

CHAPTER VI

RECIDIVISM: A CASE STUDY OF FOUR RECIDIVISTS

Recidivists are the habitual occupants of prisons.

Morris defines a recidivist as "one who having previously served a term of penal servitude, imprisonment or Borstal training, is sentenced to a term of penal servitude or imprisonment."¹

Tables 6.1 and 6.2 on the following pages illustrate the monthly intake of recidivists into the Special Prison.

¹Norval Morris, The Habitual Offender, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1951.

TABLE 6.1

ILLUSTRATION OF INTAKE OF RECIDIVISTS INTO SPECIAL PRISON

MONTH YEAR	1ST OFFENCE	2ND OFFENCE	3RD OFFENCE	4TH OFFENCE	5TH OFFENCE	6-10 OFFENCES	MORE THAN 10 OFFENCES
Dec. 1967	20 A.O. 3 Y.O.	3 A.O.	1 A.O. 1 Y.O.				
Dec. 1968	3 A.O.	2 A.O.		1 A.O.	1 A.O.		
Dec. 1969	10 A.O.	5 A.O.	2 A.O.	1 A.O.			
Dec. 1970	5 A.O. 1 Y.O.	3 A.O.	1 A.O.				
Dec. 1971	4 A.O.	2 A.O.					
Dec. 1972	2 A.O.	2 A.O.	1 A.O.		1 A.O.		1 A.C.
Dec. 1973	3 A.O. 2 Y.O.		1 Y.O.	1 A.O.			
Dec. 1974	10 A.O. 12 Y.O.	1 A.O.				1 A.O.	
Dec. 1975	1 A.O. 1 Y.O.						

Keys A.O. - Adult Offender
Y.O. - Young Offender

Source: Prison Data Charts.

TABLE 6.2

PERCENTAGE OF RECIDIVISTS

MONTH/ YEAR	DEC/1967	DEC/1968	DEC/1969	DEC/1970	DEC/1971	DEC/1972	DEC/1973	DEC/1974	DEC/1975
%	20%	57%	44.4%	40%	33.3%	71.4%	25%	4.3%	32.3%

Source: Deduction from Table C.1.

From the two tables it can be seen that recidivists form quite a percentage of the prison population in some months. The statistics only illustrate the number of recidivists during the month. Further, only the number of recidivists convicted of offences are recorded down. In actual fact, there are many more recidivists committing crimes but are not arrested due to their intelligence and fear of the public in getting involved in court trials. Recidivists as such are difficult to trace and therefore left 'untreated'. However assistance or guidance can be given to those recidivists who were arrested, tried, convicted and now serving time in prison.

In an attempt to cure recidivists, a study of their history and criminal record must be made so that probable causes of crime can be discovered and steps can be taken to eliminate these causes or if these causes cannot be eliminated entirely, to plan an effective programme of rehabilitation for these recidivists.

The case studies of your recidivists will be studied below in an attempt to assess the underlying causes of crime and the general characteristics of recidivists.

TABLE 6.3

THE CRIMINAL RECORD OF AB AGE 53 YEARS OLD IN 1975

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Theft	S379 P.C.	1936	Guilty	3 years Reformatory School.
Theft in dwelling place	S380 P.C.	April 1946	Guilty	3 months imprisonment.
Possession of chandu smoking outfit		Sept 1946	Guilty	Fine of \$20 or 1 week imprisonment (fine not paid)
Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(e) Minor offender Ordinance 1955	Oct. 1946	Guilty	1 month imprisonment.
Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(e) M.O. 1955	Nov. 1946	Guilty	1 month imprisonment.
-do-	-do-	Sept. 1947	-do-	2 months' imprisonment and 1 year Police Supervision.
Criminal intimidation	S 506 P.C.	Nov. 1947	-do-	\$50 fine or one month imprisonment.
Theft in dwelling place	S 380 P.C.	1948	-do-	2 years' imprisonment & 12 strokes of rattan & 2 years Police Supervision.

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
(1) Theft in dwelling place	S 380 P.C.	1950	Guilty	(1) 3 years' imprisonment
(11) Theft	S 379 P.C.	1950	-do-	(11) 1 day imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	1950	-do-	1 day and 1 year Police supervision
Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	1952	-do-	2 months' imprisonment
Attempt at housebreaking	S 411 P.C.	1954	-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	1954	-do-	3 months' imprisonment
Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(o) M.O. 1955	1955	-do-	1 year imprisonment.
(1) Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	1957	-do-	(1) 3 years' imprisonment.
(11) Theft in dwelling place	S 380 P.C.	1957	-do-	(11) -do-
(1) Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	1961	-do-	(1) Fine of \$300 or 3 months' imprisonment
(11) Theft	S 379 P.C.	1961	-do-	(11) Fine of \$100 or 5 months' imprisonment.

