

State of Florida
Department of
Offender Rehabilitation

Louie L. Wainwright
Secretary

NCJRS

JUL 3 1978

ACQUISITIONS

A Study of Recidivism for
Inmates Released from Custody
During October through December, 1972

Prepared by:
Research and Statistics Section
Bureau of Planning, Research and Staff Development

December 18, 1975

48219

A STUDY OF RECIDIVISM FOR
INMATES RELEASED FROM CUSTODY
DURING OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER, 1972

DECEMBER, 1975

STATE OF FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF OFFENDER REHABILITATION

A STUDY OF RECIDIVISM FOR
INMATES RELEASED FROM CUSTODY
DURING OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER, 1972

Summary

Data were analyzed for all inmates released from the custody of the Florida Division of Corrections during the fourth quarter of 1972 to determine how many had "recidivated" during the ensuing twenty-four month period. Recidivism was defined as recommitment to the Division of Corrections within twenty-four months following release by expiration of sentence, parole or mandatory conditional release. Of the 938 persons released during the study period, 160 (17.07%) were returned to the custody of the Florida Division of Corrections within the twenty-four month period.

Data are not presently obtainable in a routine manner concerning releasees who are arrested and subsequently recommitment on a felony charge to correctional institutions outside of Florida. Moreover, persons with outstanding warrants for their arrest under conditional release terms by definition were not classified as recidivists, although subsequent legal action may result in recommitment.

Findings of interest from the study include the following:

1. Males had a higher recidivist rate per 100 releases than females (17.8 vs. 8.6).

2. Black males had a higher return rate per 100 releases than white males (21.3 vs. 14.6).

3. Persons originally charged with property crimes had a higher return rate per 100 releases than persons charged with person crimes (23.1 vs. 12.4).

4. Persons released by mandatory conditional release had the highest rate of return per 100 releases (24.3). The return rate was 16.6 per 100 releases for parolees and 14.9 for persons released by expiration of sentence.

5. There was very little difference in return rates per 100 releases for persons released from various types of institutions.

6. Recidivists had been released on the average of 11.7 months prior to being returned to the custody of the Division of Corrections.

7. More than half (61.9%) of all recidivists were recommitted to the custody of the Division of Corrections within a year.

8. The average time between release and recommitment was 10.8 months for parolees, 12.4 months for mandatory conditional releasees, and 13.9 months for persons released by expiration of sentence.

9. Of all recidivists, 36.9% were returned for technical violations of conditional release agreement (parole and mandatory conditional release).

10. Comparing offense at recommitment with offense at original commitment, there was a pattern of persons released after commitment for a property offense to be recommitted for an offense against a person.

iii.

11. The recidivism rate for Florida--as defined in this study--is much less than recidivism rates popularly reported in the news media.

12. The selection criteria used by the Parole Commission--overall--are no more effective than the criteria which results in a person being released by expiration of sentence.

13. Special attention needs to be focused on individuals released from major institutions by Mandatory Conditional Release--since this cohort of releases constitutes the highest risk group.

14. Additional analysis and study is needed to pinpoint interaction effects of significant variables, to extend the scope of the inquiry by enlarging the definition of recidivism, and to determine which aspects of work release--possibly the provision of greater financial resources--contribute to a reduction in recidivism.

Prepared by:

Research and Statistics Section
Bureau of Planning, Research and
Staff Development
August 30, 1975

Note: The responsibilities and authority of the Florida Division of Corrections were transferred from the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services to the newly created Department of Offender Rehabilitation on July 1, 1975.

A STUDY OF RECIDIVISM FOR
INMATES RELEASED FROM CUSTODY
DURING OCTOBER THROUGH DECEMBER, 1972

I. PURPOSE

This is a descriptive study of inmates released from the custody of the Florida Division of Corrections during October through December of 1972 who subsequently were re-committed to the Division within a twenty-four month period. This study generates an overall recidivist or return rate for the cohort (the group of persons studied) and analyzes selected variables in terms of the relevant recidivist rate.

This study of recidivism also serves as a pilot project to test computer programs, procedures, and methodology.

