Criminal Genius: How We Know What Little We Know about High-IQ Crime

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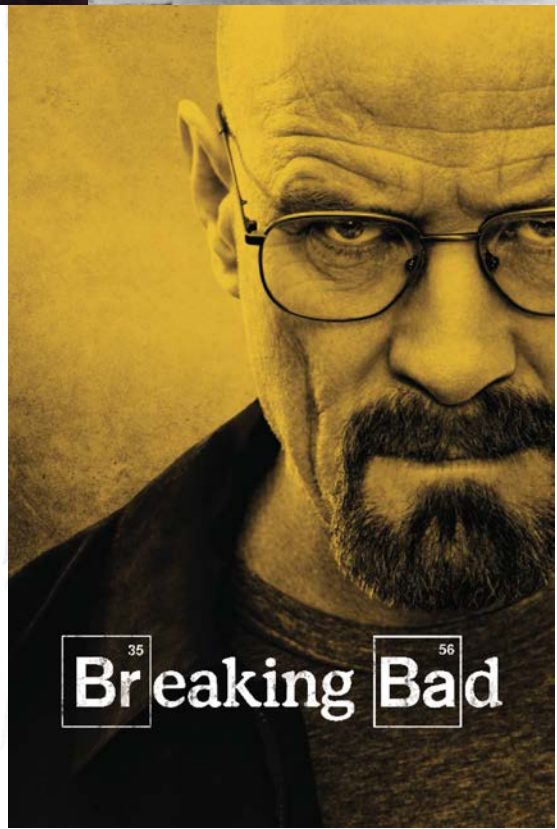
Abstract

Intelligence is said to be the most studied human faculty, and within criminology, below-average intelligence (operationalized as IQ) is a well-established correlate of delinquency and crime. Nevertheless, even though the association between low IQ and crime has been studied for nearly a century, little is known about offenders with high IQ scores. A handful of studies have examined bright delinquents; virtually no criminological research has been conducted with gifted adults. This is an elusive population.

The current research describes the self-reported offending of 465 high-IQ individuals (mean IQ = 148.7) and 756 controls (mean IQ = 115.4) across 72 different offences (ranging in seriousness from abuse of work privileges to homicide). This presentation will focus on the design and implementation of the study and the analytical work performed by COMPASS. It will also describe some key findings, such as the unexpected discovery that high-IQ respondents reported higher prevalence and incidence rates than did controls.

