

33

# **Correctional Research and Correctional Decision-Making: Some Problems and Prospects**

**FRANCIS J. CARNEY**

**Social Science Research Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Correction  
B.A. (Sociology), 1963, Boston College**

Reprinted from  
**JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN CRIME AND DELINQUENCY**  
July 1969  
Copyright, 1969, National Council on Crime and Delinquency

# Correctional Research and Correctional Decision-Making: Some Problems and Prospects

FRANCIS J. CARNEY

Social Science Research Specialist, Massachusetts Department of Correction  
B.A. (Sociology), 1963, Boston College

---

*This examination of the relationship between research and decision-making is based primarily on experience in the Massachusetts correctional system, where a program of evaluative and operational research was recently established. Research findings have not been readily incorporated into the decision-making context, particularly where findings have implications for changes that do not jibe with the basic assumptions or orientations of correctional administrators. What seems to be necessary is the development of a research orientation within the correctional setting wherein research would be considered an essential ingredient of the overall correctional enterprise. Research leading to the development of a prescriptive penology or differential treatment model could make a significant contribution to correctional decision-making.*

---

CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS are continually faced with decisions that will have varying degrees of impact on the correctional system and the people within the system. Such decisions are characteristically based on the administrator's general orientation to the field, his assumptions regarding the relative effectiveness of alternative approaches, or that now much maligned faculty, common sense. Research cannot, at present, play a role in all decisions made by correctional administrators. Many decisions must be made before the relevant data can be collected and analyzed. Other decisions concern issues where data are simply not available. When systematic and relevant data are available, however, determination

of the extent to which they influence basic assumptions or are incorporated into the decision-making process is critical.

## DEFICIENCIES OF CORRECTIONAL COMMON SENSE

One area where the adequacy of experience or common sense has been empirically evaluated is that of predicting success or failure on parole. For example, Michael Hakeem did a study in which he requested ten white-collar workers unsophisticated in correctional matters and ten parole officers to predict parole outcomes on the basis of case summaries covering two hundred parolees, half of whom actually had been returned to a correctional institution as parole viola-

tors.<sup>1</sup> Each person made a prediction on twenty cases. Hakeem found that the parole officers, who represented a "highly schooled and professionally trained group," were no more successful than the laymen in predicting outcomes. In fact, as groups, the parole officers and the white-collar workers made exactly the same number of correct predictions—112 out of 200. Interestingly, this proportion of correct predictions does not differ significantly from what would be expected by chance. Thus, this study suggests that experience (as reflected by the parole officers' predictions) is not any more effective than common sense (as reflected by the predictions of the white-collar workers) in predicting parole outcome. Further, that neither group could produce predictions that were significantly more accurate than what would be expected by chance underscores the inadequacy of experience or common sense—or both, in the case of the parole officers—in this area.

Several studies have specifically evaluated the efficacy of experience versus empirical data in parole prediction.<sup>2</sup> These studies have consistently demonstrated that empirically based prediction tables were much more effective in predicting parole outcome than the case study prog-

noses of experienced specialists in the correctional field. Since each parole decision involves a prediction of the probability of success or failure on parole for a particular inmate, prediction tables clearly can aid in this area of decision-making.

In Massachusetts, base expectancy categories for predicting the likelihood of success or failure on release have been derived for a sample of inmates from each of the state correctional institutions. In the derivation of these tables, the combination of age and prior commitment record has consistently been found to be the most powerful predictor of recidivism. Older inmates with no prior commitments have had the lowest recidivism rates, while younger inmates with prior commitments have had the highest return rates. This finding has emerged with both male and female offenders as well as with releasees from maximum security and medium security institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Although these base expectancy studies have produced some interesting results, the predictive tables themselves have not yet been used by the Massachusetts Parole Board as an aid to their decision-making. However, the Parole Board is apparently not atypical in this regard; a 1962 survey of the paroling authorities in fifty-four jurisdictions across the nation revealed that only four were using prediction tables as an aid to parole decisions.<sup>4</sup> The availability of relevant research data does not necessari-

<sup>1</sup> Michael Hakeem, "Prediction of Parole Outcome from Summaries of Case Histories," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, July-August 1961, pp. 145-55.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Don M. Gottfredson, "Comparing and Combining Subjective and Objective Parole Predictions," *Research Newsletter*, California Department of Corrections, September-December 1961, pp. 11-17; Hermann Mannheim and Leslie T. Wilkins, *Prediction Methods in Relation to Borstal Training* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1955); and Daniel Glaser, "Prediction Tables as Accounting Devices for Judges and Parole Boards," *Crime and Delinquency*, July 1962, pp. 239-58.

