

Spring 1929

Cycles of Crime

Harold A. Phelps

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Harold A. Phelps, Cycles of Crime, 20 *Am. Inst. Crim. L. & Criminology* 107 (1929-1930)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

CYCLES OF CRIME

HAROLD A. PHELPS¹

One of the customary ways to study social behavior is to measure its operation over a period of time. This interest in the quantitative analysis of human society has led to studies of birth and death rates, poverty, marriage, divorce, crime illegitimacy, and so on.² In the world of commerce, the business cycle has become a standard index for measuring prosperity, depression, and related conditions. These indexes confirm the notion of social change and serve a useful purpose in a preliminary analysis of the causes of social change.

It has long been suspected that crime tends to move in cycles. This hypothesis is primarily responsible for the explanation of an increase or decrease in crime through fluctuations in economic conditions. Little accurate information has been available, however, to verify this relationship. Prison commitment records which are most frequently used to indicate cyclical movements in crime may not be sufficiently representative either of crime in general or of the less serious crimes, though the latter may constitute the greater proportion of all crimes and be consequently of great significance. If comparisons are made between crime and other social activities, it is necessary to have a representative index of the various kinds of crime. It is then possible to determine whether crime does move in cycles and the correspondence between these cycles and other social activities.

An unusual increase or decrease in crime constitutes a cycle. These cycles are popularly known as crime waves. An analysis of the wave-like movements in crime furnishes three significant keys to an understanding of crime conditions. In the first place, they indicate in a definite period of time how much crime tends to vary above or below a general increase or decrease in crime. Secondly, the cycles of special classes of crime show what types of crime are responsible for a general cycle of increase or decrease. As a third contribution, it is possible to compare these various types of crime and to relate their movements with indexes of other social or economic conditions. In this connection these cycles help to determine the kinds of crime

¹Department of Social and Political Science, Brown University, Providence, R. I.

²M. B. Hexter, *"Social Consequences of Business Cycles,"* New York (1925).

which are caused by or occur synchronously with other social cycles and to isolate the crimes which are not the result of group influences on the person. From this point of view especially a knowledge of the cycles of crime is a valuable guide to public officials in the organization of programs of control.

In a study of the "Frequency of Crime and Punishment" in Rhode Island, the trend of all crime and of special classes of crime was discussed.³ The source of this information was the indictment and docket records of the Superior Court of the two most populous countries. This material was used to demonstrate the incidence and general trend of crime together with a comparative statement of the frequency of punishment. As shown graphically in this analysis, there is a tendency for crime to decrease, but with marked fluctuations.⁴ The following report offers a study of these fluctuations as the cycles of crime in Rhode Island.

ACTUAL RATES AND TRENDS OF CRIME, 1898-1926.

Charts 1 to 5 show the movement for a period of twenty-nine years (1898-1926) of the total crime curve (Chart 1) and of four special classes of crime, namely, crimes against the person (Chart 2), crimes against property (Chart 3), crimes against sex morality and public order (Chart 4), and miscellaneous crimes (Chart 5). The specific crimes which were grouped under these classes may be found by reference to the article mentioned above.⁵ It was pointed out in this study and is rather important to remember that the incidence in each of these special classes of crime is determined primarily by the frequency of a few crimes. In crimes against person, assault with a dangerous weapon is by far the most important offense, representing 78.5 per cent of the cases. In crimes against property, the two crimes of breaking and entering and larceny include 80 per cent of the total. In crimes against sex morality and public order, the general charge of nuisance in the earlier periods was most frequent, while various infringements of liquor laws account for the increase during the later years. Under the caption, miscellaneous crimes, the most frequent charge was driving off horse during the first period and driving off automobile during the last decade.

³Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, Vol. XIX, Pt. 1 (Aug., 1928), pp. 165-180.

⁴Ibid., p. 170.

⁵Pp. 179-180.