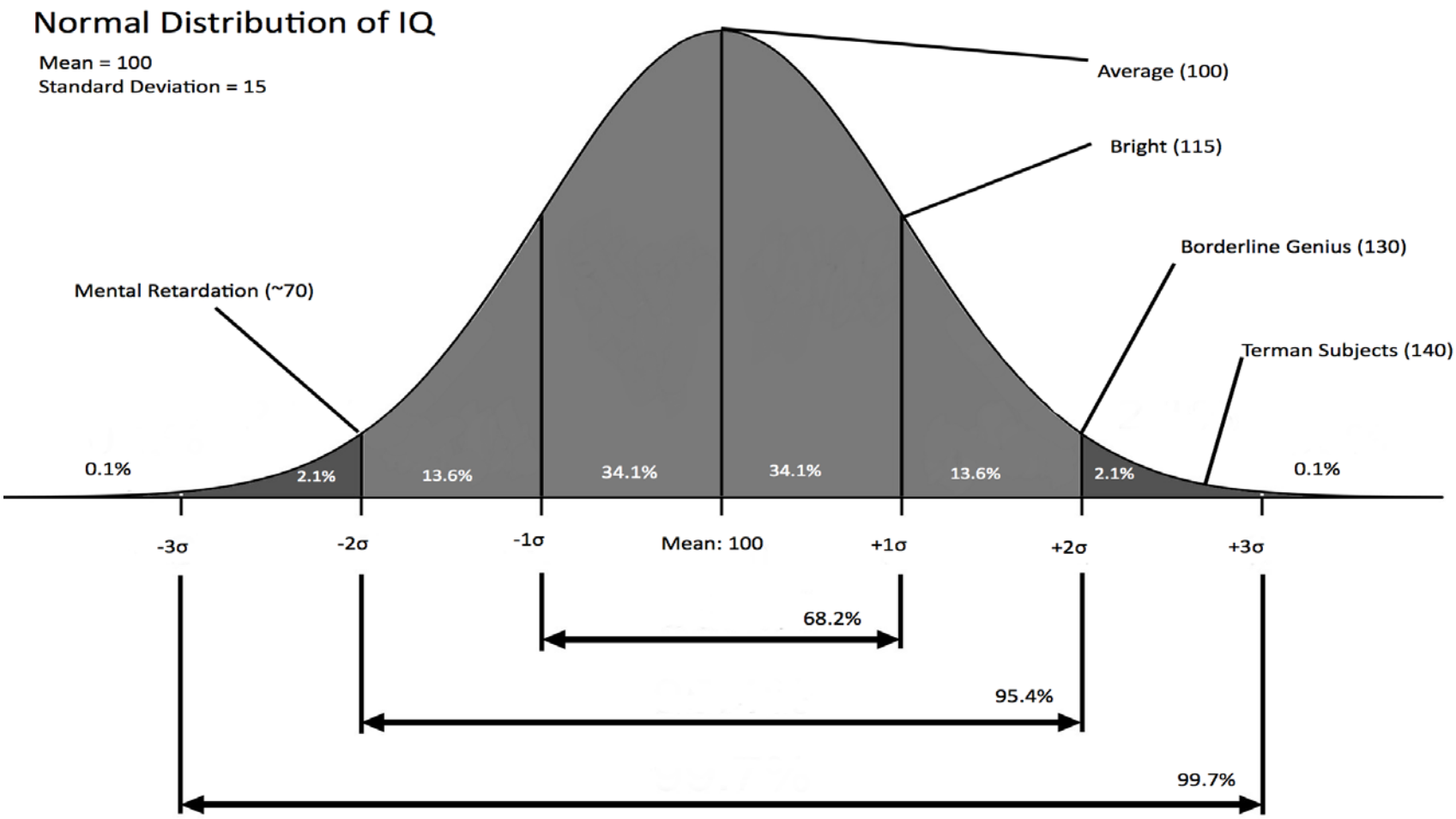
SIDNEY PAGET


35
56
Breaking Bad

Landmarks of IQ-Crime Research

- Cesare Lombroso
  - *L'Uomo Delinquente* (1876)
  - *Genio e follia* (1863)
- Charles Goring
  - *The English Convict* (1913)
- Henry H. Goddard
  - *The Kallikak Family: A Study in the Heredity of Feeblemindedness* (1912)
- Carl Murchison
  - *Criminal Intelligence* (1926)
- Edwin Sutherland
  - "Mental Deficiency and Crime" (1931)
- Travis Hirschi & Michael J. Hindelang
  - "Intelligence and Delinquency: A Revisionist Review" (1977)
- Lewis Terman
  - *Genetic Studies of Genius* Vol. I (1925)

Normal Distribution of IQ Scores



Self-Report Questionnaire

- Index Group: 465 (January 1997)
  - Members of 99.9% High-IQ Society
  - University Elites
  - US/UK Prison Sample
  - +2 σ Threshold: 130+ IQ
  - Mean IQ = 148.7
  - Postal Questionnaire
- 44 Follow-Up Interviews: Variety of Circumstances
- Control Group: 756 (March 2004)
  - Open IQ Range
  - Mean IQ = 115.4
- Eysenck Personality Questionnaire
- Demographics
- Books, films, and famous figures
- Self-Reported Prevalence, Incidence, Recency, Arrest, and Conviction Rates for 72 Offences
  - Drug Crimes (N = 13)
  - Property Crimes (N = 12)
  - Miscellaneous Crimes (N = 11)
  - White Collar Crimes (N = 9)
  - Violent Crimes (N = 8)
  - Sex Crimes (N = 7)
  - Professional Misconduct (N = 5)
  - Justice System Crimes (N = 4)
  - Vehicular Crimes (N = 3)

		Nvr.	Lyr.	Evr.	Arr.	Con.
16.	Used violence or the threat of violence to rob someone.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17.	Carried a hidden weapon other than a plain pocket knife.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18.	Made a serious threat that you meant to carry out.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19.	Beaten someone up seriously enough that they required medical attention of any kind.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Technical Matters

"I'm here about the details."

