AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM AMONG MEN RELEASED FROM M.C.I. NORFOLK DURING 1966

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I. INTRODUCTION

During the past decade a growing number of studies concerning recidivism among offenders released from Massachusetts* correctional institutions have been published. An earlier set of reports examined recidivism among offenders released around 1959 and 1960 from M.C.I. Norfolk[1], M.C.I. Walpole[2], M.C.I. Concord[3], M.C.I. Framingham[4,5], and the three state forestry camps[6]. The present study is one of a set of follow-up studies that have examined recidivism among offenders released during 1966 from the state correctional facilities just mentioned with the exception of M.C.I. Framingham.

A statistical report[7] has been published which presents figures describing the characteristics and return rates of men released during 1966. In the near future two new base expectancy of recidivism tables will be available on men committed to M.C.I. Walpole and M.C.I. Concord respectively.

The present study of recidivism among men released from M.C.I. Norfolk during 1966 has three major purposes. These purposes can be briefly stated as follows:

1) To present recidivism rates for men released from M.C.I. Norfolk during 1966. Certain types of descriptive data such as reasons for return and time elapsed before return will also be included.

2) To spotlight the various types of men who are either more likely or less likely to be returned to correctional institutions. This will involve the identification of single variables that are most closely associated with recidivism.

3) To compare and contrast, whenever possible, various patterns of recidivism among men released from Norfolk in 1966 as opposed to those released in 1960.

II. Recidivism as a Measure of the "Success" or "Failure" of the Offender and as an Indicator of the Effectiveness of the Correctional System

A rapidly growing interest in studies germane to the area of recidivism has generally reflected an overall growth in concern for what happens to offenders after their release from correctional institutions. Increased attention has been focused on numerous programs falling under the rubrics of "rehabilitation" and/or "reintegration" respectively. Questions pertaining to efforts to evaluate programs such as individual and group counseling, academic education, vocational training, pre-release guidance and several community-based correctional efforts have become vital ones to all those concerned with improving the correctional systems of this nation.

One of the central issues in the area of correctional evaluation is the choice of criteria to be employed in determining the "success" or "failure" of post-release behavior. The philosophy of the Department of Correction provides a useful framework for a discussion of this important issue. The goals of the Department of Correction have been stated in the following manner:

> The basic obligation of the Massachusetts Department of Correction is the protection of society. Part of this duty is to provide for the humane care and custody of those whom the courts have sentenced to a state correctional institution. A more challenging aspect of this obligation is to provide a truly corrective experience for sentenced offenders so that they will be better equipped to lead productive and law-abiding lives. For, if a man is returned to society more embittered, vengeful, demoralized, and incapable of social and economic survival than when he first came to prison, then we certainly will have failed in our obligation to protect society. Our goal is to return a man to society with the knowledge and skills necessary to earn an honest living, with a reasonable sense of social responsibility and self-value, and with an increased capacity for self-control, judgment and realistic optimism. Thus, the reintegration of the offender into the community life is a primary concern of the philosophy of the Department of Correction.[8]

This statement of purpose implies a wide variety of ways in which to describe and measure what happens to offenders after their release. Some

workers in this field feel a distinction should be made between measuring how law-abiding an offender is after release (e.g., subsequent rearrests or reincarcerations) and measuring how "productive" or "well-adjusted" he is within the community. It has been argued by Wilkins[9] and others that there are worse things than committing some types of new offenses (e.g., collapsing into alcoholism and allowing one's family to be supported by public welfare as opposed to occasional petty theft.) However, such a comparison, while illustrating a valid point, represents and exception to the more "normal" patterns of recidivism. Such patterns have been shown by researchers like Glueck and Glueck[10] to be strongly associated with various criteria of community maladjustment (e.g., serious involvement with alcohol or unstable employment at low paying jobs, etc.) Indeed, since parolees, who make up the bulk of releasees from correctional institutions can be returned for simply being "social failures" in the judgment of their parole officers (e.g., inability to adjust or indiscreet conduct), the entire issue seems to be a rather moot one at best.

