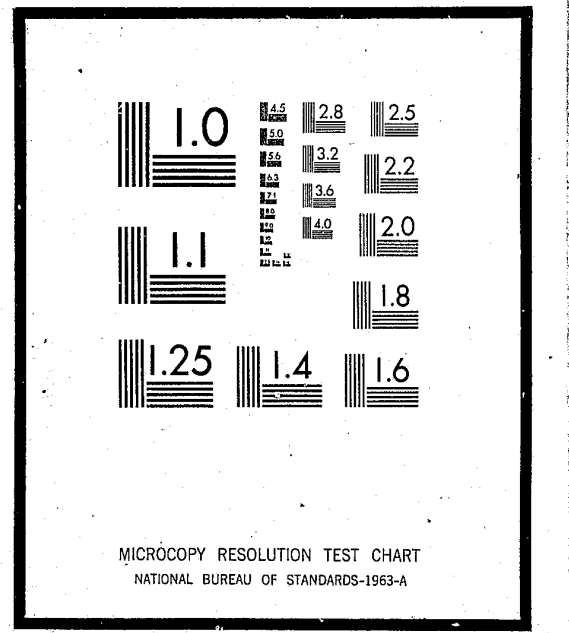


NCJRS

This microfiche was produced from documents received for inclusion in the NCJRS data base. Since NCJRS cannot exercise control over the physical condition of the documents submitted, the individual frame quality will vary. The resolution chart on this frame may be used to evaluate the document quality.



Microfilming procedures used to create this fiche comply with the standards set forth in 41CFR 101-11.504

Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the author(s) and do not represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

8/28/75

Date filmed

RECEIVED
JUN 23 1971
Governor's Committee on
Criminal Administration

A PROFILE OF INMATES EVALUATED AT A PSYCHIATRIC CENTER

OPERATED BY A STATE PENAL SYSTEM

by
Ellen Godfrey, Staff Psychologist
Kansas Reception and Diagnostic Center

and
R. E. Schulman, Clinical Psychologist
The Menninger Foundation

FILE

1198

An extensive research project¹ is being conducted at the Kansas Reception and Diagnostic Center to provide information regarding parole prediction and success. The ultimate goal will be to provide information regarding parole success through the use of regression equations. A secondary but extremely important aspect of the research is the gathering together of a data bank on all of the inmates who have been evaluated at the Center. The data on the regression analyses will be discussed in later reports and at the present time is in an extremely tentative form. This is a report which makes use of the data bank aspects of the larger research project. For purposes of beginning to develop the regression equations, 150 prisoners were randomly selected who had been evaluated at the Center during the period of 1963 thru 1965. The men selected had either been referred to the Center as new court commitments, parole violators with new convictions, or were re-entering the prison system because of revocation of probation. Sixty-one percent of the sample group were under 26 (mean age 26.3).

1. Eight hundred inmates are being studied under the auspices of a grant (#A-1198) awarded by the Governor's Committee on Criminal Administration provided under P.L. 90-351, Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

014307

OFFENSES

Fifty-three percent of the sample were sentenced to prison for burglary and theft; 17 percent were sentenced for crimes against persons and 30 percent for paper-and-pencil crimes. Ninety-five percent of the sample had pleaded guilty to their crimes. Sixty-one percent indicated that they had committed their crimes alone and that there were not any co-defendants. Contrary to the contention frequently stated by inmates that the Habitual Criminal Act is too often invoked unjustly, in our sample the Habitual Criminal Act had been used in only two cases. Crimes of theft and burglary accounted for 53 percent of the convictions. Thirty percent were sentenced for paper-and-pencil crimes and 17 percent were convicted for crimes against persons.

WHERE DO PRISONERS COME FROM?

The prison population may not be as transient as is often suggested. Thirty-seven percent of the sample indicated that they had been in the state of their incarceration during their entire life and an additional 27 percent had been in the state over two years. Seventeen percent indicated that they had been in the state less than one month; 18 percent had been in Kansas between one month and two years.

HISTORY OF DELINQUENCY

Forty-seven percent of this sample had difficulty with the law as a juvenile. Eleven percent of the sample had been in juvenile institutions before the age of 15, and 35 percent had been in some type of penal institution before the age of 18. The mean age at first commitment was 23 years. Seventy-two percent of the sample had been sentenced for the first time to a penal

institution before they were 25. This delinquent background is particularly important when one compares successful and unsuccessful parolees.² Sixty-six percent of the successful parolees did not have history of juvenile delinquency while 56 percent of the unsuccessful parolees had a history of delinquency. Delinquency often is related to education. While other studies³ found only 1 to 3 percent had completed high school, 26 percent of this sample had done so. Eighty-eight percent had completed the eighth grade.

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Health problems are frequently overlooked, but 39 percent of the men evaluated in this pilot sample did have serious medical problems or a physical handicap that conceivably could have precluded them from pursuing a primary occupation. Fifty-five percent of the sample had difficulties with excessive use of alcohol. It is interesting to note that this use of alcohol was proportionately the same for successful and unsuccessful parolees. Alcoholism also appeared to be a problem for other family members. Only 15 percent of the men participated in AA programs offered at the penal institution, but one should note that participation in most of the other programs is also small. In evaluating this, one must note that the rehabilitation programs offered at our penal institutions have increased in the past few years and participation of the inmate population also has increased.