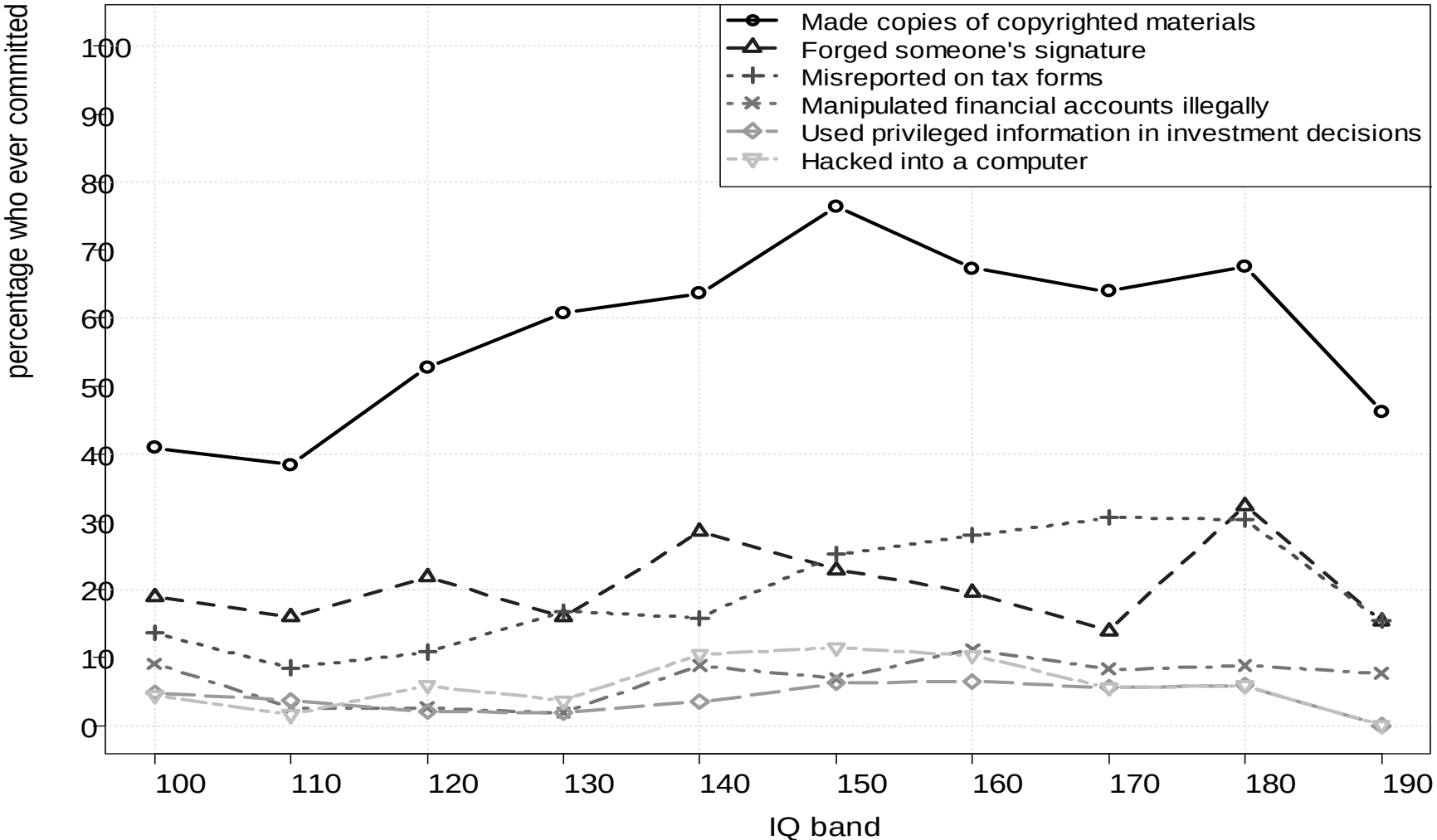
- Data Anomalies
  - Block 1
  - √ and X marks
  - "A Few" and "Many"
- Imputed IQ Scores
  - Self-Reported Scores
  - Group Scores
  - Achievement Tests
  - Education
  - Occupation