Of far more concern to community at large are the return rates that indicate in a rough manner the percentage of offenders who are not being successfully rehabilitated by the correctional process. McGerigle has observed this and commented further that:

> "Not only does the general public make clear its belief that an offender who breaks the law represents in some sense a failure of the correctional system, even men and women who contribute many hours of devoted volunteer service in helping offenders freely express the same opinion. In addition, most definitions of recidivism are easily quantifiable and rely upon data which can be obtained from official records."

Recidivism when clearly defined is usually, as McGerigle suggests, a relatively simple measure to collect data on and the official records of its occurrence are quite reliable. However, recidivism like any other criterion

that could be used for our purposes is imperfect. It is important to have a balanced appreciation of both the strengths and weaknesses of its use in the type of study being reported here.

One of the major problems with recidivism per se is that it does not refer directly to subsequent criminal behavior, but rather to the percentage of offenders who are caught either committing new criminal offenses or violating the technical conditions of their parole. Furthermore, when employing the definition traditionally used in Massachusetts, this act of being caught must be followed by a decision to return the offender for at least thirty days before recidivism is said to have occurred.

Another practical restriction on the use of recidivism centers on the necessity of using definite follow-up periods when determining recidivism rates for specific groups of releasees. Researchers, unlike journalists in this area, are not free to use the term "recidivism" as though it represented something that occurs independently of time considerations. Administrative needs dictate that research and/or evaluation efforts be done within distinct time periods. Hence, those doing recidivism research are constrained by practical considerations to define recidivism as behavior that occurs within specific time periods.

It is easy to fall into the habit of reifying both "recidivsm" and "recidivism rate". It is of paramount importance to always be aware of just how these terms are defined within any given study. It is well known that recidivism can conceivably be made to represent just about anything that is desired by its definer.

Specifically for the study reported here, recidivism was defined as being (a) reincarcerated (b) within two years of release (c) for thirty days or more (d) in a county, state or federal correctional institution (e) whether as a parole violator or as a result of a conviction for a new

criminal offense. "Parole violator" means anyone who has his parole revoked for either a new criminal offense or for a technical violation of parole conditions. The recidivism rate refers to the percentage of releasees who are recidivists according tothe definition just given.

III. An Examination of the Potential Uses of Base Expectancy of Recidivism Tables

Clearly, every offender does not have the same likelihood of being returned after his release. The second major focus of this study was directed at the identification of various types of subgroups of offenders with different chances regarding recidivism. One means of doing this was to construct base expectancy of recidivism categories through the use of a technique known as successive dichotomization. Using this technique, it is possible to spotlight combinations of variables that are associated with higher or lower recidivism rates. This statistical technique is further explained in the methods section on page9. The Base Expectancy of Recidivism Table for the 1966 Norfolk releasees is presented on pages 19-22 of the report.

There are several potential uses for base expectancy of recidivism categories. For research purposes they can be used as a control group. As such they can help in determining whether or not a given type of correctional program is having a favorable, neutral or unfavorable influence on inmates in general or on specific types of inmates in particular. Thus, they can supply correctional decision makers with valuable information which can aid them in directing various types of offenders into appropriate correctional programs.

Another potentially important application of base expectancy tables could be in the area of parole supervision. Base expectancy tables could be used to allocate various types of offenders into different types of caseload supervision. Lower risk offenders could be assigned to minimal supervision caseloads while higher risk types could be assigned to more intensive supervision caseloads. Two major research efforts done in California[12, 13] have shown that significant differences in recidivism occur within medium risk groups when parole officers have more time to devote to each individual

in their caseloads.

A number of criminologists who worked on the "San Francisco Project on Probation and Parole"[14] have suggested that a "vertical" model of caseload management would be more efficient than the conventional ones now in use. Under such an alternative method of caseload allocation various types of caseloads (i.e., minimal, regular, ideal and intensive) would be used for different offender risk groups. The implementation of any such model would, of course, depend on the extensive development and use of base expectancy categories or scores for all offenders.