In these charts the actual yearly fluctuations of crime are shown and the trend is represented as a straight-line or curve by dotted lines. The determination of the cycles of crime requires two adjustments

TABLE 1
ORIGINAL ITEMS IN THE CRIME SERIES⁶

Years	Total Crimes	Rate per 100,000 Population			Misc.
		Against the Person	Against Property	Against Sex Morality	
1898	159.6	22.3	80.2	48.7	11.7
1899	159.1	22	71.2	58.3	11
1900	138.7	25.2	71.4	34.8	10.2
1901	166.3	21.6	90.1	43.8	9.5
1902	146.8	24.6	68.8	38.7	8.8
1903	132.3	23.9	67.8	27.9	8
1904	124.6	24.8	66.3	23.2	7.3
1905	119.2	23.5	65.6	22.9	6.6
1906	86.6	14.9	44.2	23.1	5.8
1907	108	21.8	62.5	19.1	5.1
1908	112.8	18.7	67.9	21.7	4.4
1909	96.4	18.5	53.6	17.1	8.4
1910	91.2	16.5	46.6	20.1	9.2
1911	106.4	19.9	60.6	18.3	10.1
1912	90.9	16.5	45.2	15.2	10.9
1913	81.1	16.5	34.4	13.1	11.7
1914	113.2	24.6	67.2	10.9	12.6
1915	111	16.2	68.1	14.7	13.4
1916	91.5	15.9	55.3	8.4	14.3
1917	127.9	24.7	71	12.9	15.1
1918	122.4	14.6	64.5	24.4	15.9
1919	134.2	17.5	80.2	23.4	16.7
1920	92.5	11.2	51.9	18.5	17.6
1921	160.9	12.9	103.5	25	18.4
1922	109.1	16.6	49.4	22.5	19.3
1923	115.9	15.5	36.3	50.8	20.1
1924	128.4	20.9	47.9	42.4	20.9
1925	158.6	15.9	60.6	49.4	21.8
1926	134.7	13.5	53.2	45.1	22.6

TABLE 1
ORIGINAL ITEMS IN THE POVERTY SERIES⁷

Years	Rate per 1,000 Population		
	Total Poverty	Outdoor Relief	Indoor Relief
1898	121.8	100	21.7
1899	96.1	81.9	14.2
1900	89.7	64.5	25.2
1901	91.9	60.6	31.4
1902	87.4	49.5	40
1903	76.8	38.4	38.4
1904	77.7	42.1	35.6
1905	66.7	37.9	28.8

⁶Source: Indictment and Docket Records of the Superior Court of Providence and Bristol Counties.

⁷Source: Providence Department of Public Aid.

	<i>Rate per 1,000 Population</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Outdoor</i>	<i>Indoor</i>
	<i>Poverty</i>	<i>Relief</i>	<i>Relief</i>
1906	65.2	39	26.2
1907	68.3	38.9	29.4
1908	95.4	59	36.4
1909	63	37	26
1910	58.2	33.5	24.7
1911	60.8	34.7	26.1
1912	66.1	37.8	28.9
1913	68.8	36.9	32
1914	96.1	54.8	41.3
1915	110.8	68.1	42.8
1916	60.1	34.9	25.1
1917	64.4	40.2	24.1
1918	53	35.2	17.7
1919	50.1	44.9	5.2
1920	43.9	41.5	2.4
1921	81.4	76.7	4.8
1922	69.3	60	9.3
1923	44.6	41.1	3.5
1924	66.1	54.5	11.7
1925	68	61	7
1926	75.5	66.5	9