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
(i) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	1961	Guilty	1 month imprisonment
(ii) Theft	S 379 P.C.		-do-	5 months imprisonment
(iii) Housebreaking	S 453 P.C.		-do-	5 years imprisonment
(i) Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	1963	-do-	(i) 6 months imprisonment
(ii) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.		-do-	(ii) 5 years imprisonment
Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	1967	-do-	1 year imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	1967	-do-	1 year imprisonment
(i) Breaking curfew		1969	-do-	(i) 3 months imprisonment from date of arrest
(ii) Theft	S 379 P.C.		-do-	(ii) 1 year imprisonment
(iii) Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.		-do-	(iii) 9 months' imprisonment
Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(o) M.O. 1955	1971	-do-	3 months' imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	1971	-do-	6 months' imprisonment

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Failure to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	1972	-do-	6 months' imprisonment
(i) Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	1975	-do-	(i) 2 years' imprisonment
(ii) -do-	-do-		-do-	(ii) 1 year imprisonment

Source: A.B.'s Criminal Record.

A.B. commenced his criminal career at 16 and since then has been in and out of prison. Unemployed most of his life, he is not sure of any job after his discharge.

Renounced as a Recidivist, A.B. has been the frequent subject of newspaper talk.

In 1957, the Straits Echo reported that this thirty-five year old Malay who has a black record of fourteen convictions was again convicted of being a member of a gang of night prowlers.

In 1963, the President of the Sessions Court was said to have remarked that A.B. should be kept out of society, the longer the better, because he had persisted in his criminal ways and had not reformed.

In 1967, A.B. again hit the headlines in "Jailbird steals A Bird". He was convicted for stealing a bird. As his plea of mitigation, Mr. A.B. promised that he would turn over to a new leaf. Obviously he was not.

Whilst in prison, A.B. was a very skilful worker at his workshop earning quick promotion in his Grade. However, he was often found guilty of committing prison offences also.

In 1957, the Discharge Board of a prison summarised aptly the position of A.B. "... this man is a regular customer and has been in prison fourteen times. He will certainly be able to find work but

he is just as certain to come back to prison."

TABLE 6.4

THE CRIMINAL RECORD OF A.C. AGE 49 YEARS IN 1975

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Theft (3 counts)	S 379 P.C.	Sept. 1946	Guilty	6 months' imprisonment (concurrently)
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Oct. 1947	-do-	3 months' imprisonment
Criminal breach of Trust	S 406 P.C.	Nov. 1947	-do-	3 months' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
Theft	S 379 P.C.	June 1948	-do-	18 months' imprisonment & 2 years Police Supervision
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Aug. 1952	-do-	4 months' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(1) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	April 1951	-do-	(1) 2 months' imprisonment
(11) Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(o) M.O. 1955		-do-	(11) 2 weeks imprisonment
Criminal breach of trust	S 406 P.C.	June 1951	-do-	7 months' imprisonment and 1 year Police Supervision
-do-	-do-	Jan. 1952	-do-	6 months' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Criminal Breach of Trust	S 406 P.C.	July 1952	Guilty	12 months' imprisonment
-do-	-do-	Oct. 1952	-do-	12 months' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(i) Criminal Breach of Trust	-do-	Aug. 1954	-do-	1 year imprisonment
(ii) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.		-do-	1 year imprisonment (consecutively)
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Oct. 1954	-do-	3 years' imprisonment
(i) Theft	S 379 P.C.	June 1958	-do-	(i) 3 years' imprisonment & 2 years Police Supervision
(ii) Housebreaking by night	S 457 F.C.		-do-	(ii) 3 years' imprisonment (concurrently)
(iii) Housebreaking	S 453 P.C.		-do-	(iii) -do-
Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	Sept. 1958	-do-	3 months' imprisonment
Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	Oct. 1958	-do-	3 years' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
-do-	-do-	Dec. 1960	-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
(i) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	Dec. 1960	Guilty	3 months' imprisonment
(ii) Failing to notify O.C.P.D. within 24 hours of leaving district	S 297 P.C.		-do-	3 months' imprisonment (concurrently)
Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	Dec. 1961	-do-	1 year imprisonment
Housebreaking by night				1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
Failure to notify change of residence	S 297 P.C.	Jan. 1962	-do-	6 months imprisonment
Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	Jan. 1962	-do-	3 years' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
Failure to inform C.P.O. for leaving district as a Restricted Resident		1965	-do-	3 years' imprisonment
-do-		1966	-do-	3 years' imprisonment
Failure to comply as Restricted Resident		1968	-do-	3 months' imprisonment

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
(1) Theft	S 379 P.C.	1972	Guilty	(1) 6 months' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(11) -do-	-do-		-do-	(11) -do-
(1) Housebreaking by night	S 457 P.C.	1973	-do-	(1) 5 years' imprisonment from the date of arrest
(11) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297(o) P.C.		-do-	(11) 1 year imprisonment

Source: A.C.'s Criminal Record.