The use of base expectancy scores in parole board decision making has long been a controversial issue. Hayner[15] has reported the most frequently given reasons why many parole board members are hesitant to use prediction devices as aids in their decision making activity. Many of the reasons given are valid ones and are realistic observations of the limitations of prediction devices in this area. However, they seem to point out the need for cautious and intelligent use of such devices rather than the advisability of discontinuing their use altogether.

Few would favor a total reliance on base expectancy tables or scores in making crucial decisions about whether or not to release offenders to the community. However, insofar as these decisions are to be made on the basis of an offender's risk of being returned, prediction devices should be considered as vitally important decision making aids.

As Sheldon Glueck[16] has written:

> "...the creators of prediction devices do not urge that such devices be applied in any mechanical fashion; they are adjuncts to both the individual case history and individual experience of the parole board members."

Just as prediction devices could be used in the decision to either grant or deny parole they could also be used to assist board members in making parole revocation decisions. Issues relevant to the use of technical

violations in revocation procedures are becoming crucial ones in parole supervision. Massachusetts in particular has experienced a marked increase in the number of returns for technical violations as opposed to returns for new criminal offenses.[17] The development of base expectancy categories for parolees which would consider factors related to the commission of technical violations might prove to be of great value. An analysis of the relationships between technical violations and subsequent criminal involvement might well be of considerable utility.

It is once again prudent to introject some words of caution. The ones here were supplied by John Conrad,[18] a notable observer of correctional systems throughout the world. He wrote:

> "This decision (i.e., revocation) can not be made by statistics alone, but a statistical estimate of the probable success of a plan to maintain a paroled person in the community as opposed to his return to prison could add support to the painful judgment which must ultimately be made on the basis of other factors."

Another possible area which might benefit from prediction devices could be the criminal court system. Perhaps prediction tables could be developed that would aid judges in their sentencing decisions. Just as they can add a degree of objectivity to parole board decision making such devices could assist judges in what many consider to be their most difficult and frustrating task (i.e., that of imposing sentences on criminal offenders). Also, on the court level, probation agencies could use them much in the same manner that has been suggested they be used in parole supervision.

Clearly then, parole is not the only portion of the criminal justice system that has failed to make constructive use of well-developed statistical methods.

IV. Methods Employed in the Analysis of the Norfolk Data

The sample consisted of all 298 inmates who were released from M.C.I. Norfolk during 1966. Data was collected from the files of the Department of Correction, the Parole Board, and the Board of Probation. The results are presented in the following section of this report. There were two closely related methods used to analyze the single variables of the Norfolk base expectancy data. The first method used was that of simple dichotomization. This method has been used by the DOC research unit in most of its past studies. Using this method data on each of the variables are divided into two mutually exclusive categories. These two categories necessarily include each datum in the entire sample on any given variable (e.g., number of disciplinary reports: none vs. some).

A second method of analyzing single variables was used whereby special grouping within variables were compared with each other. These groupings were not the result of dichotomization and did not contain all the data available on the variables being analyzed. In order to distinguish between these partial breakdowns of certain variables and complete dichotomization, such breakdowns will be referred to as "special breakdowns".

It was noted that the practice of dichotomizing single variables did have an inherent weakness if used exclusively. In certain cases this practice can serve to obscure important differences within a given variable. In analyzing the base expectancy data for Norfolk, Concord and Walpole it was observed that significant[19] differences did occur between certain subgroups within variables that did not materialize when simple dichotomization was employed. For example, in the Concord data the variable of length of incarceration was not found to be of significance when it was divided into a high group and a low group respectively. However, when a middle group(i.e., all those who had between one year and two years as their length of incarceration) was compared to a high group (i.e., two years or more) on this variable

significant differences materialized. Subsequent to this observation it was decided to employ similar special comparisons whenever necessary to complement the findings obtained from simple dichotomization.

The method used to derive the base expectancy of recidivism categories for Norfolk releasees was that of successive dichotomization. Using this technique variables are successively divided until subgroups become too small to produce meaningful results. The initial step in using this technique involves finding the most significant single variable to serve as a base for all of the subsequent dichotomizations to be made.