TABLE 2

CYCLES IN TERMS OF STANDARD DEVIATION

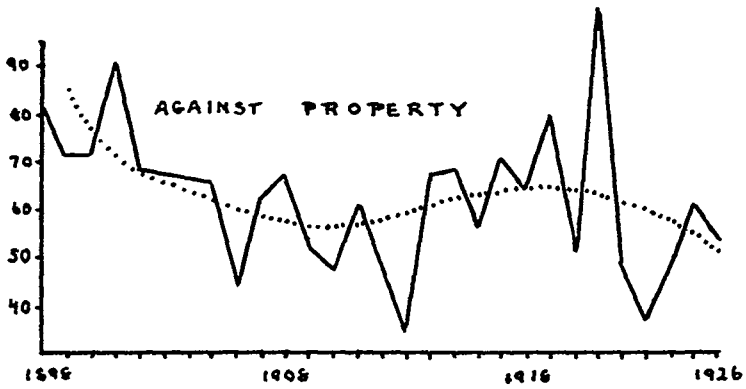
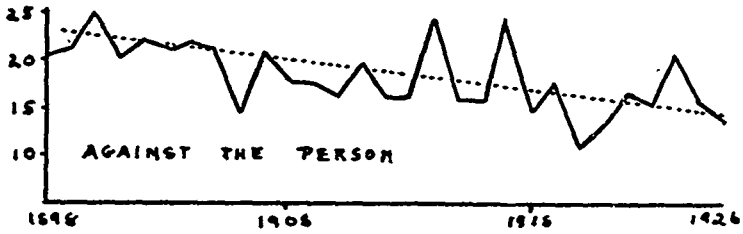
<i>Years</i>	<i>Total Crimes</i>	<i>Against the Person</i>	<i>Against Property</i>	<i>Against Sex Morality</i>	<i>Miscellaneous</i>
1898	-0.5	-0.3	-0.4	+0.3	-1.7
1899	-0.01	-0.3	-0.6	+1.4	-1
1900	-0.6	+0.6	-0.3	-0.5	-1.1
1901	+1.4	-0.2	+1.3	-0.5	+0.6
1902	+0.8	+0.7	+0.1	+0.3	-2.4
1903	+0.4	+0.6	+0.3	-0.7	+2
1904	+0.3	+0.9	+0.4	-1	+1.3
1905	+0.3	+0.7	+0.5	-0.9	+0.3
1906	-1.7	-1.7	-1.1	-0.6	-0.7
1907	+0.03	+0.4	+0.4	-0.9	-0.5
1908	+0.6	-0.4	+0.9	-0.2	+0.2
1909	-0.5	-0.4	-0.3	-0.7	+0.5
1910	-0.8	-0.9	-0.9	+0.3	-0.4
1911	+0.3	+0.2	+0.2	+0.4	-0.7
1912	-0.8	-0.7	-1.1	+0.2	+0.9
1913	-1.6	-0.7	-2	+0.3	+1.5
1914	+0.7	+2	+0.5	+0.3	-0.6
1915	+0.4	-0.6	+0.5	+3.5	-0.3
1916	-1.2	-0.6	-0.5	+1.6	-0.6
1917	+1.2	+2.4	+0.6	-0.1	+1
1918	+0.6	-0.9	+0.1	+1.5	+0.3
1919	+1.2	+0.2	+1.3	+0.4	-0.7
1920	-1.8	-1.9	-0.8	-1	-1.3
1921	+2.4	-1.2	+3.1	-0.6	+0.2
1922	-1.1	+0.3	-0.9	-1.2	+0.2
1923	-0.9	....	-1.8	+1.4	-0.8
1924	-0.3	+2.2	-0.7	+0.1	-0.6
1925	+1.1	+0.4	+0.7	+0.3	+1.7
1926	-0.4	-0.4	+0.4	-0.3	+0.04