<sup>3</sup> Francis J. Carney, "A Summary of Studies on the Derivation of Base Expectancy Categories for Predicting Recidivism of Subjects Released from Institutions of the Massachusetts Department of Correction," Massachusetts Department of Correction, October 1966 (mimeo).

<sup>4</sup> Victor H. Evjen, "Current Thinking on Parole Prediction Tables," *Crime and Delinquency*, July 1962, pp. 215-38.

ly ensure that such data will be incorporated into the decision-making of correctional administrators. Other issues—such as the development of a climate within which research is regarded as an essential ingredient in the overall correctional enterprise, not merely as “window dressing,” and the appropriate communication and interpretation of findings by researchers—seem to be as crucial as the research itself if the findings are to have an impact on correctional practices. Much of the burden for progress on these other issues is on the correctional researchers. More will be said on this later.

#### IMPACT OF RESEARCH ON CLASSIFICATION

In most correctional systems a good deal of time, money, and energy is invested in collecting information on individual inmates, and a correspondingly large investment is made in decision-making. However, the relationship between the data collection and the decision-making appears, at times, to be tenuous. First, whether decisions about an inmate are based on the information so painstakingly collected or on the needs of the institution is sometimes unclear. Second, efforts at measuring the outcomes of decisions based on the collected data have been limited. The relationship between the information, the decisions, and the extent to which they result in the achievement of the intended goals is sorely in need of study.

One area of decision-making that is apparently influenced by data collection is the classification committee meeting, where the overall program for each inmate is developed, based on the available information on his needs

and capacities. In Massachusetts, the classification system was recently overhauled, with an emphasis on the standardization of information gathering. Research assisted in the development of the new classification system by providing an assessment of the process of data collection.<sup>5</sup> This study pointed out the aforementioned investment in time, money, and energy in collecting data, often with much duplication and with compulsive concern for specific details. But perhaps the most significant disclosure was the apparent superfluity of the entire enterprise of data collection—at least in terms of the general programing of inmates. There was cogent evidence that the needs of the institution tended to preempt any decision that might be made concerning an inmate based on the information so assiduously collected. One goal of the newly structured classification system was to avoid having a vast reservoir of data lying fallow in the files and to make data collection relevant to classification decisions. Another goal was to make the decisions of the classification committee significant enough to elevate the needs of the inmates over the needs of the institution. If the latter goal were not accomplished, classification of inmates would be little more than a “paper program.”

After the classification system had been in operation for nine months, the extent to which the recommendations of the committee were actually being implemented was measured.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Francis J. Carney and John D. Coughlan, “An Evaluation of the Process of Data Collection,” Massachusetts Department of Correction, August 1966 (mimeo).

<sup>6</sup> John E. Gardner, “An Evaluation of the Impact of the Walpole-Norfolk Classification Program,” Massachusetts Department of Correction, July 1968 (mimeo).

The major question was the degree to which inmates were becoming involved in the programs the classification committee had recommended for them. The total number of program recommendations made for the 159 inmates studied was 498. Of these 498 recommendations, 30 per cent were followed, 30 per cent resulted in some kind of program involvement similar to the type recommended by the classification committee, and 40 per cent were not implemented at all.