A.C. stopped schooling at Standard 3, since then he loitered around, was employed as a carpenter sometimes and did odd jobs. The Superintendent of the Pudu Prison had this to say of him: "(AC) is a confirmed thief and a habitual criminal of the worst type whilst outside but within the prison is well-behaved and works hard at his prison-taught trade as a tailor. I do not think that there is any possible chance of rehabilitating him as an honest citizen."

TABLE 6.5

THE CRIMINAL RECORD OF A.D. AGE 37 YEARS IN 1975

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Theft	S 379 P.C.	1955	Guilty	Sent to Henry Gurney Advanced Approved School for three years.
Theft by servant	S 381 P.C.	1958	-do-	3 months' imprisonment & 6 months Police Supervision
Failing to report o Police Station	S 297 P.C.	June 1958	-do-	3 months' imprisonment
Impersonating a public servant		Nov. 1958	-do-	6 months' imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	June 1959	-do-	12 months' imprisonment & 6 months Police Supervision
Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.	Sept. 1959	-do-	6 months imprisonment
Loitering	S 28(k) M.O. 1955	Dec. 1960	-do-	3 weeks' imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	April 1961	-do-	6 months' imprisonment
Fraudulent possession of property	S 29(o) M.O. 1955	June 1961	-do-	12 months' imprisonment & 12 months' Police Supervision

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Theft	S 379 P.C.	July 1961	Guilty	6 months' imprisonment
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Nov. 1962	-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(i) Theft	S 379 P.C.	Dec. 1962	-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(ii) Theft	S 379 P.C.	-do-	-do-	-do-
Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	Dec. 1962	-do-	1 month imprisonment to commence after present sentence
(i) Theft	S 379 P.C.	Jan. 1963	-do-	2 years imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(ii) Theft	S 379 P.C.	-do-	-do-	1 year imprisonment & \$200 fine
Did not report place of residence to O.C.P.D.	S 297 P.C.	Nov. 1967	-do-	6 months' imprisonment
Theft in building	S 380 P.C.	July 1968	-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	Aug. 1968	-do-	7 months imprisonment
Attempted extortion	S 335 P.C.	Oct. 1969	-do-	2 years imprisonment

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Failing to report to Police Station of change of address	S 297 P.C.	March 1971	Guilty	3 weeks imprisonment
Theft in dwelling place	S 380 P.C.	1971	-do-	3 years' imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(1) Attempted robbery	S 15(2)(b) Prevention of Crime Ord. 1959	1973	-do-	2 years' imprisonment
(11)	S 393 P.C.	1975	-do-	4 years' imprisonment & 3 strokes of rattan
	S 15(2)(b) Prevention of Crime Ordinance 1959		-do-	2 years' imprisonment to run concurrently

Source: A.D.'s Criminal Record.

A.D.'s natural parents passed away when he was seven. Thereafter, he stayed with his maternal aunt. According to her, A.D. was childish as a boy, irresponsible and often slept out at night with his friends. A.D. had primary education till Standard Six at a Malay Medium School. After he had left school, he assisted his aunt at rubber tapping. However, after two years of such employment, he ran away to Kuala Lumpur. Thereafter, he was often without a job. One of the reasons for such a state of affairs was that A.D. had the false impression that he had inherited a vast estate from his father and therefore need not work for a living. His friends were not very desirable and honest characters and very soon thereafter A.D. began his criminal career.

After his first offence, A.D. was sent to Henry Gurney School. He started off very badly there being extremely naughty and lazy. Later, however, he improved tremendously, worked at various skills, though he was the master of none. However, after his release he was soon back in prison.

During his subsequent terms in prisons, A.D. was very skilful at his prison-taught trade earning praise from his supervisors. But once out of prison, A.D. would not be able to find jobs and would be back in prison after a short period of time.