TABLE 2
CYCLES IN TERMS OF STANDARD DEVIATION

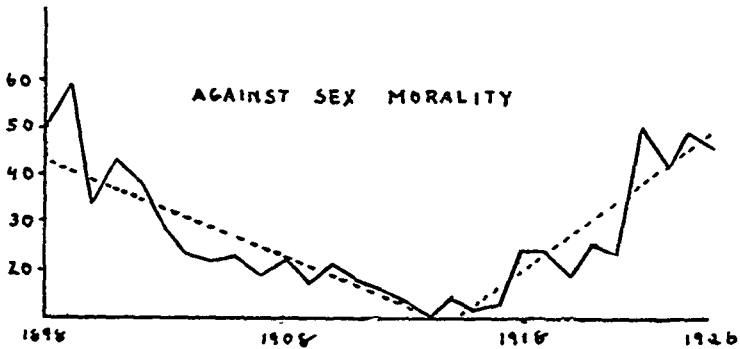
Years	Total Poverty	Outdoor Relief	Indoor Relief
1898	+1.7	+2.5	-0.9
1899	+0.4	+1.5	-1.3
1900	+0.2	+0.5	-0.6
1901	+0.3	+0.3	-0.1
1902	+0.2	-0.3	+0.6
1903	-0.4	-0.9	+0.5
1904	-0.3	-0.7	+0.4
1905	-0.8	-0.9	-0.05
1906	-0.9	-0.8	-0.2
1907	-0.6	-0.8	+0.1
1908	+1	+0.4	+0.8
1909	-0.8	-0.9	+0.03
1910	-1.1	-1.1	-0.01
1911	-0.9	-1	+0.2
1912	-0.5	-0.8	+0.6
1913	-0.3	-0.9	+1
1914	+1.5	+0.2	+2.1
1915	+2.5	+1.1	+2.5
1916	-0.7	-1	+0.7
1917	-0.3	-0.6	+0.7
1918	-1	-0.9	+0.02
1919	-1.2	-0.3	-1.6
1920	-1.5	-0.5	-1.9
1921	+1.1	+1.8	-1.5
1922	+0.4	+0.8	-0.7
1923	-1.3	-0.5	-1.7
1924	+0.3	+0.5	-0.1
1925	+0.5	+0.9	-0.8
1926	+1.2	+1.3	-0.3

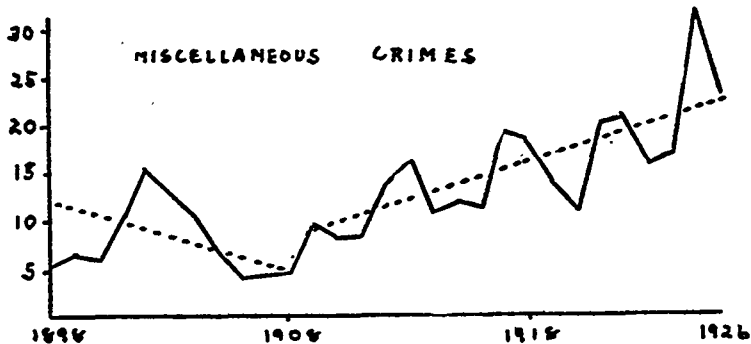
CHARTS 1,2,3. ANNUAL DATA, RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION.





CHARTS 4,5. ANNUAL DATA, RATES PER 100,000 POPULATION.





in the actual number of indicated criminals. In the first place it is necessary to eliminate the general upward movement due to the growth of population. This was done by reducing the data for each year to a percentage of the population of that year. Accordingly, the figures in Charts 1 to 5 represent the crime rates per 100,000 population. Next it was necessary to eliminate the upward or downward trend by fitting a curve to the annual rates. These curves for each of the series are presented graphically.⁸ The percentage variation of the actual rates from these trends, divided by their standard deviation, furnishes the cycles of crime which appear in Charts 6-10. The crime rates and cycles discussed in this study are given in Tables 1 and 2.

The fluctuations of the total crime curve and its sub-groups and their trends are worth a brief summary. It is apparent from graphical comparison that the different classes of crime have behaved differently over a period of years. These variations are significant, because they call our attention strikingly to the probability that these different classes of crime are different in nature. In other words, they are not comparable, and it is confusing to attempt an analysis of the causes of crime, until crime is subdivided into comparable groups. From the standpoint of the administration of criminal law or the treatment of criminals by courts or penal institutions, this differentiation is of prime importance.

Limiting our attention simply to the variations from trend furnishes an important contribution to our knowledge of the direction and significance of various kinds of crimes, because the variations due to the disappearance of one or more specific offenses, to the interpretation of law, or to the activity of the police and courts, are partially eliminated at least. That is, the cycles alone measure the

⁸Note that the zero origin is omitted in all of these charts.

relative fluctuations in crime between two points in time, and these fluctuations represent the pronounced variations above or below trend and not the actual number of indicted criminals.