The next step was to consider the number of inmates involved in the various treatment programs and to compare the involvement rate of those whom the classification committee recommended for a particular program with the involvement rate of those whom the committee did not recommend for the program. The goal of this comparison was to determine whether or not the proportion of inmates who were participating in a recommended program differed significantly from the proportion of inmates participating in the same program without the recommendation of the classification committee. For example, as Table 1 indicates, 52 per cent of those recommended for academic education actually became involved in this program, while 37 per cent of those not recommended participated in it. The proportions of recommended and non-recommended inmates participating in the educational program do not differ significantly from what would be expected by chance ( $X^2 = 2.98$ ,  $df = 1$ ,  $p < .10$ ). None of the five comparisons in Table 1 yielded a statistically significant difference in the program involvement rates of recommended versus non-recommended inmates. Thus, the author of this study concluded

that "the Classification System . . . has met with limited success after its first year of operation. In many instances, inmates became involved in rehabilitation programs seemingly independent of Committee recommendations, and, conversely, a high proportion of those with the Committee's recommendation did not become involved in the programs."<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 1  
PROPORTION OF INMATES INVOLVED IN  
TREATMENT PROGRAMS FOR THOSE  
RECOMMENDED BY THE CLASSIFICATION  
COMMITTEE COMPARED WITH THOSE  
NOT RECOMMENDED

Treatment Program	N	Proportion Involved
Education		
with recommendation	121	52%
without recommendation	38	37%
Vocational Training		
with recommendation	27	18%
without recommendation	132	10%
Psychotherapy		
with recommendation	103	28%
without recommendation	56	27%
Social Education		
with recommendation	93	67%
without recommendation	66	56%
Recreation and Avocation		
with recommendation	73	62%
without recommendation	86	60%

Two other studies concerned with the new classification system were carried out. One was geared to tap inmates' knowledge and perceptions of the classification program.<sup>8</sup> A sample of inmates who had gone through the classification process was interviewed. Over 80 per cent of the respondents reported that they did not have a clear understanding of what

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> John E. Gardner, "A Study of Inmate Perception of the Walpole-Norfolk Classification Program," Massachusetts Department of Correction, July 1968 (mimeo).

classification was. As a group, they could recall only 30 per cent of the committee's recommendations, and only one out of four reported that the classification system had been of any personal use. The classification program was neither very well understood nor very well accepted by the inmates.

The other study on classification was simply a statistical report in which some other problems were spotlighted.<sup>9</sup> For example, the length of time between commitment and classification was found to be much longer than prescribed in the guidelines of the new system. Although inmates were supposed to have been classified by the end of their sixth week in the institution, only about 10 per cent of the inmates studied were classified within six weeks and 25 per cent of them waited at least three months.

In sum, a fairly comprehensive evaluation of the newly formed classification system was carried out. The studies demonstrated several limitations of the system and made some suggestions for improvement. Administrators used the data on the excessive length of time between commitment and classification to bring pressure to bear on the classification personnel to increase their productivity. However, on other important problems the research did not stimulate a major movement toward change. The research's immediate impact on changes in the classification system was not very significant. Again, the availability of relevant data does not necessarily guarantee that the information is used as a basis for change or

as an aid to decision-making. In this particular case two factors seem to be related to the limited use of research findings. One is the newness of the research enterprise itself. The other is the ambivalence of some administrators about the need for a classification system. The latter factor suggests that changes in this area will come slowly and that research is unlikely to produce any dramatic changes in a short period of time.

#### THE PANACEA DELUSIONS

The above research has revealed that, in its first nine months of operation, the classification system has had less than a significant impact on inmate involvement in recommended programs. But what if the recommendations of the classification committee were systematically and consistently followed. Would it be reasonable to expect some measurable, positive results, such as a reduction in recidivism? The answer to this question involves a consideration of the factors on which classification decisions are based. Such decisions usually evolve from a subjective assessment of the case history material and thus rely heavily on common sense, experience, and intuition. As yet, little empirical evidence exists on the relative effectiveness of the various treatment programs or, more importantly, on the types of inmates who tend to benefit most (and least) from the different programs. The classification committee seems to believe that inmates ought to be given an opportunity to participate in the treatment program in which they show an interest, expressing little concern for the possibility that some programs may have a negative impact on particular types of inmates. Later in the paper some

<sup>9</sup> Francis J. Carney, "A Statistical Report on the Walpole-Norfolk Classification Program," Massachusetts Department of Correction, July 1968 (mimeo).

findings from a recent evaluation of the mental health program in the maximum security institution will be presented. These findings indicated that psychotherapy had a negative impact on a particular type of inmate. Perhaps most striking, however, was the finding that the type of inmate shown to be adversely affected by psychotherapy was the type the classification committee, using common sense, was most likely to recommend for psychotherapeutic treatment. This finding not only emphasizes again the inadequacy of common sense in correctional decision-making but also points out research's potential value in classification decisions.