TABLE 6.6

THE CRIMINAL RECORD OF A.E. AGE 39 YEARS

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Nov. 1953	Guilty	Adopted mother executed bond to exercise proper control over child for 6 months with surety.
(i) Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.	Dec. 1953	-do-	Sent to Approved School for three years. Adopted father to pay \$10/month for his upkeep.
(ii) Theft in building	S 380 P.C.			
(iii) -do-	-do-			
Theft in dwelling place	S 380 P.C.	May 1956	-do-	Sent to Taiping Boys' School for 3 years.
Theft	S 379 P.C.	Dec. 1956	-do-	-do-
Possession of offensive weapon		May 1960	-do-	Sent to Henry Gurney School till 21 years of age
Theft in building	S 380 P.C.	Jan. 1963	-do-	12 months' imprisonment & 12 months Police Supervision
Theft	S 279 P.C.	Dec. 1963	-do-	6 months' imprisonment
Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	Jan. 1964	-do-	12 months' imprisonment

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.	Aug. 1965	Guilty	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(i) Restriction or obstruction by a person to his lawful apprehension	S 224 P.C.	Aug. 1965	-do-	-do-
(ii) Theft	S 379 P.C.		-do-	-do-
Failure to notify change of address being under Police Supervision	S 297 P.C.	Oct. 1965	-do-	12 months imprisonment to run consecutively with other terms.
Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.	Nov. 1965	-do-	8 months imprisonment
(i) Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.	1972	Guilty	3 years imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(ii)	S 28(5) M.O. 1955		-do-	6 months imprisonment (consecutively)
(iii) Escaping from lawful custody			-do-	-do-
(iv) Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.		-do-	1 year imprisonment (concurrently)
(v) Dishonestly retaining stolen property	S 411 P.C.		-do-	6 months imprisonment

NATURE OF OFFENCE	SECTION	YEAR OF TRIAL	CONVICTION	SENTENCE
(vi) Failing to report to Police Station	S 297 P.C.	1976	Guilty	1 year imprisonment to commence after expiry of other sentences.
(i) Housebreaking	S 454 P.C.		-do-	1 year imprisonment & 1 year Police Supervision
(ii) Failing to report to O.C.P.D.	S 297 P.C.		-do-	1 year imprisonment to commence after the expiry of other sentences.

Source: A.E.'s Criminal Record.

A.E.'s natural father died when he was very young. His mother gave him away for adoption and she went to live with another man. His adopted father was a partner in the logging business earning a reasonable income. Though he was sympathetic and quiet, he was seldom at home. His wife, on the other hand, was a nagger and had frequent misunderstandings with the boy.

In school, A.E. was inattentive and seldom attended school. He changed schools frequently. However, in the various Approved Schools to which he was sent to, he improved his education, acquired the English and Malay languages and even cultivated a good reading habit.

During his first few days at the Approved Schools however he was mischievous, stubborn and talkative. He could not mix with his fellow-inmates. Later, he changed, became the head cook, mixed freely and earned praise from his housemaster. However, on discharge, due to lack of parental supervision, A.E. again resorted to crime and has kept on adding new convictions to his criminal record since.

From the case studies above, several similar characteristics can be abstracted.

- (i) Most of the recidivists come from unstable family backgrounds, their parents may have passed away while they were at a tender age and they may have been adopted by other families or relatives. The income-nature of families of recidivists is

usually low and the members of the family big in number. Lack of parental supervision due to lack of time or negligence is a general characteristic of families of recidivists.

- (ii) Recidivists have a poor standard of education. They either have stopped schooling at an early age, or have no interest in school-work or ran away from school or are poor at their school-work.
- (iii) Recidivists seem also to possess some similar personality traits. They are rude, stubborn, persistent in getting what they want, keep late hours, live under delusions, sleep out, run away from home and generally unemployed.
- (iv) The associates habitual offenders keep are often undesirable characters. Like themselves, their associates are often of poor quality, disobedient, uneducated and may be even members of secret societies. These associates may be the first to introduce these young delinquents to crime.
- (v) A recidivist tend to commit similar types of crimes in his criminal career, for example, Mr. A.B. is a master in theft and fraudulent possession of property, Mr. A.C. in criminal breach of trust and housebreaking. Offences like theft, housebreaking, fraudulent possession of property carry shorter terms of imprisonment than murder and kidnapping.

It can be noted therefore that offenders convicted of crimes which carry short sentences are more likely to return to crime than offenders convicted of crimes which carry longer sentences.

(vi) Recidivists are generally skilful, well-behaved in prison but once released they will revert back to crime within a short period of time. This fact reflect to some extent the failure of the rehabilitation programme in the prison.

