and three times, respectively, and they collectively formed 34.7% of the entire cohort. The criminal career of these individuals was medium-length or long depending on what percentage of the crimes were committed as minors and as adults. Four individuals who were punished twice were serving custodial sentences at the time of the last stage of the study. Most of those who had been punished three times had committed their latest criminal offence in the mid-1990s and nine of them were serving custodial sentences at the time of the last stage of the study. Both

¹⁰ Naseleniye rayonov, gorodov i posyolkov gorodskovo tipa Estonskoi SSR: Po dannym vsesoyuznoi perepisi na 17 yanvarya 1979 goda. Tallin: ZSU ESSR, 1980, p. 131.

¹¹ Rahvaloendus 2000 (Census 2000). Available at: <http://gatekeeper.stat.ee:8000/px-web.2001/Dialog/Saveshow.asp> (3.01.2003) (in Estonian).

categories are characterised by recidivism and these individuals were referred to as **Persistent Criminals**. The punishments inflicted on the Persistent Criminals (271 punishments in total) formed 32.7% of all the punishments.

Group 4 consisted of 83 individuals who had committed at least four different criminal offences for which they had been punished four times or more. These **Habitual Criminals** formed **26.2%** of the entire cohort. The criminal career of such persons was long and its duration was evidenced by the custodial sentences served by a large part of the group (39 individuals or 45%) during the final stage. The aggregate punishments imposed on Habitual Criminals (417 punishments) formed 50.4% of all the punishments in the cohort (see Table 7).

Table 7. Distribution of individuals of cohort by criminal career and punishments imposed on them by 1999

Groups of individuals	Number of individuals	Percentage of cohort	Number of punishments and their percentage of total punishments
Desisters	18	5.7	–
Occasionals	53	16.7	53 (6.4)
Persistent Criminals	110	34.7	271 (32.7)
Habitual Criminals	83	26.2	417 (50.4)
All groups	264	83.3	741 (89.5)
Withdrawn from cohort	53	16.7	87 (10.5)
Total	317	100.0	828 (100.0)

The fields of activity and places of residence of individuals of different groups were then studied to identify any relations with criminal careers. The percentage of working individuals was the greatest in 1999 in the Desisters' group (61%) and the lowest in the Habitual Criminals' group (13%). Unemployment was the lowest (22%) among the Desisters at the same time. The larger percentage of non-working persons among the Occasionals and Persistent Criminals as compared to the Habitual Criminals was surprising (38%, 50%, and 34%, respectively). This was explained by the next row in the Table, revealing that 47% of the Habitual Criminals were serving custodial sentences in prisons at the time. This means that prisoners dominated the Habitual Criminals group both by numbers and by percentage. Only two Occasionals (3.8% of the group) and 13 Persistent Criminals (12% of the group) were in prison in 1999 (see Table 8). The structure of activities across the groups revealed the best social position of the Desisters and the worst of the Habitual Criminals. Analysis results also showed that according to the characteristics used, the social position of the Occasionals was better than that of the Persistent Criminals. The relatively frequent lack of information on the activities of the Desisters and Occasionals implied their infrequent contact with state institutions amongst other things.

Table 8. Fields of activity of the groups in 1999 (number and percentage of individuals)

Field of activity	Desisters	Occasionals	Persistent Criminals	Habitual Criminals	Total
Working	11 (61.1)	20 (37.7)	34 (30.9)	11 (13.3)	76 (28.8)
Non-working	4 (22.2)	20 (37.7)	55 (50.0)	28 (33.7)	107 (40.5)
In prison	–	2 (3.8)	13 (11.8)	39 (47.0)	54 (20.5)
No data available	3 (16.7)	11 (20.8)	8 (7.3)	5 (6.0)	27 (10.2)
Total	18 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	110 (100.0)	83 (100.0)	264 (100.0)

Analysis of the places of residence of the individuals in 1999 in relation to their criminal careers showed the following patterns. The percentage of individuals who had a place of residence was the smallest among the Habitual Criminals, of whom about 23% had no permanent residence. The proportion of individuals residing in rural areas, villages and rural settlements was the largest among the Occasionals (30%). Towns with more than 15,000 inhabitants were the most common place of residence of the Desisters (39%). Individuals residing in Tallinn were distributed among the criminal career groups relatively equally (see Table 9).