In recent years the number of treatment programs in the correctional setting has increased substantially, seemingly on the assumption that inmates could derive across-the-board gains from participation in any or all of them. Proponents of the various habilitative approaches—e.g., psychotherapy, education, vocational training, inmate self-help groups—have generally asserted that all inmates could benefit from participation in their program. A panacea frame of reference emerged, accompanied by impressive claims of success but precious little empirical support for the claims.

Early evaluative research on these programs was influenced by the panacea frame of reference. Research methodologies were designed to measure the overall impact of treatment programs, leaving unexamined the possibility of a differential impact with different types of offenders. Some carefully controlled studies using the classical experimental design failed to show any significant differences in recidivism between treatment program

participants and non-participants. For example, in a review of one hundred correctional outcome studies, Bailey found that those studies with the most rigorous experimental designs reported that treatment had either a detrimental effect or no effect at all.<sup>10</sup> Early evaluative studies in Massachusetts also resulted in some rather disappointing findings.<sup>11</sup> The basic analytical technique of these studies was the comparison of the expected recidivism rate, as derived from base expectancy categories, with the actual recidivism rate of a sample of treatment program participants. This technique controlled fairly well for the possibility of a selective factor. For example, if a particular treatment program had an overrepresentation of low recidivism risks, the expected recidivism rate would be low. Thus, if a significant difference was found between the actual and expected rates, there would be some assurance that the difference was related to the program and not simply to the types of inmates who were involved in it. This analytical technique, however, is basically grounded in the panacea approach because it tends to assume equal gains for all inmates in a particular program. We must go beyond the simple comparison of expected versus actual return rates to explore the possibility of a differential impact of treatment with different types of inmates. One way of doing this is to compare the recidivism rates of treatment and non-treatment sub-

<sup>10</sup> Walter C. Bailey, "Correctional Outcome: An Evaluation of 100 Reports," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*, June 1966, pp. 153-60.

<sup>11</sup> For example, see Francis J. Carney and Estelle D. Bottome, "An Analysis of Recidivism among Inmates Released from a Forestry Camp," Massachusetts Department of Correction, March 1967 (mimeo).

jects with similar characteristics. Thus, if the results of these early evaluative studies were discouraging, they did demonstrate the importance of examining the impact of treatment programs with particular types of offenders, rather than with offenders *en masse*.

#### TOWARD A PRESCRIPTIVE PENOLOGY

One of the major challenges now facing correctional researchers is the need for comprehensive analyses of the relative effectiveness of the various kinds of treatment programs with different types of inmates. Such research would lead away from a panacea approach to a prescriptive approach within which an inmate could be guided into programs that have been found to benefit other inmates with his characteristics and steered away from those programs that have had no impact, or even a detrimental impact, on other inmates like him. After all, the basic premise underlying the whole concept of classification is that some programs will be more helpful than others with specific inmates. The problem has been the lack of objective guidelines on what programs benefit what offenders. Common sense and experience alone have been unsuccessful in making such determinations. Therefore, empirical data are essential if classification committees are to make the most appropriate program recommendations.

Some impressive progress toward the development of a prescriptive penology has been reported recently in the literature. One example is the Community Treatment Project in California, in which the research focus has been on the crucial question of "what kinds of treatment programs, in what kinds of settings, are most effective with what kinds of

juvenile delinquents."<sup>12</sup> The study revealed that an intensive community program was more effective than incarceration with certain types of sentenced delinquents, while an institutional program was more effective with other types. Beginning to emerge from this research is a treatment model by which specific modes of treatment can be prescribed for different types of delinquents, classified according to an interpersonal maturity level typology.

