**Notes: Criminal justice statistics and sexual offences (England and Wales) 1918-1970**

Summary:

This dataset relates to quantitative information about sexual offences, their reporting and prosecution, which has been abstracted from the Annual Criminal Justice Statistics for England and Wales 1918-1970 (Command Papers series). The dataset was created as part of the ESRC-funded project ES/M009750/1 ‘Historicising “historical child sexual abuse” cases: social, political and criminal justice contexts’. The purpose of this specific element of the project was to identify the number of sexual offence cases within the criminal justice statistics that definitely related to minors or may have related to minors.

Originating sources:

These Command Papers were sourced through ProQuest House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, <http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk.ezproxy.is.ed.ac.uk/home.do>

Accessed January – March 2015.

Note: Annual Criminal Justice statistics were not published during the Second World War. A reduced set of data was published in 1946 relating to the years 1940-45. No data was published for 1939. Criminal Justice statistics for 1920 and 1921 were not published as Command Papers. Data relating to sexual offences is however available from the 1925 Report of the Departmental Committee on Sexual Offences Against Young Persons (Cmd. 2561).

Separate sheets in the excel file relate to the following offences:

* \*Buggery (described as ‘unnatural offences’ until 1957). Prosecutions continued after 1967 (decriminalisation of same-sex offences between consenting males over 21).
* \*Attempt to commit buggery, including assaults with intent to commit buggery, indecent assaults on male persons, and male persons soliciting for immoral purposes (described as ‘attempt to commit unnatural offences’ until 1957). Prosecutions continued after 1967 (see above). \*\*Note: indecent assaults on male persons under 16 could be dealt with summarily by magistrates by consent of the accused (1908 Children’s Act) which allows researchers to abstract these out as involving minors; all other offences in this category had to be committed to higher court.
* \*Indecency between males. Prosecutions continued after 1967 (see above).
* Rape, including men having unlawful sexual intercourse with woman who is ‘defective’; ‘male member of hospital staff or mental nursing home having unlawful sexual intercourse with female patient; man having unlawful sexual intercourse with mentally disordered female patient who is subject to his care’.
* \*indecent assault on a female. \*\*Note: indecent assaults on female persons under 16 could be dealt with summarily by magistrates by consent of the accused (1908 Children’s Act) which allows researchers to abstract these out as involving minors; all other offences in this category had to be committed to higher court.
* \*\*unlawful sexual intercourse (carnal knowledge) with girl under 13
* \*\*unlawful sexual intercourse (carnal knowledge) with girl between 13 and 16
* \*incest
* \*procuration of women or girls
* \*abduction of women or girls
* \*\*Gross indecency/indecency with children. This was a new offence created by the Indecency with Children Act 1960. The act distinguished between indictable offences (gross indecency) and summary offences (indecency).
* \*Indecent exposure; summary offence dealt with by magistrates only. Across time it has been used to deal with a variety of offences (sex in public places and thus in relation to women as well as men and as a prostitution-related offence; exhibitionism)

\*\* charges that were age specific and thus are offences against minors by definition

\* charges that may have involved offences against minors

For each of these charges the following data has been captured:

* A= year
* B = number of offences known to police (this is given for all offences except indecent exposure and cases under the 1960 Act that were summary offences). This is the nearest metric that we have to ‘reported’ crime. Note that this category does not correlate with ‘persons’ proceeded against or tried (more than one person may have been tried for one offence; one person may be tried for more than one offence).
* C = number of offences ‘cleared up’ .
* D = persons tried at Assizes or Quarter Sessions
* E = persons tried/dealt with by Magistrates
* F = persons proceeded against (in any court). This figure is taken from police returns so does not necessarily correlate exactly with the court returns.
* G = number of persons found guilty by magistrates. Note: convictions were also recorded separately until 1929. Following the Probation of Offenders Act of 1907 it was fairly common for a case to be ‘proven’ but no conviction to be recorded. The charge against the individual might be dismissed (even through proven); or the individual might be made the subject of a recognizance (binding over order) or probation order. After 1929 the term ‘found guilty’ was used to enable better comparisons across all levels of justice. Note to that juvenile courts were not empowered to ‘convict’; they could only make a finding of guilt or proven.
* H = number of persons committed for trial by magistrates
* I = number found guilty (technically ‘convictions’) by Assizes and Quarter Sessions
* J = number imprisoned (Assizes and Quarter Sessions only)
* K = number of persons found guilty (all courts)
* L = number of persons found guilty who were female (all courts)

Where data in these categories is missing from the published Annual Criminal Justice Statistics, cells are shaded grey.