Crime Scores

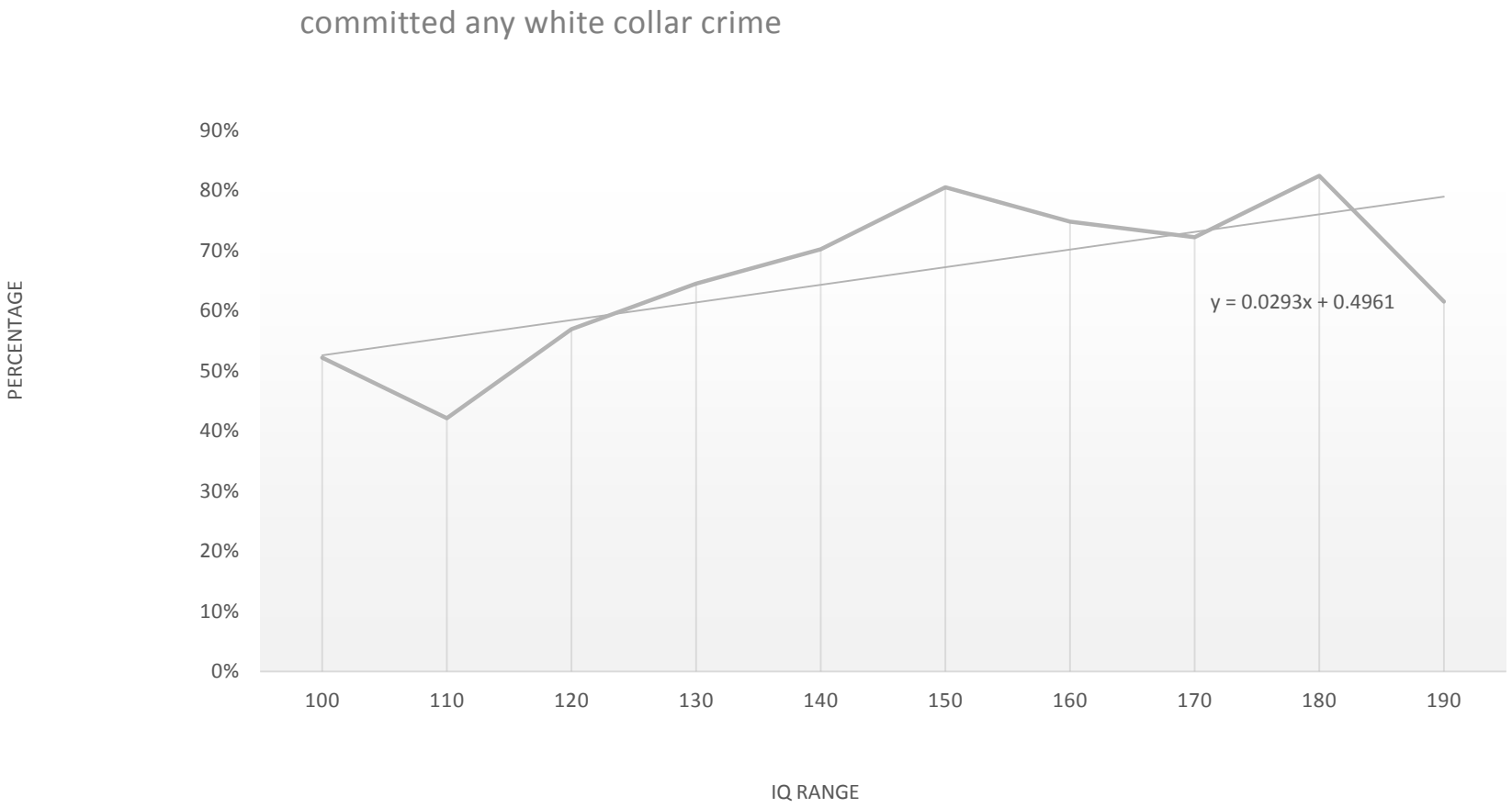
- Apples and Oranges
- *The Measurement of Delinquency* (Sellin & Wolfgang, 1964)
- 1.0 to 664.0