The first Massachusetts study that revealed a differential impact of a treatment program was an evaluation of the effectiveness of psychotherapy with inmates in the maximum security institution.<sup>13</sup> In this study a sample of inmates who had participated in the psychotherapy program for twenty-five weeks or longer (N=115) was compared with a sample who had not been involved at all in the psychotherapy program (N=138). The minimum of twenty-five weeks in therapy was decided on because the clinical staff felt that at least this much time was needed to develop a valid psychotherapeutic relationship. The standard used to measure the effectiveness of the psychotherapy program was the recidivism rate, with a four-year follow-up period for determining recidivism.

The most general finding was that the actual recidivism rate of the psychotherapy sample (53 per cent) was significantly lower than the expected

<sup>12</sup> Marguerite Q. Warren, "The Community Treatment Project after Five Years," California Department of Corrections, 1967 (mimeo), p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Francis J. Carney, "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Psychotherapy with Inmates in a Maximum Security Correctional Institution," paper presented at the Cape Cod Conference on the Administration of Criminal Justice and Community Mental Health, Oct. 5, 1968.



rate (68 per cent). A tremendous range, however, appeared in the recidivism rates of subgroups of the psychotherapy sample. For example, five mutually exclusive categories could be delimited with return rates ranging from 0 per cent (for those who had five or fewer prior arrests and an eleventh grade education or higher, regardless of age) to 94.1 per cent (for those who had six or more prior arrests, were thirty-three or younger at their present incarceration, and had more than one juvenile incarceration).

From these five categories it was possible to determine the general characteristics of inmates who tended to benefit from psychotherapy versus those who tended not to benefit. For example, the subgroup consisting of inmates who had longer records (six or more prior arrests) and were younger (thirty-three or under at the present incarceration) appeared to have been very little affected by psychotherapy. Inmates with these characteristics who were in psychotherapy had a slightly higher recidivism rate (78 per cent) than their counterparts who were not in therapy (76 per cent). These younger subjects with longer records will be subsequently referred to as the "no impact group," since psychotherapy tended to have no impact on them—at least in reducing recidivism.

On the other hand, two subgroups appeared to have benefited considerably from psychotherapy. The first subgroup consisted of those with shorter records (five or fewer prior arrests); the second was made up of those with longer records (six or more prior arrests) but who were older (thirty-four or above at present incarceration). The recidivism rate of therapy subjects with shorter records was 23.8 per cent, which was 35.5

percentage points lower than that of non-therapy subjects with shorter records (59.3 per cent). Also, older therapy subjects with longer records had a recidivism rate (52.2 per cent) that was 13.8 percentage points lower than that of their non-therapy counterparts (66 per cent). Thus, psychotherapy was effective with inmates having these characteristics—particularly those with shorter records, since the return rate of non-therapy subjects with shorter records was more than 2½ times higher than that of therapy subjects with shorter records. For further analysis these two subgroups were combined and referred to as the "impact group," since psychotherapy apparently did have a significant impact in reducing their recidivism rates.

Another issue to be explored was whether or not a relationship existed between recidivism and the length of time in psychotherapy for the "impact" and "no impact" groups. Table 2 presents some rather striking data.

TABLE 2  
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECIDIVISM  
AND TIME IN PSYCHOTHERAPY FOR THE  
"IMPACT GROUP" AND THE  
"NO IMPACT GROUP"

Weeks in Therapy	"Impact Group"		"No Impact Group"	
	N	Recid. Rate	N	Recid. Rate
25-44	23	39.1%	15	66.7%
45-79	21	38.1%	18	77.8%
80 or more	21	23.8%	17	88.2%
Total	65	33.8%	50	78.0%

The data in Table 2 show that the recidivism rate of the "impact group" decreased as the length of time in psychotherapy increased, while the recidivism rate of the "no impact group" increased as the length of time in therapy increased. Thus, the return rate of the "impact group" was

not only significantly lower than its non-therapy counterparts but was reduced even further as the length of time in therapy increased. On the other hand, the recidivism rate of the "no impact group," which was slightly higher than that of its non-therapy counterparts, became higher as the length of time in therapy increased. Inmates with the characteristics of the "no impact group"—i.e., younger men with long records—do not seem to be appropriate candidates for psychotherapy.