II. BACKGROUND

Previous analyses of persons committed to the Florida Division of Corrections have focused upon the ratios or percentages of inmates with prior felony commitments--both in relation to the Florida Division of Corrections and to other state or federal correctional institutions. This data, while suggestive, and perhaps indicative of trends, does not produce a statistic which conforms to conventional criteria for defining recidivism.

There is no universal practice concerning the use of a recidivism statistic in corrections, and even a greater variety

of opinion concerning how recidivism should be defined.

It is frequently stated that at least two-thirds of the inmates released from prison are later recommitted, implying a recidivism rate of 66.7%. This alleged recidivism rate in all probability is based upon a statistic derived from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports, (UCR). The UCR data cited rearrests as the criterion variable and were based only upon cases of inmates initially incarcerated for federal charges. Further, the UCR analysis did not distinguish adequately between those who were arrested and released without conviction and those who were subsequently convicted and recommitted.

In his book, The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System (1964), Dr. Daniel Glaser challenged the theory that two-thirds of the released offenders eventually return to prison. He identified a common error introduced by obtaining rates from dissimilar cohorts. For example, a study of a cohort incarcerated at one point in time will have a higher percentage of repeaters than will a cohort of admissions for another given time period. This phenomenon is caused by the accumulation in prison of second and third time repeaters who generally receive longer sentences than first offenders. The error in the two-thirds recidivist theory is compounded, Glaser contends, if recidivist rates are calculated for specific institutions which house a higher percentage of repeaters. For instance, in California at one time, 14% of Folsom's inmates were repeaters compared to 82% of the Deuel population.

In support of his contention, Glaser cites numerous studies which challenge the two-thirds recidivism statistics. The National Prisoner Statistics report issued in 1963 indicated that 51.2% of the 149,617 inmates in state prisons as of December 31, 1960 had no prior criminal record. This indicated an implied recidivism rate of less than 49%.

At present there is no universally accepted definition of recidivism. In 1971, the Uniform Crime Reports defined a recidivist as a person who had been arrested, had a fingerprint card submitted to the FBI, and had subsequently been rearrested (UCR, 1971, p. 36). This definition closely parallels one developed by Dr. Vernon Fox in Introduction to Corrections (1968). Dr. Fox defined a recidivist as a person who had been a member of the correctional caseload, had been released, and had subsequently been readmitted to that caseload (p. 38).

In January, 1973, the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals published a definition of recidivism which was presented as a proposed standard for use in corrections.

Recidivism is measured by (1) criminal acts that resulted in conviction by a court, when committed by individuals who are under correctional supervision or who have been released from correctional supervision within the previous three years, and by (2) technical violations of probation or parole in which a sentencing or paroling authority took action that resulted in an adverse change in the offender's legal status.

.....

Recidivism is recognized universally as a useful criterion for correctional measurement, but there has been considerable variation in the way recidivism has been measured. A standard definition clearly is needed. Three main factors should be considered in developing recidivism statistics: the nature of events to be included, the categorization of the behavior and degrees of seriousness to be included, and the duration of the follow-up period.

The problem of defining recidivism for corrections was recently addressed by the OBSCIS* project committee of Search Group, Inc. in May, 1975. Recognizing the difficulty of developing a definition of recidivism which would be applicable in each state, the members of the OBSCIS committee found it necessary to make a general statement of when recidivism occurs:

Recidivism occurs with the renewal of offender status or a non-successful termination of either parole or mandatory release, supervision within a specified time after discharge, pardon, conditional pardon, sentence commutation, or any of the other releases from institutional custody.

To further clarify this statement the OBSCIS committee added three more definitions or conditions:

(1) Renewal of offender status will occur on arrest and conviction for a crime, death during commission of crime, or recommitment to a correctional institution.

(2) A non-successful termination of parole or mandatory release supervision implies that a new offense is involved. The word "non-successful" rules out situations where, for example, an offender might be recommitted to a correctional authority for surgery or medical treatment.

(3) A specified time period after discharge or other release from institutions simply means that there is a time period following which offenders are considered to be rehabilitated. An offender who is not recommitted for twenty-four months is considered to be rehabilitated for statutory purposes.