In the movement of all crime a parabola seems to be the best fit, signifying a period of decreasing crime from 1898 to 1911 and a gradual increase thereafter.⁹ Deviations from this trend are the cycles or waves of crime. In the first special class of crimes, crimes against the person, there is a definite downward trend.¹⁰ Of the crimes in this class, murder and manslaughter are relatively infrequent and assault and battery did not occur in the records after 1912. Consequently fluctuations from the straight-line trend are essentially the cycles in assault with a dangerous weapon. In Chart 3 a parabola is the best fit to the fluctuations of crimes against property.¹¹ These cycles occur for the most part in the incidence of breaking and entering and larceny. Clearly the variations in the trends of crime against the person and against property and the differences between the movement of the actual yearly rates show that these classes of crime are not only distinct, but that they respond quite differently to the conditions which make or diminish crime. In the next two Charts, 4 and 5, the trends of crime against sex morality and public order and of miscellaneous crimes are represented in both series by two straight lines.¹² Here too the cycles represent the decrease of some offenses and the development of new crimes. Again, there are noticeable variations between the fluctuations of these and the other curves of crime. But these cyclical variations are more apparent in Charts 6 to 10, where the cycles alone may be compared.

CYCLES OF CRIME

The cycles of crime in Charts 6 to 10 represent only the variations or wave-like movements in crime which exceed or are less than the usual crime rate. The horizontal base-line in each of these charts is the usual crime rate or the trend. The upper part of these curves (the positive deviations) shows excessive amounts of crime; the lower por-

⁹Formula for the trend of total crime, $y = +102.0 + .444x + .277x^2 - .0075x^3$, origin 1912.

¹⁰Formula for the trend of crimes against the person, $y = -.305x + 19.1$, origin 1912½.

¹¹Formula for the trend of crimes against property, $y = +58.7 + .77x + .051x^2 - .011x^3$, origin 1912.

¹²Formula for the trend of crimes against sex morality, 1898-1916, $y = -2.18x + 25.3$, origin 1907; 1917-1926, $y = +4.01x + 31.4$, origin 1911½.

Formula for the trend of miscellaneous crimes, 1898-1908, $y = .72x + 8.4$, origin 1902½; 1909-1926, $y = .84x + 15.5$, origin 1907½.

tion (the negative deviations) are years of relatively few crimes. Therefore, one may read from the scale at the left the net deviations of any particular year from the usual rate.

It is apparent from the graphical comparison of these cycles that there is considerable difference between years in the content of crime waves. In fact in some years an increase in one type of crime is counterbalanced by a decrease in another type. Charts 7 and 8, crimes against the person and crimes against property, show this difference very strikingly, especially from 1913 to the present. A similar comparison might be made between Charts 8 and 9 or between Charts 8 and 10, where the cycles of different crimes in some years are in the opposite direction. It is these deviations in the special classes of crime which raises anew the many questions concerning causes of crime. It is easier and usually most profitable in an approach to these questions to compare the cycles of specific crimes with some standard index of the movement of social phenomena. Though it is not possible by the process of correlation to show specific cause in many instances, it does furnish a satisfactory base by which the cycles of crime in this study may be related to each other.