The findings of this study point to the feasibility of a prescriptive approach with adult inmates and have important implications for decision-making within the institution. For example, the study provided much-needed information that should be useful to the classification committee and to the mental health staff, such as the types of inmates most likely to benefit from psychotherapy. That the information was "much needed" was emphasized by an analysis of the psychotherapy recommendations of the classification committee before the publication of this study. The analysis revealed that 74 per cent of the inmates with the characteristics of the "no impact group" were recommended for the psychotherapy program, while only 56 per cent of those with the characteristics of the "impact group" were recommended. Because the committee's decisions were based on the panacea orientation toward psychotherapy and on common sense, it is understandable that younger inmates with long records were recommended for the psychotherapy program at a significantly higher rate than other inmates. However, the empirical data suggest that the classification committee ought to be more selective in referring this type of inmate to the psychotherapy program.

The study also indicated that the therapist ought to be alert to the possible negative impact of the psychotherapeutic process—particularly on younger inmates with longer records. It suggested that a careful assessment ought to be made of the progress of psychotherapy with each patient at regular intervals. According to other data in the study, the crucial period for deciding whether to continue or terminate therapy seems to be about six months after the beginning of treatment. Therefore, after six months of therapy the impact of the treatment process should certainly be evaluated, since the positive or the negative effects become more and more pronounced as treatment is continued beyond this point.

The data on the differential impact of psychotherapy have not, as yet, been taken into account in the intake procedures of the mental health clinic. For example, 43 per cent of those in the psychotherapy study sample were in the "no impact" category. (No one who was released after March 1963 was included in this sample.) A survey of all patients in the psychotherapy program of the maximum security institution in February 1969—fifteen months after publication of the study—revealed that 57 per cent had the characteristics of the "no impact" category. Thus we see a significant increase in the proportion of patients with the characteristics of the "no impact" group and a corresponding decrease in the proportion of those with the characteristics of the "impact" group. All in all, the research findings have apparently had little effect on decision-making or policy formulation. The generalization that the availability of relevant data does not guarantee their use seems to hold true, even, as in this case, with the professional staff who have gen-

erally supported research endeavors with much enthusiasm.

Turning back to the data of the psychotherapy study, we find that psychotherapy tended to have a detrimental effect—at least when measured by the criterion of recidivism reduction—on young inmates with long criminal records. This finding is generally consistent with some California studies on the effectiveness of psychotherapy.<sup>14</sup> It raises the crucial question of what other treatment approaches will have an impact with this type of inmate. This question is important because the young inmates with long records constituted over 40 per cent of both the therapy and the non-therapy samples. Its importance has been even further underscored by the findings from some subsequent Massachusetts studies on the effectiveness of other kinds of treatment programs. These studies have indicated that this same type of inmate tended not to benefit from other methods of treatment.

One of these studies evaluated the educational program at the medium security institution by considering those inmates who were involved in the program for at least three months. A two-year follow-up found that the recidivism rate of young inmates with long records who were in the educational sample was 51 per cent, exactly the same as their counterparts in the control group.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For example, see J. D. Grant and Marguerite Q. Grant, "A Group Dynamics Approach to the Treatment of Nonconformists in the Navy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March 1959, pp. 126-35; and Stuart Adams, "The PICO Project," in *The Sociology of Punishment and Correction*, Norman Johnston, Leonard Savitz, and Marvin Wolfgang, eds. (New York: John Wiley, 1962), pp. 213-24.

<sup>15</sup> Alvin Youman, "An Evaluation of the Impact of the MCI-Norfolk Education Pro-

gram on Recidivism," Massachusetts Department of Correction (forthcoming).

Another evaluative study of the same nature focused on the impact of the Fellowship Program at the same medium security institution.<sup>16</sup> Although this program encompasses a fairly wide range of activities, the basic ingredient is weekly discussion groups for inmates and interested people from the outside community. A major goal of the program is the development of valuable relationships between inmates and outsiders, or "outmates." The research was based on a two-year, nine-month follow-up of those who had been involved in the Fellowship Program for at least three months. Young inmates with long records who were Fellowship members were found to have a recidivism rate of 60 per cent, while non-Fellowship subjects with the same characteristics had a return rate of 62 per cent. Thus, none of these programs—psychotherapy, education, and Fellowship—significantly reduced the recidivism of young inmates with long records, although each program did seem to have a substantial impact on other types of offenders.