For the purpose of this present study in Florida, a recidivist is defined as one who (1) has been incarcerated in the Division of Corrections, (2) has been released by parole, mandatory conditional release, or expiration of sentence, and (3) has subsequently been returned to the custody of the Florida Division of Corrections within two years of his release.

*OBSCIS (Offender Based State Correctional Information System).

A copy of the OBSCIS model may be obtained from Search Group, Inc.

III. METHODOLOGY

Limitations

The analysis of all variables which impact upon deviancy and reinvolvement in the criminal justice system subsequent to release, while highly desirable, is not possible at present due to shortage of staff and the limitations of a developing computer technology in Florida.* The cohort for this study was selected and the study is circumscribed by the following limitations:

(1) Only those items of information were analyzed which were routinely processed by the staff of the Florida Division of Correction. I.e., the study selected only those persons formally committed on a felony charge to incarceration under the custody of the Florida Division of Corrections.

(2) It studied an intact population of persons who were released from the Florida Division of Corrections by expiration of sentence, parole or mandatory conditional release.

(3) It was limited to a two-year follow-up period, primarily to expedite feed-back of information to policy makers and management.

(4) The population size was of sufficient size to permit

*If an ideal information system existed, such as those described in the CDS (Comprehensive Data System) and OBTS/CCH (Offender Based Transaction Statistics/Computerized Criminal History) programs, it would be possible to analyze post release performance of inmates in terms of number of arrests, types of offenses, intervals of time between release and subsequent rearrests, disposition of each charge, and commitment information--regardless of whether the events occurred in Florida or in another jurisdiction. However, since such information was not immediately retrievable on a broader scale for use in this study, the focus was restricted to data about persons returned to correctional supervision for whom information was processed by the Florida Division of Corrections.

detailed analysis, but small enough to be manually processed if computer technology was not sufficiently developed to process historical data.

(5) The cohort included a sufficient number of persons released from Community Correctional Centers to permit preliminary feedback to management concerning post-release performance for that sub-group of releasees.

Study Cohort

Previous studies of return rates have focused upon persons committed to the Florida Division of Corrections during each fiscal year. Reports have presented ratios and percentages for inmates with no prior felony commitments (one year or more) and those with one or more prior felony commitments.

The subject cohort for this study included 938 persons released by the Florida Division of Corrections by expiration of sentence, mandatory conditional release or parole during October through December, 1972.

Data Presentation

The data is presented in three sections. Section I describes the recidivist subpopulation and the larger study cohort from which the recidivist group was drawn. Findings are reported in terms of frequency distribution for selected variables. Section II presents a more detailed analysis of the subpopulation of recidivists. Findings are presented in crosstabular form. Section III focuses on variables and rates of return.

IV. FINDINGS

Section 1: Description Of Cohort And RecidivistsRace/Sex

The percentage distribution of race and sex for the study cohort and the lesser included group of recidivists is presented in Table I. Males constituted 92.4% of the cohort group and 96.4% of the recidivists.

TABLE I

Frequency And Percentage Of Cohort And
Recidivists By Race And Sex

| Race/Sex | Cohort | Recidivists |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| White Male | % 49.0 n(460) | 41.9 (67) |
| White Female | % 3.5 n (33) | 1.9 (3) |
| Black Male | % 43.4 n(408) | 54.4 (87) |
| Black Female | % 3.9 n (37) | 1.9 (3) |
| Totals | %100.0 n(938) | 100.0 (160) |

Subjects were distributed proportionately by race in both populations. Whites represented a little more than one-half of the cohort (52.6%) and a little less than half of the

recidivists (43.8%).

Type of Offense

Table II presents the percentage distribution of the cohort and recidivists according to the type of offense for which they were originally committed. Analysis indicates that persons committed for offenses against persons constituted a smaller percentage of the recidivists than the cohort (cohort: 24.1%, recidivist: 17.5%), whereas persons committed for property crimes constituted a larger percentage of recidivists than the cohort (cohort: 49.4%, recidivists: 66.9%).