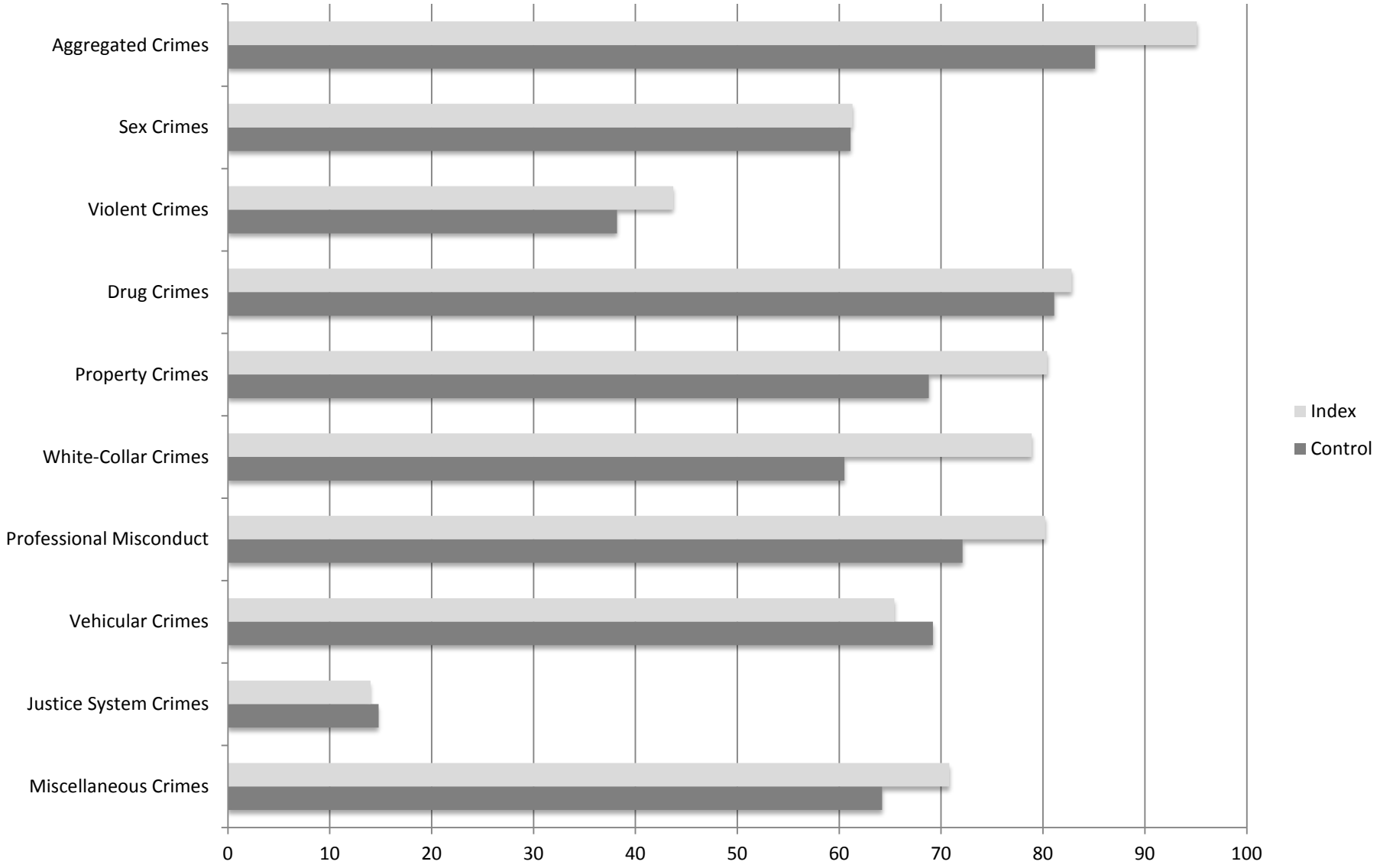
Minor injury to victim	1
Victim treated and discharged	4
Victim hospitalised	7
Victim killed	26
Victim of forcible sex intercourse	10
Intimidated by weapon, add	2
Intimidation of persons in connection with theft, etc. (other than in connection with forcible sex acts):	
Physical or verbal only	2
By weapon	4
Forcible entry of premises	1
Value of property stolen and/or damaged:	
Under 10 dollars	1
10-250	2
251-2000	3
2001-9000	4
9001-30000	5
30001-80000	6
Over 80000	7
Theft of motor vehicle (recovered, undamaged)	2