In speculating about the reasons for the relative ineffectiveness of these programs for the young inmate with a long record, we should consider some of the common characteristics of the programs as well as some of the characteristics of this type of inmate. The three programs share a dependence on verbal processes and interpersonal relationships as the primary means of helping inmates gain insight into how they might pursue a non-criminal career. If a generalization

gram on Recidivism," Massachusetts Department of Correction (forthcoming).

<sup>16</sup> John E. Gardner and Lygere Panagopoulos, "An Evaluation of the Effect of the Fellowship Program at MCI-Norfolk on Recidivism," Massachusetts Department of Correction, March 1969 (mimeo).

may be made about the young offender with a long record, it is that he tends to be more manipulative than other offenders. In commenting specifically on this type of inmate, Glaser has suggested that "a major source of gratification to him has . . . often been his impression that he has successfully manipulated the various adult counsellors, therapists, and social workers to whom he has been assigned. . . . Such a youth has usually no record of appreciable success or any personal stake in conforming behavior, for his self conception derives its strength from his sense of distinction in delinquent and criminal activity."<sup>17</sup> This type of offender's experience in psychotherapy or in the educational or Fellowship programs could well have served to augment this impression of successful manipulation of people and, therefore, did not help him to make a successful adjustment in the outside community. With this possibility in mind, Glaser suggested experimentation with a new correctional orientation to young inmates with long records, one that would move away from an emphasis on treatment approaches that depend on verbal processes to a treatment approach in a friendly but firm atmosphere where the emphasis would be on vocational training coordinated with programmed or other immediate reinforcement education, realistic employment experiences in prison, and work in the community before parole. Counseling would be directed mainly to helping inmates achieve gratification in this experience. According to the avail-

able research data, this approach seems to have the greatest potential for making a positive impact on the youthful offender with a long criminal record.

A comparison of the data in the three evaluative studies also provides some leads for further research in the development of a prescriptive penology. For example, it was discovered that psychotherapy and the Fellowship program differed significantly in the degree of their effectiveness with certain types of offenders. The psychotherapy program was found to be particularly effective with sex offenders but relatively ineffective with other types of assaultive offenders. Conversely, the Fellowship program appeared to be ineffective with sex offenders but very effective with other kinds of assaultive offenders. Table 3 summarizes this interesting relationship.

The data in Table 3 suggest that programs encouraging the participation of lay community people are less effective than professionally administered psychotherapy in dealing with sex offenders, but that these types of programs might be more effective than psychotherapy with other types of assaultive offenders. However, the characteristics of inmates within these offense categories in the psychotherapy samples may be significantly different from those in the Fellowship samples, as the psychotherapy study was done on samples of inmates from the maximum security institutions, while the Fellowship study consisted of samples from the medium security institution.<sup>18</sup> Further research is required

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Glaser, "Comments on Francis J. Carney Paper, 'An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Psychotherapy with Inmates in a Maximum Security Correctional Institution,'" presented at the Cape Cod Conference on the Administration of Criminal Justice and Community Mental Health, Oct. 5, 1968.

<sup>18</sup> Although we don't know the extent to which sex offenders who are retained at the maximum security institution are different from sex offenders who are transferred to the medium security institution, we would probably expect differences in such areas as

**TABLE 3**  
**A COMPARISON OF THE RELATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF PSYCHOTHERAPY AND THE**  
**FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM WITH SEX OFFENDERS AND WITH OTHER TYPES OF**  
**ASSAULTIVE OFFENDERS**

	Sex Offenders		Other Assaultive Offenders	
	N	Recid. Rate*	N	Recid. Rate*
<b>Psychotherapy Data</b>				
Non-therapy sample	26	61.5%	48	72.9%
Therapy sample	34	32.4%	42	69.0%
Difference in Recid. Rates		-29.1		-3.9
<b>Fellowship Data</b>				
Non-Fellowship sample	57	22.8%	135	50.4%
Fellowship sample	19	26.3%	23	26.1%
Difference in Recid. Rates		+3.5		-24.3

\* The recidivism rates of the psychotherapy and the fellowship studies are not comparable with each other since the two studies were based on different follow-up periods for determining recidivism.

for a more substantive interpretation of this finding.