TABLE II

Frequency and Percent of
Cohort and Recidivists
By Type Of Original Offense

| Type of Offense | Cohort | Recidivists |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Person | % 24.1 n(226) | 17.5 (28) |
| Property | % 49.5 n(463) | 66.9 (107) |
| Narcotics | % 2.3 n (22) | 2.5 (4) |
| Sexual | % 18.1 n(170) | 10.0 (16) |
| Other | % 6.1 n (57) | 3.1 (5) |
| Total | %100.0 n(938) | 100.0 (160) |

The proportion for narcotic crimes does not vary noticeably. However, persons convicted of sexual and other crime offenses constituted a larger percent of the cohort than of the recidivist group (cohort: sexual, 18.1%; other, 6.1% recidivist: sexual, 10.0%; other, 3.1%).

Type of Release

Table III presents data concerning type of release for the total cohort and the recidivist sub-group. The majority of both groups were released by parole (cohort: 65.0%; recidivist: 63.1%). However, conditional releases (parole and mandatory conditional release) constituted a higher proportion of recidivists than did end-of-sentence releases.

TABLE III

Frequency And Percent Of
Cohort And Recidivists
By Type Of Release

| Type Of Release | Cohort | Recidivists |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Parole | % 65.0 n (610) | 63.1 (101) |
| Mandatory Conditional Release | % 11.4 n (107) | 16.2 (26) |
| Expiration of Sentence | % 23.6 n (221) | 20.6 (33) |
| Total | % 100.0 n (938) | 100.0 (160) |

Type of Institution at Release

Table IV presents a frequency distribution for the cohort and recidivist sub-group according to institutions from which the offenders were originally released. Types of institutions were proportionately represented in both the cohort and recidivist group.

TABLE IV

Frequency And Percent Of
Cohort And Recidivists
By Type Of Institution
At Release

| Type Institution | Cohort | Recidivists |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Major Institution | % 65.9 n (618) | 68.8 (110) |
| Road Prisons | % 7.5 n (70) | 6.9 (11) |
| Community Correctional Centers | % 24.7 n (232) | 22.5 (36) |
| Others | % 1.9 n (18) | 1.9 (3) |
| Total | % 100.0 n (938) | 100.0 (160) |

Major Offenses

Tables Va and Vb analyse the data in terms of five most frequently reported original offenses for both the cohort and recidivist sub-population. In both groups, B&E and armed robbery

were the two most frequent offenses. ~~Grand larceny also~~ appeared in both the cohort and recidivist rankings. Next, in order of frequency among recidivists, auto theft and forgery were reported more frequently; among the cohort members, possession of narcotics and aggravated assault were more frequent.

TABLE V

Frequency And Percent For Cohort And
Recidivist By Five Major Original Offenses

| V-a. Cohort | | V-b. Recidivists | |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Major Offenses | | Major Offenses | |
| Breaking & Entering | % 22.6 n(212) | Breaking & Entering | %34.4 n(55) |
| Armed Robbery | % 10.7 n(100) | Armed Robbery | %11.2 n(18) |
| Possession of Narcotics | % 8.1 n (76) | Auto Theft | % 8.8 n(14) |
| Grand Larceny | % 6.7 n (63) | Forgery | % 8.1 n(13) |
| Aggravated Assault | % 6.3 n (59) | Grand Larceny | % 6.9 n(11) |

Section 2: Analysis of Recidivist Sub-Population

Percentages of Types of Release By Types of Original Offense

Tables VIa and VIb present the percentages for the type of release by types of original offense for the recidivist sub-population. The percentages for types of release according to types of original offenses are presented in Table VIa.

TABLE VIa

Percentage Of Type Of Release
By Type Of Original Offense
For Recidivists

| Type of Release | Type Of Original Offense | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|
| | Persons | Proper-ty | Sexual | Nar-cotic | Other | |
| Expi-ration of Sent. | 3.6% | 28.0% | 0.0% | 12.5% | 0.0% | 20.0% |
| Parole | 85.7% | 54.2% | 100.0% | 75.0% | 60.0% | 63.1% |
| Manda-tory Condi-tional Release | 10.7% | 17.8% | 0.0% | 12.5% | 40.0% | 16.2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

For a large majority recidivists guilty of crimes against persons, (85.7%) were paroled. Among the recidivists guilty of crimes against property, approximately half (54.2%) were paroled.