2. The sample of parolees contained 81 men with the others being released by other means. Fourteen men served to the conditional release date, 3 were released to a detainer, 3 died while in prison and 49 were released on probation.

3. Daniel Glaser, The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964.

HOME ENVIRONMENT

The majority of inmates come from large, broken families. In 57 percent of the cases, the homes were considered to have been broken sometime prior to the inmates 16th birthday. In 42 percent of the cases, there apparently was constant conflict existing between the parents within the family. In 16 percent of the cases, some family member was reported as having a criminal record--in most instances a brother. Unfavorable influences existed in the family situation in 45 percent of the sample.

Over half the sample had maintained residence in Kansas for more than 5 years, but only 30 percent of those who served time received regular visits from family. Forty-seven percent of the sample never received a visit during the period of incarceration. Contact with family members seems to play an important role in successful parole as two-thirds of the unsuccessful parolees never received a visit; while only one-third of the successful parolees never received a visit.

Maintaining family ties is also critical with regard to employment opportunities upon release. Successful parolees had help from their families in 45 percent of the cases; unsuccessful parolees had help in obtaining employment in only 34 percent of the cases.

EMPLOYMENT

Employment histories prior to incarceration were poor as 64 percent of the men had never held steady employment over one month. Only 8 percent of the inmates had maintained a stable work adjustment.

The employment records of the parolees contrasts with employment records

prior to incarceration. Forty-six percent of the parolees made only one or two job changes during the 2 year parole period. Many of the men experienced their most stable work adjustment while on parole.

In general the question of employment is critical for success outside of the institution. Those who had no recorded job arrangement upon release were not successful as parolees. Income per se, however, does not seem to make any difference between successful and unsuccessful parole. Twelve percent of the parolees were released to jobs paying under \$200 per month. Sixty-one percent were released to jobs paying between \$200 and \$400 per month, but many of the men did better themselves as 35 percent of the group raised their income level from the time of release to the time of discharge from parole. These men also increased the skill level at which they were employed during the parole period. Seventy-nine percent of the men worked at jobs ranging from skilled to unskilled labor for the longest period of time. Fifty-nine percent of all the men worked at semi-skilled jobs or below.

INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIOR

Sixty percent of the inmates were written up for disciplinary infractions. Those successful on parole had a few write-ups, but they apparently did not persist in misconduct to the degree that unsuccessful parolees did. Overall most of the infractions were not regarded as serious by the correctional staff as only 16 percent of the cases were placed temporarily in maximum security for disciplinary reasons.

PAROLE PROCESS

Hostility with accusations of longer-than-necessary sentences is often

verbalized by inmates toward the parole board. However, this is not supported by the present study. In 60 percent of the cases, inmates were granted parole on the first hearing. In only 11 percent of the cases was the inmate before the parole board on more than two occasions. For those people successful on parole, the successful parolees were never denied parole more than one time. Unsuccessful parolees, however, served more additional months past their minimum release date than did successful parolees. Overall 80 percent of the men who served to the minimum date were released on parole eventually, and only 14 percent served to their conditional release date.

Inmates often maintain that parole officers are not supportive in their efforts to adjust to the outside world, but this data suggests that this is an unfounded accusation. During the parole period, 50 percent of the men had difficulty in maintaining employment; one-third had difficulty with excessive use of alcohol and traveling outside the parole limits. Forty percent found themselves in custody at some time during their parole period because of suspicion or investigation and 16 percent experienced new minor convictions which resulted in jail time of less than one year. Only 25 percent of the men released on parole were judged to experience no difficulty at all. In spite of all the difficulties the parolees experienced, parole officers, in their reports, indicate support of the men as well as efforts to mitigate the difficult circumstances.

Eighty-one men of the study group were released on parole with 51 percent performing successfully. The successful parolees, those who were discharged from parole, without exception are still successful so far as could be determined by records available. The length of time these successful men

were followed ranged from three years to over six years. Eighty-four percent of the successful group were followed at least four years. Seventy-five percent of the unsuccessful parolees had been returned to a prison at the end of one year and 88 percent were returned in eighteen months. The first year would be considered the most critical for the parolee in view of the high number returned during that period. Over half the unsuccessful parolees were returned to prison with new felony convictions while 30 percent were returned because of misdemeanor charges or in lieu of prosecution for this type of offense.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is instructive to note, with regard to the psychiatric staff's assessment and evaluation of the offenders, that in 83 percent of the cases the opinion was that the inmate needed a structured living situation, either in or outside of the prison system. The evaluation staff at the Center are aware of the therapeutic value of institutional living. In 43 percent of the cases the psychiatric report suggested release to probation without a period of time in an institution. In response to this suggestion, the court reacted by modifying about one-third of the inmate sentences to probation. In most instances the granting of probation occurred soon after the court received the diagnostic report. The evidence also indicates that where a recommendation for probation was made and the sentence was not modified in accordance with the suggestion, those inmates tended to be successful when released on parole.

CONCLUSION

This report is based on data gathered for a predictive study. It is

also the beginning effort to gather much needed demographic information on prisoners. Although this report is based on a sample of 150 inmates and 81 parolees, as the project continues similar information will be available on between four and five thousand prisoners who have been evaluated at the Reception and Diagnostic Center. The data will be immediately available, computerized, and provide basic information for research purposes.

END