After the initial dichotomization has been made, the sample is then further dichotomized according to which variable best discriminates between the recidivists and non-recidivists contained within each subgroup. In order to determine which variable is the most discriminating for each division, several chi-squares must be computed.

V A Brief Description of the 1966 Norfolk Base Expectancy Sample

As has been pointed out, all 298 releasees from M.C.I. Norfolk were included in the base expectancy study. Of these 298 subjects, 147 (49.3%) were committed for offenses against the person, 51 (17.1%) for sex offenses , 88(29.5%) for property offenses and 12(4.0%) for "other" offenses(e. g., drug offenses, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, etc.). The average age of this group at the time of their present incarceration was 30 years, with a range extending from 15 to 65 years of age. The average length of their present incarceration was 2 years and 5 months.[20]

In attempting to uncover important possible differences between 1960 and 1966 Norfolk samples, some difficulties emerged. Certain items that may well have been quite different (e.g., percentages of those committed for certain types of offense) were coded differently in the two studies. Consequently, valid comparisons were not feasible in all cases.

Only one finding of major importance surfaces upon analysis of the data. There were proportionately more blacks in the 1966 sample (28.5%) as compared to the earlier one (17.6%). Other differences did exist between the two samples but were not large enough for inclusion here.

VI. A Presentation of the Major Recidivism Findings of the 1966 Norfolk Base Expectancy Study

The overall recidivism rate for the entire 298 man Norfolk sample was 41.3% for the two year follow-up period. This was slightly higher than the 38.3% return figure for the 1960 base expectancy group after a similar two-year follow-up period.

An analysis of the reasons for return among the recidivists in the 1966 Norfolk sample should provide a useful background for understanding data that will be subsequently presented in this report. This presentation should also help to clarify just what is being discussed when the term "recidivism rate" is used repeatedly throughout the results section of this report.

Table I Recidivism Data for the 1966 Norfolk Base Expectancy Sample

A. Simple Breakdown

	N= 298	% of total
Recidivists	123	41.3%
Non-Recidivists	175	58.7%

B. Detailed Breakdown for Recidivists

	N= 123	% of tota N= 298	% of recidivists
I Parole Violators	95	31.9%	77.2%
(a) Technical P.V.'s	51	17.1%	41.4%
(b) New Arrest P.V.'s	44	14.8%	35.8%
II New Commitments	28	9.4%	22.8%
(a) to House of Correction	11	3.7%	8.9%
(b) to M.C.I. Concord	-	-	-
(c) to M.C.I. Walpole	11	3.7%	8.9%
(d) to M.C.I. Bridgewater	1	.3%	.8%
(e) to outside Mass.	5	1.7%	4.1%

Of the 123 recidivists in the study, 95 or 31.9% of the total sample were returned for parole violations. Approximately one-sixth (17.1%) of the 298 man Norfolk sample were returned for technical violations of their parole conditions. 44 men, 14.8% of the sample, were returned because they were arrested for a new offense while still on parole.

Table II below gives an indication of the specific time intervals within which the 123 recidivists were returned. In addition, it shows the percentage of recidivists who were returned as parole violators within the same one-half year time intervals.

Table II Time within which Recidivists were Reincarcerated

Time Interval	N	% of Recidivists	Cumulative %	% of Recidivists who were P.V.'s
0-6 months	44	35.8%	35.8%	90.9%
6-12 months	39	31.7%	65.7%	74.3%
12-18 months	19	15.5%	82.9%	68.4%
18-24 months	21	17.0%	100.0%	61.9%
Total	123	100.0%	--	Overall Average 77.2%

It is important to note that over three-quarters or 77.2% of the total number of recidivists were parole violators. Also, it should be noted that a significantly higher percentage of those returned within the first six months after release were returned as parole violators. This same finding was also observed in the two other major sample groups from Concord and Walpole.

This relatively high concentration of parole revocations within the first six months after release strongly points out the need for additional community support during the reentry period.