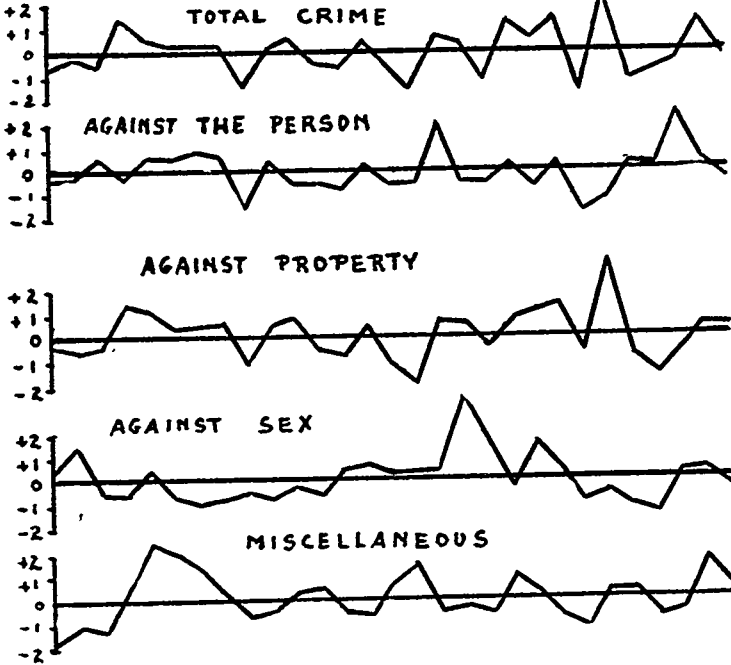
CYCLES OF CRIME AND BUSINESS CONDITIONS

In recent years several investigations have been made into the social consequences of periods of prosperity and depression. When crime has been employed as one index of social conditions, it has usually been demonstrated that crime increases during a period of depression and decreases with a return of prosperity. In reaching this conclusion, criminologists especially have been accused of riding a hobby, the contention being that they have confirmed a fixed idea without adequate analysis of economic conditions or without constructing a reliable index of crime.

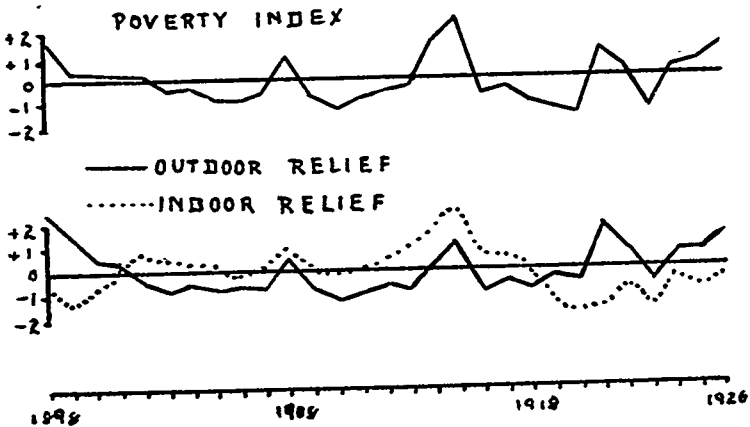
A review of the literature on this subject suggests two common points of view. Bonger's hypothesis that "the part played by economic conditions in criminality is preponderant, even decisive,"¹³ makes economic conditions of paramount importance as causes of crime. The other hypothesis is more reserved. It recognizes the connection between economic conditions and fluctuations in social phenomena, but leaves for further study the judgment whether or not this relationship is casual. In the search for causes of crime, a comparison be-

¹³W. A. Bonger, *"Criminality and Economic Conditions,"* translated by H. P. Horton (1916), p. 669.

CHARTS 6,7,8,9,10. CYCLES OF CRIME, 1898-1926.
UNIT: ONE STANDARD DEVIATION.



CHARTS 11,12. CYCLES OF POVERTY



tween the incidence of crime and poverty furnishes a good check upon the relationship between these phenomena.

Recent contributions to this general problem have made a distinct advance over the earlier investigations on the relation of crime to economic conditions.¹⁴ Using the admissions to the New York State Prisons from 1896-1915 as an index of crime and wholesale prices as an index of economic conditions, Davies found a negative correlation of $-.41$, confirming the notion that "while there are certain crimes which are intensified by prosperity, yet crime as a whole is decidedly an accompaniment of depression."¹⁵ Ogburn and Thomas, using the same source of data over a longer period, 1870-1920, came to the same conclusion. They found a negative correlation of $-.35$ in their study of admissions to prison and a correlation of $-.12$ in the number of convictions for offenses against the person.¹⁶ In a study of the incidence of homicide in Seattle from 1914 to 1924, Schmid reported that, contrary to the commonly accepted notion, homicides did not increase in the summer months but during an influx of migratory workers and during periods of unemployment.¹⁷