**Table 9. Places of residence by group in 1999
(number and percentage of individuals)**

Place of residence	Desisters	Occasionals	Persistent Criminals	Habitual Criminals	Total
Rural areas, villages, rural settlements	4 (22.2)	16 (30.2)	24 (21.8)	20 (24.1)	64 (24.2)
Small towns or townships	2 (11.1)	10 (18.9)	24 (21.8)	13 (15.7)	49 (18.6)
Towns with more than 15,000 inhabitants	7 (38.9)	13 (24.5)	34 (30.9)	19 (22.4)	73 (27.7)
Tallinn	3 (16.6)	9 (17.0)	21 (19.1)	12 (14.5)	45 (17.0)
No residence	2 (11.1)	5 (9.4)	7 (6.4)	19 (22.9)	33 (12.5)
Total	18 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	110 (100.0)	83 (100.0)	264 (100.0)

5. Criminal careers and juvenile delinquency of individuals

The following analysis studied the relation between the criminal careers of the individuals and their juvenile delinquency. The Desisters' group consisted exclusively of S-boys because of the rules of preparing the sample and the definition of the Desisters' group. Occasionals included equal proportions of individuals from each subgroup (S-boys, V-boys, Chronic Offenders). There were a slightly smaller number of S-boys and more V-boys and Chronic Offenders among the Persistent Criminals. The Habitual Criminals' group included relatively less S-boys, somewhat more Chronic Offenders and the largest number of V-boys (see Table 10). It was obvious that juvenile delinquency and later criminal careers were not related the way it was predicted earlier. The results of the S-boys were undoubtedly the best. The V-boys and Chronic Offenders had committed a much larger number of criminal offences than the S-boys ($p < 0.01$). At the same time, the numbers of criminal offences committed by the Chronic Offenders and V-boys did not differ between themselves. It may be said that the number of criminal offences in a criminal career was largely determined by whether a criminal punishment was inflicted on the individual as a minor or not.

**Table 10. Criminal careers and juvenile delinquency
(number and percentage of individuals)**

Groups	S-boys	V-boys	Chronic Offenders	Total
Desisters	18 (100.0) (33.3)	–	–	18 (100.0) (6.8)
Occasionals	11 (20.8) (20.4)	31 (58.5) (20.7)	11 (20.8) (18.3)	53 (100.0) (20.1)
Persistent Criminals	17 (15.5) (31.5)	66 (60.0) (44.0)	27 (24.5) (45.0)	110 (100.0) (41.7)
Habitual Criminals	8 (9.6) (14.8)	53 (63.9) (35.3)	22 (26.5) (36.7)	83 (100.0) (31.4)
Total	54 (20.5) (100.0)	150 (56.8) (100.0)	60 (22.7) (100.0)	264 (100.0) (100.0)

Analysis of the punishments imposed for the first criminal offences showed that the Habitual Criminals were first punished at the earliest age (16.1 years). The Occasionals were the oldest at the time of their first criminal punishment (17.7 years) (see Table 11). The age when the first criminal offence was committed and punished thus related to the length of the career. The earlier the first criminal punishment was imposed, the longer was the criminal career that followed. And *vice versa*: a later criminal punishment predicted a shorter criminal career.

Table 11. Criminal careers and age at the time of first criminal punishment

Groups	Age at the time of first criminal punishment (years)
Desisters	–
Occasionals	17.7
Persistent Criminals	16.6
Habitual Criminals	16.1
Average	16.7

Placement in a special school as a minor was significantly related to the progress of later criminal careers. While only one of the Desisters was placed in a special school, the share of such individuals among the Habitual Criminals was nearly one-fourth. The respective figures for the Occasionals and Persistent Criminals were practically equal. Placement in a special school as a child or minor thus proved to be a factor that predicted a later long-term criminal career with a large number of criminal offences.