At this point, it seems reasonable to conclude that the development of a prescriptive penology or a client-specific treatment model is a feasible enterprise and a major challenge for correctional researchers. However, the extent to which such data will be used in decision-making is still questionable. The apparently minimal, short-range impact on decision-making of the studies cited in this paper may have created the impression that correctional administrators in Massachusetts have completely ignored all research efforts. This has not been the case. Although the findings from the studies referred to above have certainly not been put to maximum use immediately, there is some indication that they may ultimately have an impact on decision-

criminal histories, disciplinary problems, the need for external controls, etc. The same is of course true for other assaultive offenders at the two institutions. Since possibilities for these kinds of differences may be attributed to sampling techniques, it would not be valid to generalize the findings on the inmates from one institution to the other.

making. Some studies have had an immediate effect in helping to bring about significant policy changes. For example, a hard and fast policy had existed not to transfer any inmate with a history of narcotic use from the maximum to the medium security institution. This policy was apparently based on the untested, common-sense assumption that this type of inmate was likely to get involved in disciplinary problems, particularly those concerning drugs. A study was designed to test this assumption by comparing a sample of inmates with a history of narcotic arrests with a sample of inmates with no such narcotic history.<sup>19</sup> A significantly lower proportion of the drug-user sample (18.5 per cent) had one or more institutional disciplinary reports than did the non-user sample (59 per cent). Further, none of the infractions of the drug-user sample was for aggressive or destructive behavior and none

<sup>19</sup> Lygere Panagopoulos, "A Study of the Relationship between a History of Narcotic Arrests and Institutional Behavior," Massachusetts Department of Correction, July 1968 (mimeo).

was for drug-related incidents. In comparison, 17.6 per cent of the disciplinary reports of the non-user sample were for aggressive or destructive behavior and 14.7 per cent of their reports involved drug-related infractions. These empirical data played an important role in the changing of the transfer policy for known drug users. Now the history of narcotic use per se does not preclude the possibility of a transfer to the medium security institution.

#### CONCLUSION

Research leading to the development of a prescriptive penology could make a major contribution to correctional decision-making and also to the development of inmate typologies and the formulation and refinement of theories of criminality.

The findings of a formalized research program in Massachusetts have not been readily incorporated into the decision-making context. To improve this situation, researchers will have to generate a research orientation within the correctional setting so that research is viewed as an essential component of the overall correctional enterprise. One of the first steps in creating a research-oriented climate in correction is to open up and increase the channels of communication between administrators and researchers. One useful technique of doing this in Massachusetts has been to include a research section in the monthly newsletter, which is distributed to all Department of Correction personnel. In this research section the major findings of recently completed studies are summarized and interpreted. Lengthy research papers with detailed methodological discussions, such as might be prepared for a pro-

fessional journal, do not effectively communicate the implications of studies to administrators and other correctional personnel. However, a synopsis of the study with a brief discussion of its findings, presented in such a publication as the monthly newsletter, has seemed to communicate the results of research more effectively and to stimulate a greater interest in research. Another means for developing a climate conducive to research has been for research personnel to discuss the role of research with new correctional officers at the Correctional Officers' Training Academy and with other correctional personnel at various staff seminars.

Another recent innovation has been the establishment of a research committee consisting of administrators from the correctional institutions and the central office, and researchers. In this committee, administrators have the opportunity to propose for research issues that are most pressing to them. Research priorities are then established so that the research staff is working on those issues most relevant to the needs of the administrators. Also, the findings of newly completed studies are presented, along with a discussion of the implications of the findings for decision-making and policy formulation. The importance of a more adequate data base for evaluative research has been discussed, and some progress may be made along these lines. In general, a clearer awareness of what research can do and what it cannot do is beginning to emerge. As the channels of communication between administrators and researchers are widened, the relationship between correctional research and correctional decision-making should become less and less tenuous.