In "Social Aspects of the Business Cycle," which is devoted to a study of the relation between social conditions and the business cycle in England, Miss Thomas has one chapter on the relationship between crimes and economic conditions.¹⁸ This chapter makes a valuable addition to preceding investigations, because it shows clearly the desirability of separating the various classes of crime in attempting an analysis of total crime. The number of persons for trial before the Assizes and Quarter Sessions and Courts of Summary Jurisdiction for "All Indictable Crimes" formed the index of crime to be tested with the business cycle. Correlating these indexes led Miss Thomas to the conclusion that no significant relation can be found between crime in general and business conditions because of the complexity of any general index of crime. Accordingly this index of all indictable crimes was divided into its sub-classes of crimes of violence against property and the person, against morals, larcencies, malicious injuries to prop-

¹⁴Dorothy S. Thomas, "Social Aspects of the Business Cycle," London (1925), pp. 24-52. A good summary of the early investigations on this subject.

¹⁵G. R. Davies, "Social Aspects of the Business Cycle," Quar. Jour. of the U. of N. D., Vol. 12, p. 114.

¹⁶W. I. Ogburn and Dorothy S. Thomas, "The Influence of the Business Cycle on Certain Social Conditions," Amer. Statistical Assn. (Sept., 1922), pp. 339-340.

¹⁷C. F. Schmid, "A Study of Homicides in Seattle," Soc. Forces, Vol. 5, pp. 750-751.

¹⁸Dorothy S. Thomas, op. cit., ch. 8.

erty, etc. Correlations between these sub-classes of crime and the business cycle revealed the highest negative correlation with crimes against property with violence, a correlation of $-.44$ for the years 1857-1913. The other correlations did not appear to be constant or significant over a period of years, and in summarizing her conclusions Miss Thomas wrote, "Crime, as shown by various series of Judicial Statistics, for England and Wales, gives little evidence of the alleged strong correlation with the business cycle. Crime generally, and larcenies, show a slight tendency to increase in times of depression, and decrease in prosperity. Burglary, housebreaking, and other violent crimes against property, show a much stronger tendency in the same direction. Crimes against the person and against morals show slight tendencies to increase in prosperity, suggesting the possible influence of alcoholism upon such crimes."¹⁹

CYCLES OF CRIME AND POVERTY

In the present study poverty is used as an index to be compared with the cycles of crime. The poverty cycles are shown graphically in Charts 11 and 12. The method of computing these cycles is similar to that described in the computation of the cycles of crime. Chart 11 represents a poverty index for the city of Providence, based upon the indoor and outdoor relief furnished by the Department of Public Aid. The indoor relief cycles are constructed from the records of the Municipal Lodge, which provides food and shelter for homeless men or casual laborers. The outdoor relief cycles are constructed from the number of families which are assisted from year to year by public funds. Chart 12 shows these two cycles separately. The plus deviations indicate years of considerable poverty and the minus deviation represent the years of relative prosperity.²⁰ Comparisons between these poverty cycles and crime would accordingly result in a positive correlation, if there is a significant relationship between conditions of prosperity and a decrease in crime.

The correlations between these three indexes of poverty and the five classes of crime are shown in the following table. A positive correlation of $+.33$ between the total poverty index demonstrates a

¹⁹Ibid., p. 161.

²⁰The difference between the two poverty curves in Chart 12 offers some evidence that there are at least two kinds of poverty, namely, that of men outside the family group and that of families. Whether this difference is sufficiently distinct to trace it to degrees of employment, underemployment, or unemployment is a matter of present interest to the economists who are studying the business cycle.

fairly significant relationship between conditions of economic hardship and criminal activity. The same positive relationship prevails between the total poverty index and crimes against property, the coefficient being $+.357$. Omitting the first three years in these comparisons, when the movements of poverty and crime were opposed, these coefficients increase in significance, being $+.41$ for the totals and $+.436$ for crimes against property. There is also a positive but less significant correlation between crimes against sex morality and the total poverty index of $+.247$. The positive correlation of $+.16$ between crimes against the person and this index is probably of no significance whatsoever, and the correlation with miscellaneous crimes is practically zero. These general relationships between crime and its sub-classes and an index of economic conditions corresponds closely with the results of Miss Thomas and other writers on this topic.