The blame can partly be put on the shoulders of the Prison Authority. Prison Officers have failed to convince these habitual offenders that it is better to lead an honest, industrious life rather than a criminal one. It is of no avail to equip offenders with industrial skills if mentally they are not prepared to give up their criminal ways. Prison Officers must themselves believe in the rehabilitation programme in order to reap success out of it, a teacher must first believe in what he is teaching before he teaches his student. Otherwise, the student may spot his insincerity and would not be convinced that the method of the teacher is the correct method.

Further, sentencing a recidivist to a short term of imprisonment may not be effective. The Penal Code provides the maximum term of sentence for each offence and it is up to the individual Magistrate/President/Judge to pass a sentence within the limit imposed. It takes time and effort on the part of the Prison Authority to rehabilitate and on the part of the recidivists to be rehabilitated. Principle IX

of the American Correctional Standards advocates that

Repeated short sentences imposed for recurring misdemeanours or petty offences, are ineffective, both as means of correction and as a positive deterrence. These sentences often are a contributing factor in the career of the petty recidivist. An integrated system of control by means of special institutional facilities and community supervision is essential for the solution of this problem. Further research and experimentation with agencies and institutions of other than the conventional type offer the greatest promises.³

Too long sentences, on the other hand, should not be imposed since a long-term prisoner is likely to turn his back on the rehabilitation programme and instead place all his concentration on how to live comfortably in prison.

The sentence imposed therefore should be one which suits a particular offender's needs. Principle XIV of the said Standards advocates that

The sentence or disposition determining the treatment of the offender should be based on a full consideration of the social and personality factors of the particular individual.

³Manual of Correctional Standards issued by the American Correctional Association, Woodridge Station, P.O. Box 10176, Washington D.C. 20018, Third Printing, 1966.

In the many jurisdictions, this investigation may be made at different levels, so long as the essential information is available to the court or treatment authority at the time crucial case decisions are to be made.

Thus, the above principle advocates that an investigation should be carried out into the background, social and economic conditions of the offender before sentence is passed. This is to ensure that the correct term of sentence is given to that individual.

Further, the diversity of sentences imposed on different offenders for the same type of offence may be a cause of recidivism. For the offence of theft under S 379 Penal Code, the maximum sentence is an imprisonment of three years, or fine or both. Offender A may be sentenced to one year imprisonment for theft whilst Offender B may be sentenced to two years imprisonment. If Offenders A and B get together and discuss their terms of sentence, inmate B may feel that he is unjustly sentenced and this may aggravate his anger towards society and the law making him determined to take his revenge after his term of sentence.

But such diversity of sentences cannot be avoided if the sentence is based on the particular needs of the offender and the individual circumstances of the case. As long as there is a sound reason for such diversities, there is a possibility to make Offender B realise that his offence and particular circumstances justify his longer term of sentence.

In addition, the system of parole may help in reducing the number of recidivists in the prison. Most of the recidivists do not know how to cope with society's demands and therefore indulge in criminal activities again and again. Through the system of parole, a convicted offender is released under supervision and under certain restrictions and requirements, after he has served a portion of his sentence in prison. The function of parole is to restore a measure of freedom to the prisoner, give him guidance and supervision during the period of transition from controlled to uncontrolled living and at that particular moment when he is equipped to return to community life, fitting into its pattern and becoming a useful unit in it. Training and treatment in a prison are only part of the rehabilitative process, they must be followed by a period of guidance and supervision in a normal community.

A caution, however, must be laid down concerning the parole system. The system should be based on the rehabilitated degree of each recidivist or star prisoner and not granted automatically. If parole is granted automatically, the offender may not be ready to live an "uncontrolled life" and society will again be threatened by his criminal activities. Thus to ensure that the parole system works effectively, correct timing is essential.

Thus, recidivism is a very important problem which demands consideration from the sociological as well as the legalistic point of view. Sending recidivists to prisons may result in temporary elimination of their criminal activities from society, but, on the

other hand, it may also convince them that their profession is that of committing crimes and that going to prison for a short while is merely a normal phase of their profession. "It is suggested that the old lag, the recidivist with many crimes behind him, and no prospect of any change in his pattern of behaviour, very closely resembles the frustrated rat with its stereo-typed behaviour pattern, self-punishing and maladaptive as it may be."⁴ Society, therefore, should strive to rehabilitate recidivists into law-abiding citizen and not merely stamp them as "hard-cores" punishing them for each criminal episode they wish to indulge in.

⁴H.J. Eysenck, "Crime and Conditioning" in Crime and Personality, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964.