VII. Single Factors Most Significantly Related to Higher Recidivism Among 1966 Releasees from M.C.I. Norfolk

A. Using Dichotomization

There were fourteen single variables that were significantly related to recidivism when dichotomized. These were in order of significance:(1) number of prior property offenses, (2)number of prior arrests, (3) present offense, (4) job stability, (5) age at first arrest, (6) type of release, (7) length of incarceration, (8) number of school years completed, (9) overall time incarcerated, (10) number of prior juvenile incarcerations,(11) probation status, (12) number prior adult incarcerations (state, federal and house of correction), (13) prior offenses for drunkenness, (14) total time incarcerated-house of corrections.

The single most closely related factor to recidivism in the Norfolk study was the number of prior property offenses. Releasees having two or more prior property offenses on their records had a 52.7% return rate. In contrast to this, those offenders having either one or no such offenses on their records had only a 23.3% reincarceration rate. This difference produced the highest chi-square ($\chi^2 = 25.39$) in the entire set of 1966 base expectancy studies.

The next most significant variable was number of prior arrests. Those offenders who had 9 or more prior arrests had a 54.1% return rate while those with 8 or less prior arrests had a 30.9% return rate. This difference was significant at the $p < .001$ level.

Three more variables were also significant at this relatively high level. They were: present offense, job stability and age at first arrest. Having a present offense for a property or"other" offense, having low job stability and being 15 or younger at the time of one's first arrest were

all associated with higher return rates.

Five variables analyzed in the study were significant at the $p<.01$ level. Type of release, length of incarceration, number of school years completed, overall time previously incarcerated and number of prior juvenile incarcerations were all significant at this level.

As might be expected, offenders who were paroled had higher return rates than did those who were discharged without parole supervision. Releasees who had a length of incarceration of 18 months or less had significantly higher return rates than did those who served 19 months or more. As this finding could have considerable implications for correctional practice it will be further discussed on page 23.

Offenders with some prior juvenile incarcerations returned at a higher rate than did those with no such commitments. Also significant in the same manner, were the variables of overall time previously incarcerated (state, federal, house of correction or juvenile time) and number of prior adult incarcerations. This latter variable was significant at the $p<.02$ level.

Perhaps one of the most useful findings in the study was that a low number of school years completed was, in fact, associated with higher recidivism rates. Offenders who had completed 8 grades or less returned at a higher rate than did those who had completed 9 grades or more. The importance of this finding will be examined in the discussion section of this report.

Significant at the $p<.02$ level was the variable of probation status. Offenders who had been on "juvenile probation only" had significantly higher return rates than did the offenders who fell into other categories (i.e., never on probation, adult probation only, or both adult and juvenile probation). This finding appears to be a reflection of the relationship between early involvement in delinquent activities and higher recidivism.

Two variables in the study were observed to be significant at the $p < .05$ level. Number of prior offenses was found significant at this level as was total time incarcerated-house of corredtion. Those with one or more prior offenses for drunkenness were more likely to be returned than were offenders with no such offenses on their criminal records. Also, those with some time served in a house of correction had higher return rates than those who had no such prior commitments.

Table III Dichotomized Variables Listed in Order of Statistical Significance
1966 Norfolk Base Expectancy Study

Variable	Dichotomization	Return Rate	χ^2
1. Number of Prior Property Offenses	2 or more none or one	52.7 23.3	25.39 p<.001
2. Number of Prior Arrests	9 or more 8 or less	54.1 30.9	16.39 p<.001
3. Present Offense	property or "other" person or sex	57.0 33.3	15.35 p<.001
4. Job Stability	low average or above	48.4 27.9	11.82 p<.001
5. Age at First Arrest	15 or younger 16 or older	52.8 32.9	11.80 p<.001
6. Type of Release	Paroled Discharged	45.5 24.6	9.52 p<.01
7. Length of Incarceration	18 months or under 19 months or over	50.3 32.9	9.34 p<.01
8. Number of School Years Completed	8 grades or less 9 grades or more	46.5 29.5	8.01 p<.01
9. Overall Time Previously Incarcerated (State, Fed., H of C, and Juvenile)	Some None	46.5 27.8	7.14 p<.01
10. Number of Prior Juvenile Incarcerations	Some None	53.8 35.6	6.70 p<.01
11. Probation Status	on "juvenile probation only" any other probation status	60.7 39.2	6.37 p<.02
12. Number of Prior Adult Incarcerations (State, Fed, and H of C)	Some None	45.4 30.5	5.43 p<.02
13. Prior Offenses for Drunkenness	Some None	47.3 34.9	4.75 p<.05
14. Total Time Incarcerated- House of Corrections	Some None	46.0 34.0	4.19 p<.05