Example: White Collar Crimes

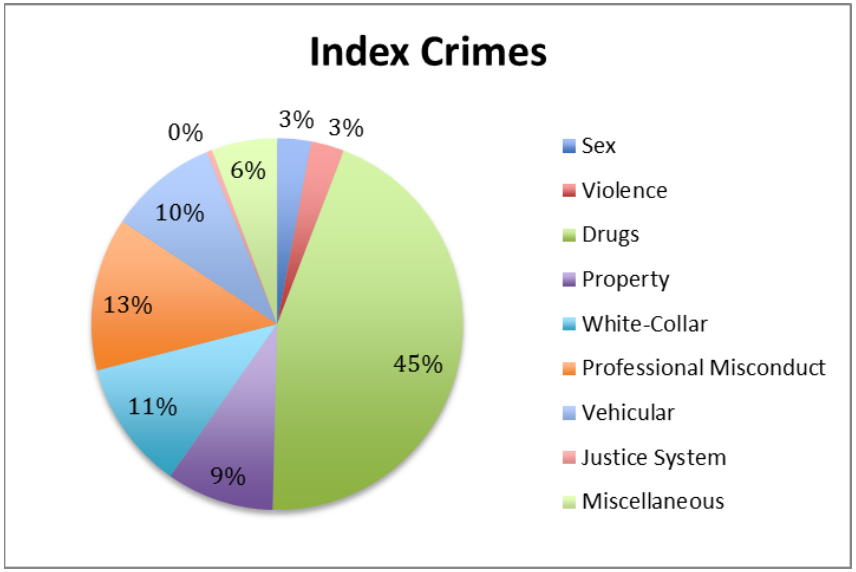


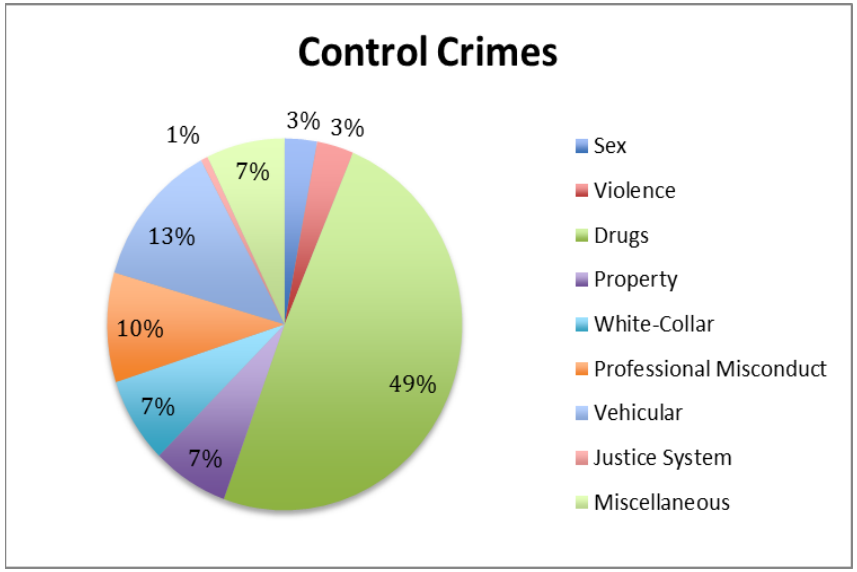
Linear Regression Trend Line

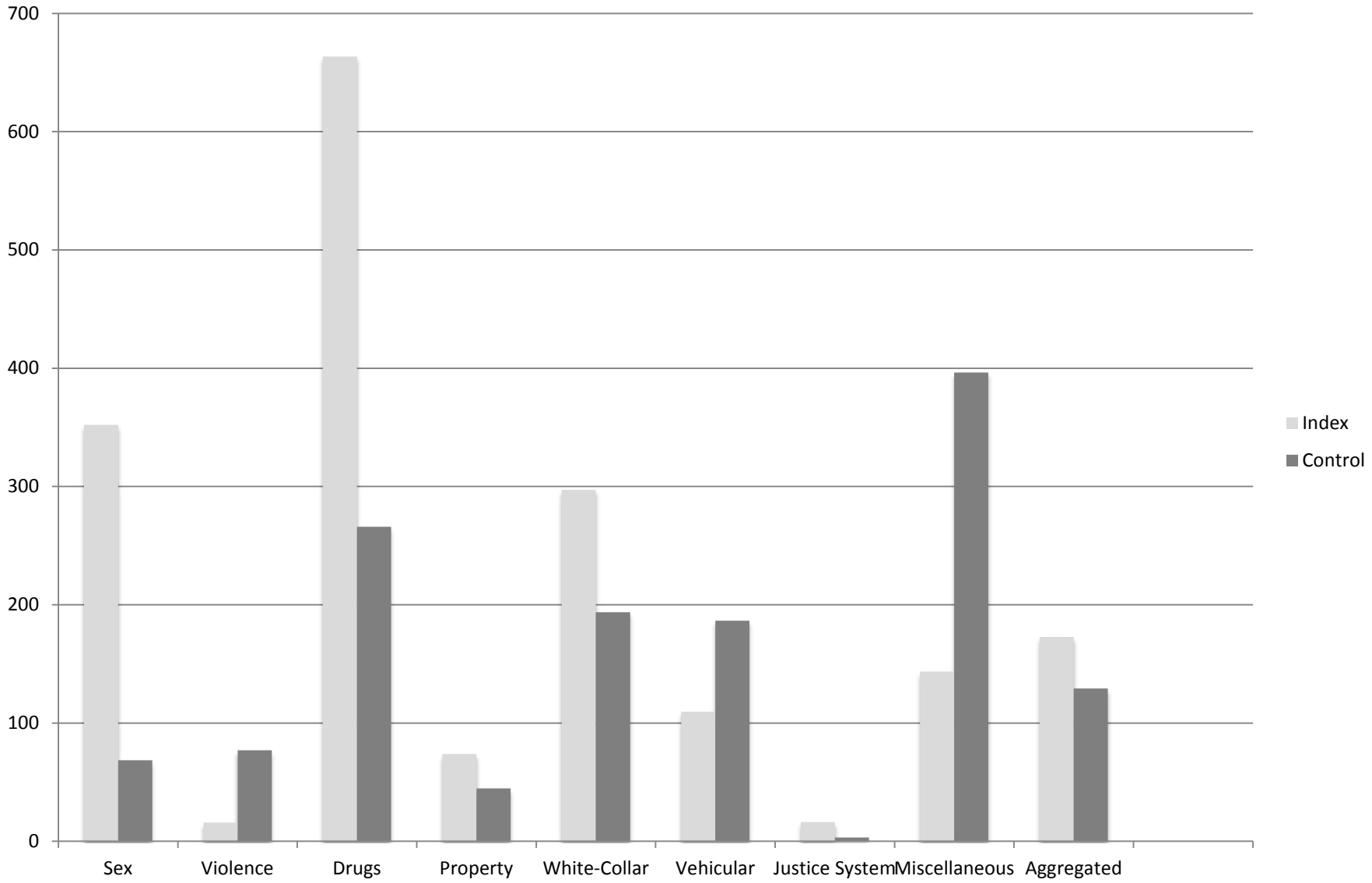


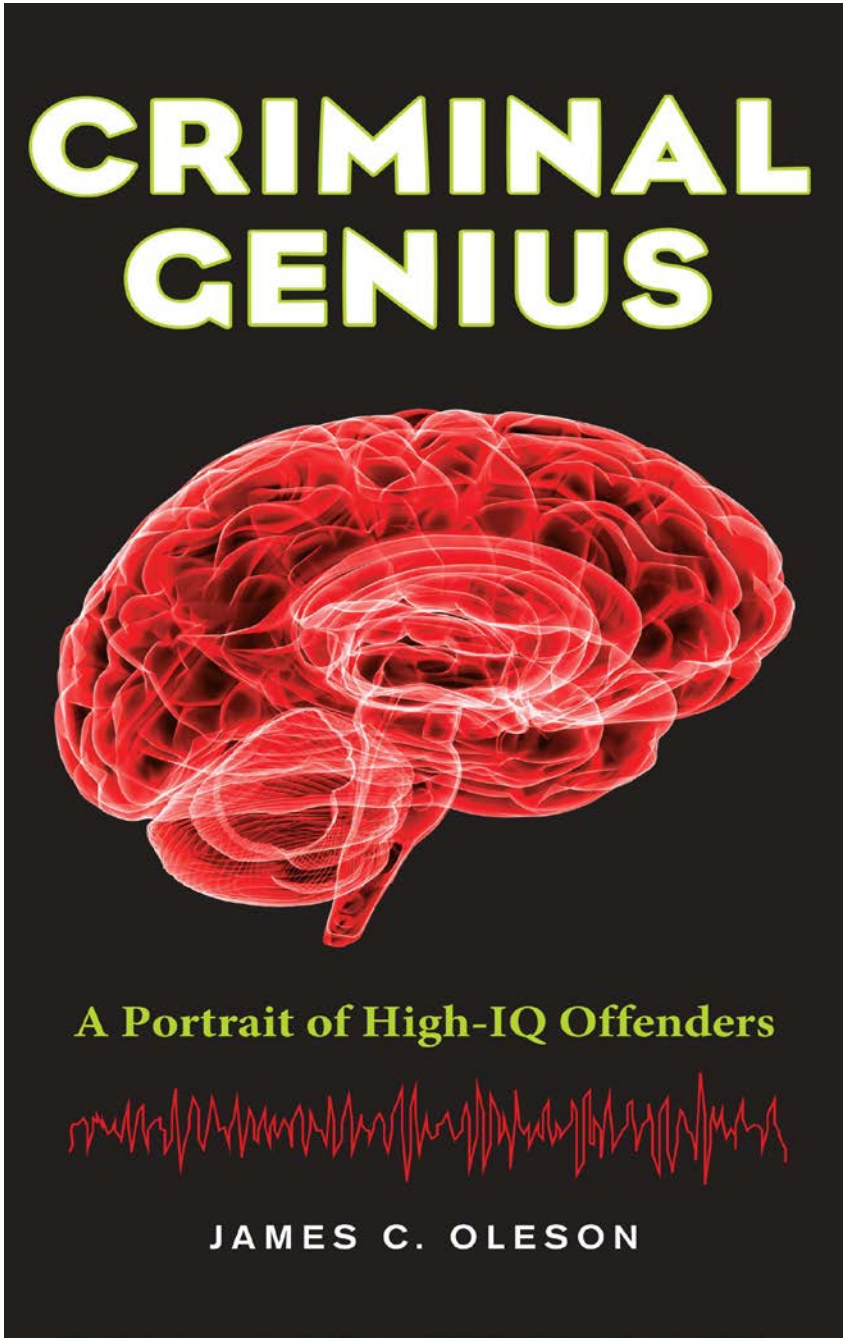

Aggregated Crimes
Sex Crimes
Violent Crimes
Drug Crimes
Property Crimes
White-Collar Crimes
Professional Misconduct
Vehicular Crimes
Justice System Crimes
Miscellaneous Crimes
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
Index
Control

Incidence: Offence Types






700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
Sex
Violence
Drugs
Property
White-Collar
Vehicular
Justice System
Miscellaneous
Aggregated
Index
Control



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Questions or Comments?

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