The same tendency was revealed when observing the age of an individual at the time of recording with the Committee for Minors' Affairs and the number of hearings held there over their conduct. The Habitual Criminals had been placed on record at the Committee at the earliest age and they were given the largest number of hearings. Not the Desisters, but the Occasionals were recorded at the Committee for Minors' Affairs at the latest age, and they were given the smallest number of hearings (see Table 12).

Table 12. Criminal careers and first contacts with legal protection bodies

Groups	Age upon recording at Committee for Minors' Affairs (years)	Number of hearings over conduct
Desisters	12.9	4.2
Occasionals	13.2	3.8
Persistent Criminals	12.9	4.1
Habitual Criminals	12.4	4.7
Average of cohort	12.8	4.2

6. Conclusion

The study provided a picture of the past 15 years of the lives of the individuals of the cohort who had committed criminal or other offences as minors. The main conclusion was that in most cases, their lives were not successful. The former occupants of reformatory and penal institutions were characterised by high mortality, lack of working career (not working, unemployed), and lack of a permanent place of residence. There was a strong correlation between criminal careers and the overall course of life. The larger the number of crimes and punishments during the observed period, the worse was the social position of a person. The more serious were the crimes, the less successful was the social adaptation of the individuals. At the same time, placement in a reformatory or penal institution as a minor, discontinuance of the educational path, lack of a regular profession, harmful habits developed at an early age, and social stigmatisation already pre-determined the low social position of the entire contingent. Similar results have been obtained in several foreign criminological studies, in which delinquent conduct was associated with substantial problems in other spheres of life.^{*12}

During the 15 years, the employment and social position of the individuals of the cohort deteriorated, largely due to their insufficient educational and vocational preparation, and lack of a positive social background. Employment structure in Estonia changed significantly in the 1990s, which caused a need for acquiring new

¹² T. Hirschi, M. R. Gottfredson (eds.). *The Generality of Deviance*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994; M. Junger, I. H. Marshal. The interethnic generalizability of social control theory: An empirical test. – *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 1997, vol. 34, pp. 79–112; M. Junger, G.-J. Terlouw, P. G. van der Heijden. Crime, accidents and social control. – *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, 1995, Vol. 5, pp. 386–410; C. Keane, R. Arnold. Examining the relationship between criminal victimization and accidents: A routine activities approach. – *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, 1996, vol. 33, pp. 457–479.

skills and professional knowledge. This has been a task beyond the powers of many former occupants of juvenile reformatory and penal institutions. This social degradation and marginalisation process occurred at a different intensity in the subgroups. After 15 years, the S-boys were in a better and the V-boys and Chronic Offenders were in a worse position. The result did not match the earlier prognoses of the individuals' lives, which predicted the best results for the V-boys and the worst results for the Chronic Offenders. Apparently, the fact of a custodial sentence and criminal punishment as a minor — a characteristic shared by these two subgroups, but not the S-boys — has made a major impact.

The differences between Estonians and non-Estonians have aggravated during the 1990s. The final sample included a relatively numerous contingent of individuals with a positive social engagement, *i.e.* a relatively large percentage of them had a job and a place of residence. Non-working persons prevailed among non-Estonians, and a somewhat larger percentage of non-Estonians were imprisoned. The acclaimed criminologist M. Tonry reached similar conclusions when summing up the results of studies conducted to identify the relations between crime and belonging to an ethnic or racial minority at the end of the 1990s. The crime and imprisonment indicators of minority groups exceed the respective indicators of the main population in all countries, while other social and economic problems are also frequently revealed among minority groups.*¹³

¹³ M. Tonry. Introduction. – M. Tonry (ed.). *Ethnicity, Crime, and Immigration: Comparative and Cross-National Perspectives. Crime and Justice. A Review of Research*. Vol. 21. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 1–29.