B. Using Special Breakdowns

There were only a few special breakdowns in the Norfolk data that yielded significant differences. Some of the ones that were significant were merely indicative of differences already noted by the list of dichotomized variables. Only one finding is worth mentioning here. The variable of occupational status was found to be of significance at the $p < .02$ level when those categorized as unskilled were compared to those grouped into a "not unskilled" category. This latter subgroup included all those who were classified as either semi-skilled, skilled, professional, or managerial respectively. The "not unskilled" group had 27.0% return rate, whereas the unskilled group had a 44.4% rate of return. This finding is closely related to the observation that both low job stability and low number of school years completed were significantly related to higher return rates among those in the Norfolk sample. Some additional comments on this related cluster of variables will be included in the discussion section of the paper.

VIII. A List of Important Variables not Significantly Related to Recidivism Among the 1966 Releasees from M.C.I. Norfolk

A. Criminal History Variables

1. Number of Prior Offenses for:
   (a) crimes against the person
   (b) sex crimes
2. Whether Incarcerated as a Parole Violator
3. Age at Incarceration

B. Background Factors

1. Birthplace
2. Race
3. Religion
4. Marital Status
5. Military Record
6. Last Civilian Address

C. Institutional Variables

1. Number of Disciplinary Reports
2. Number of Good Conduct Days Withheld

IX. Base Expectancy of Recidivism Categories for Norfolk

A presentation of the base expectancy of recidivism categories for the 1966 Norfolk releasees is included on the following pages in two different forms. A brief explanation of how these categories were derived was given on page 9 of this report. The reader may find it useful to review that section before interpreting these data.

BASE EXPECTANCY OF RECIDIVISM CATEGORIES FOR NORFOLK

					RETURN RATE
TOTAL NORFOLK RELEASEES DURING 1966 N= 298 41.3% Return	ONE OR FEWER PRIOR ARRESTS FOR PROPERTY OFFENSES N= 116 23.3% Return	25 OR OLDER AT PRESENT INCARCERATION N= 78 14.1% Return	24 OR OLDER AT FIRST ARREST	N= 29	0.0%
			23 OR YOUNGER AT FIRST ARREST	N= 49	22.4%
		24 OR YOUNGER AT PRESENT INCARCERATION N= 38 42.1% Return	ONE OR MORE CODEFENDANTS	N=23	26.1%
			NO CODEFENDANTS	N= 15	66.7%
	TWO OR MORE PRIOR ARRESTS FOR PROPERTY OFFENSES N= 182 52.7% Return	DISCHARGE OR EXPIRATION AS TYPE OF RELEASE N= 48 31.3% Return	TOTAL TIME PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED 30 MONTHS OR MORE	N= 31	23.3%
			TOTAL TIME PREVIOUSLY INCARCERATED 29 MONTHS OR LESS	N= 17	47.1%
		PAROLE AS TYPE OF RELEASE N= 134 60.4% Return	8 OR FEWER PRIOR ARRESTS N= 57 43.9% Return	NO MILITARY SERVICE N= 36	30.6%
				SOME MILITARY SERVICE N= 21	66.7%
			9 OR MORE PRIOR ARRESTS N= 77 72.7% Return	LENGTH OF PRESENT INCARCERATION 16 MONTHS OR MORE N= 38	57.9%
				LENGTH OF PRESENT INCARCERATION 15 MONTHS OR LESS N= 39	87.2%