When the total index of poverty is broken into its two constituent elements of outdoor and indoor relief, the correspondence between these particular indexes of poverty and the five indexes of crime adds to the significance of the relationships between crime and poverty. Outdoor poor-relief, which is essentially aid to poor families, con-

COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION, ANNUAL DATA

	Pearson's <i>r</i> .	<i>r</i> .
	1898-1926	1901-1926
Poverty index and total crime.....	$+.33$	$+.41$
Poverty index and crimes against the person.....	$+.16$	.....
Poverty index and crimes against property	$+.357$	$+.436$
Poverty index and crimes against sex morality, etc.	$+.247$	.....
Poverty index and miscellaneous crimes.....	$-.017$	.....
Outdoor poor-relief and total crime.....	$+.27$	$+.36$
Outdoor poor-relief and crimes against the person.....	$-.004$	.....
Outdoor poor-relief and crimes against property	$+.326$	$+.447$
Outdoor poor relief and crimes against sex morality, etc.	$+.12$	.....
Outdoor poor relief and miscellaneous crimes.....	$-.27$	.....
Indoor poor-relief and total crime.....	$+.077$	.....
Indoor poor relief and crimes against the person.....	$+.30$	.....
Indoor poor-relief and crimes against property	$+.005$	.....
Indoor poor-relief and crimes against sex morality, etc.	$+.30$	.....
Indoor poor-relief and miscellaneous crimes.....	$+.346$	.....

tinues to have significant correlation with total crime and crimes against property, the respective coefficients being $+.27$ and $+.326$, or omitting the first three years $+.36$ and $+.447$. When families are in need of assistance, there is again no significant relationship with crimes against the person or with crimes against sex. But with miscellaneous crimes a negative correlation of $-.27$ demonstrates fairly significantly that the types of criminal behavior under this category have no im-

mediate connection with economic conditions leading to the poverty of families. These three groups of crime do, however, have a positive correlation with the index of indoor relief. This index which is an evidence of unemployed casual labor, generally single men, correlates positively with crimes against the person (+.30), with crimes against sex morality (+.30), and with miscellaneous crimes (+.346), but has no significant correlation either with total crime or with crimes against property.

Further comment especially concerning the causal significance of these relationships is probably unwise. They do contribute to our understanding of criminal behavior in a definite manner. Limiting our attention to the relationships between outdoor and indoor relief and the sub-classes of crime, it is probably more than coincidence that (1) crimes against the person, such as murder, manslaughter, and assaults; (2) crimes against sex morality and public order, such as carnal knowledge and nuisance charges, and (3) miscellaneous crimes, such as driving off horse and driving off automobile, do correspond with increases in unemployed and homeless men and have no correspondence with the number of families in need of public relief. Similarly in the relationship between the number of poor families and the number of offenses against property, there is enough evidence of correspondence, either as cause, effect, or both, to stimulate further inquiry into the social and economic conditions which operate to make these cycles. But proof as to the causal relationships between these social factors depends as much upon analysis of individual cases as upon statistical evidence.

Conspicuous in the relationships between poverty and these cycles of crime is the evidence that periods of prosperity and depression may influence directly a few kinds of social relationships and consequently may cause indirectly unfavorable reactions in social conduct which is only remotely connected with conditions of poverty. Unemployment or part-time employment leading to the dependence of families or to an unusual number of unplaced casual laborers is a fairly precise measurement of this connection between business and social conditions.

To a certain extent this relation between social and economic conditions makes more concrete the age-old question concerning the influence of the group upon individual behavior. From the point of view of types of criminal behavior, it shows rather clearly that a vast number of crimes can be reduced or eliminated by greater economic stability. But it also indicates that there are certain classes of crimes which are remotely connected with fluctuations in economic

conditions, or as Bonger would have it, with the economic organization of society. Any considerable extension of general social well-being will hinge immediately upon further analysis and control of the business cycle. This is the special task of economists. But from the more restricted point of view of the control and decrease of crime, there is still an extensive field and a persistent need for the services of the sociologist, psychiatrist, and social worker.