1966 Base Expectancy Categories M.C.I. Norfolk

Description	N	% of sample	Return Rate
1. One or fewer prior arrests for property offenses, 25 or older at present incarceration, 24 or older at first arrest.	29	9.7%	0.0%
2. One or fewer prior arrests for property offenses, 25 or older at present incarceration, 23 or younger at first arrest.	49	16.4%	22.4%
3. Two or more prior arrests for property offenses, discharge or expiration of sentence as type of release. Total time previously incarcerated-30 months or more.	31	10.4%	23.3%
4. One or fewer prior arrests for property offenses, 24 or younger at present incarceration. One or more codefendants.	23	7.7%	26.1%
5. Two or more prior arrests for property offenses, Paroled as type of release, 8 or fewer prior arrests, No military service.	36	12.1%	30.6%
6. Two or more prior arrests for property offenses, discharge or expiration of sentence as type of release, total time previously incarcerated 29 months or less.	17	5.7%	47.1%
7. Two or more prior arrests for property offenses, Parole as type of release, 9 or more prior arrests, length of present incarceration 16 months or more.	38	12.7%	57.9%
8. (a) One or fewer prior arrests for property offenses, 24 or younger at present incarceration. No codefendants.	15	5.0%	66.7%
(b) Two or more prior arrests for property offenses. Parole as type of release, 8 or fewer prior arrests, some military service.	21	7.0%	66.7%

Description	N	% of sample	Return Rate
9. Two or more prior arrests for property offenses, Parole as type of release, 9 or more prior arrests, length of present incarceration 15 months or less.	39	13.1%	87.2%

X. Discussion: Norfolk Results

In general, the findings of this 1966 base expectancy study closely parallel those obtained in the 1960 Norfolk study. Some important differences did surface upon analysis. The variable, age at incarceration, was the most predictive one in the 1960 study. This same variable was not significant in the later study. Likewise, the variable, number of good conduct days withheld, was found significant in the 1960 study but not in the 1966 study.

Conversely, two variables found significant in the 1966 study were not found to be significant at the $p<.05$ level in the 1960 study. These were length of incarceration and type of release respectively. Three variables; job stability, number of school years completed and probation status, that were found significant in the 1966 study were not among the fourteen variables analyzed in the earlier study.

The variable, number of prior property offenders emerged as the single most significant variable in the Norfolk study. It was also the second most significant variable in the Concord study and eighth in the Walpole study. In addition, this variable was the most significant variable when special breakdowns were used. Hence, the prior property offense variable appeared to be the single best predictor of recidivism for the combined samples.

Another variable that appeared to be predictive in each of the studies was length of incarceration. In the Norfolk study this variable was sixth in significance and in the Concord study it was the most significant variable after special breakdowns were made. The predictive power of this particular variable may be related to the fact that property and "other" types of offenders, who normally have higher return rates, usually serve less time than do offenders who commit crimes against the person.

A great majority of the variables found to be most predictive of recidivism in the Norfolk study related to factors which can not usually be changed by the time the offender enters a state correctional facility. Prior criminal record, prior penal commitment record (i.e., juvenile and house of correction time) and certain age variables are variables that, while supplying the most discriminating predictors of recidivism do not in and of themselves suggest which kinds of means should be used to rehabilitate offenders. However, in the Norfolk study two out of fourteen significant variables, job stability and number of school years completed, represent characteristics that can be altered to some degree by current correctional programs. Certainly, vocational and academic programs within our correctional institutions should be further strengthened so that no opportunities there might be to influence these variables are missed.

The base expectancy of recidivism categories for Norfolk illustrate that a few key variables, when clustered together, can be highly predictive of recidivism. As has previously been pointed out, higher return rates occur among those with a high number of prior offenses in general and among those with a high number of property offenses in particular. Both early involvement in law breaking activities and early contact with the criminal justice system appear to be strongly related to the prospects an individual has for becoming a recidivist. These general findings closely parallel those that have been obtained in many other studies of recidivism.[21]

FOOT-NOTES

1. Francis J. Carney, "Predicting Recidivism in a Medium Security Correctional Institution: Base Expectancy Categories for M.C.I. Norfolk", Dept. of Correction: mimeographed (June, 1966)

2. Francis J. Carney, "Predicting Recidivism in a Maximum Security Correctional Institution: Some Emerging Generalizations", Dept. of Correction: mimeographed (October, 1966)

3. Ralph Metzer and Gunther Weil, "Predicting Recidivism: Base Rates for M.C.I. Concord", Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science (Sept. 1963) pp. 307-316

4. Barbara DeVault and David Haughey, "Base Expectancy Categories for Predicting Parole Failure", Dept. of Correction: mimeographed (June, 1965)

5. Francis J. Carney, "Base Expectancy Categories for Predicting Recidivism of Female Drunkenness Offenders: Combined Data, Division of Legal Medicine: mimeographed (August, 1965)

6. Francis J. Carney and Estelle D. Bottome, "An Analysis of Recidivism Among Inmates Released from the Forestry Camps", Dept. of Correction: mimeographed (March, 1967)

7. Edward F. Callahan, "Statistical Tables Describing the Characteristics and Recidivism Rates of Men Released During 1966 from M.C.I. Norfolk, M.C.I. Walpole, M.C.I. Concord, and the Massachusetts Forestry Camps", mimeographed (January, 1971)

8. Taken from: Program Guide: A Review of Massachusetts Department of Correction Programs, (September, 1971)

9. Leslie T. Wilkins, Evaluation of Penal Measures, NewYork: Random House, Inc., 1969

10. Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck, Delinquents and Non-Delinquents in Perspective, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968

11. Paul McGerigle, "Evaluating Correctional Enterprises", A Memorandum to the Joint Correctional Planning Commission, April, 1971. p.7

12. Joan Havel and Elaine Sulka, Special Intensive Parole Unit, Phase III, Research Report No.3, California Dept. of Corrections, March, 1962

13. Joan Havel, Special Intensive Parole Unit, Phase IV: The Parole Outcome Study, Research Report No. 13, California Dept. of Corrections Sept. 1965

14. Joseph D. Lohman, Albert Wahl, Robert M.Carter, and Leslie T. Wilkins, "The San Francisco Project Final Report," Research Report No. 12 (April, 1969)

15. Norman S. Hayner, "Why do Parole Boards Lag in the Use of Predictive Scores?" Pacific Sociological Review, (Fall, 1958) pp. 73-76.

Hayner listed five major reasons for the reluctance of parole board members to utilize parole prediction devices. They were as follows:

1) sensitivity to public opinion
2) the effect the decision might have on the use of prison time

3) the uniqueness of cases
4) legal and traditional restrictions
5) reactions to prediction devices themselves

16. Quoted by Victor H. Evjen, "Current Thinking on Parole Prediction Tables", Crime and Delinquency, Vol. 8 (July, 1962) p. 217

17. A summary of the parole statistics for the years 1968-71 indicates that in Massachusetts revocations for new felony convictions have been decreasing at a very rapid rate. Between 1970 and 1971 alone, new felony convictions for parolees under supervision declined by 32%. Unfortunately, these reports included misdemeanor offenses in the same category with all the technical violations excluding "whereabouts unknown". This, of course, makes it impossible to give specific percentages on the increasing reliance there appears to be on technical violations in revocation proceedings.

The technical violation of "whereabouts unknown" deserves special attention. This category accounted for only 21% of the technical revocations in 1960. By 1970 this percentage had grown to 35% and by 1971 to 45% of the total. It would appear that an examination of the use of this technicality is needed.

18. John P. Conrad, Crime and Its Correction, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967, p. 192

19. A note of explanation might well be useful here concerning the terms significance and level of significance.

Statistical significance simply refers to the degree to which observed differences could have occurred through sheer chance. The level of significance indicates the probability that observed differences could have occurred by chance in a given number of instances. For example, a $p < .001$ level of significance means that the observed differences had a probability of occurring by chance in less than one time out of a thousand. In order to determine the level of significance a Chi-square must be computed in each case.

For purposes of this research report the term "significant" will denote that a difference has been observed at the $p < .05$ level of significance. This is generally considered the point at which social scientists can safely assert that real differences have, in fact, been observed.

20. See: Edward Callahan op. cit., for a more detailed statistical description of the group and the other base expectancy groups.

21. Leslie T. Wilkins, op. cit. p. 56