Table VIb presents percentages for the type of original offense according to the type of release. Nearly all the recidivists who expired their sentences (90.0%) were committed to prison for property crimes. Also, the majority of the recidivists who were released on mandatory conditional release (73.1%) were recommitted to prison for crimes against property. Of those recidivists committed to the Division of Corrections for crimes against persons, very few were released by expiration of sentence or mandatory conditional release (expiration: 3.0%; MRC: 11.5%).

TABLE VIb

Percentage Of Type Of Original
Offense By Type Of Release
For Recidivists

| Type of Original Offense | Type Of Release | | | Total Release |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Expiration Of Sentence | Parole | Mandatory Conditional Release | |
| Persons | 3.0% | 23.8% | 11.5% | 17.5% |
| Property | 90.9% | 57.4% | 73.1% | 66.9% |
| Sexual | 0.0% | 4.0% | 0.0% | 2.5% |
| Narcotic | 6.1% | 11.9% | 7.7% | 10.0% |
| Other | 0.0% | 3.0% | 7.7% | 3.1% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Time From Release To Recommitment

The average time from release to recommitment (or time out) for the recidivist sub-population is presented in Tables VIIa,b,c,d. Less time is required to return supervised releases (parolees and MCR) than is needed to return offenders who are not under a supervised type of release. The difference in the ease of return to custody of some offenders may account for some of the variation observed in Tables VIIa,b, and c.

Table VIIa presents data concerning the average time out controlling for the type of original offense. There is little difference in time out between various types of offenses. Most recidivists were free on the average of one year before recommitment.

TABLE VIIa

Frequency And Average Time Out For
Recidivists By Type Of Original Offense

| Original Offense | n | Average Time-Out |
|------------------|-----|------------------|
| Persons | 28 | 1.040 years |
| Property | 107 | 1.010 years |
| Sexual | 4 | 1.051 years |
| Narcotic | 16 | .694 years |
| Other | 5 | .746 years |
| Total | 160 | .976 years |

The type of offense for which recidivists were recommitted is analyzed in Table VIIb with reference to the average time out. Again, little difference was apparent in the time between release and recommitment for most types of new offenses. The average time out for all recidivists was 1.00 years.

TABLE VIIb

Frequency And Average Time Out for
Recidivists By Type Of New Offense*

| New Offense | New Commitments | | Violators With New Commitments | | Total | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------|--------------------------------|------|-------|------|
| | n | avg. | n | avg. | n | avg. |
| Persons | 19 | 1.22 | 9 | .71 | 28 | 1.06 |
| Property | 34 | 1.15 | 18 | .57 | 52 | .95 |
| Sexual | 3 | 1.18 | 3 | 1.46 | 6 | 1.32 |
| Narcotics | 4 | 1.02 | 1 | .48 | 5 | .91 |
| Other | 4 | 1.02 | 6 | .92 | 10 | .96 |
| Total | 64 | 1.160 | 37 | .73 | 101 | 1.00 |

*Excludes persons returned to custody for technical violations.

Table VIIc presents the average time from release to recommitment broken down by type of original offense. Again, there appears to be little significant difference between the various types of releases. Recidivists released under supervision returned in less time than did those inmates who were released by expiration.

TABLE VIIc

Frequency And Average Time Out
For Recidivists By Type Of Release

| Type of Release | n | Average Time-Out |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------------|
| Parole | 101 | .901 years |
| Mandatory Conditional Release | 26 | 1.034 years |
| Expiration of Sentence | 33 | 1.161 years |
| Total | 160 | .976 years |

Table VIId is a cross tabular representation of the preceeding three tables. Table VIId presents percentages, cumulative percentages, and the number of recidivists for each time period. As noted before, the supervised types of releases (paroles, and mandatory conditional release) tended to be recommitted sooner than did those inmates released by expiration of sentence. There also tended to be a trend for returns to be reduced as time out increases. In other words, the longer the inmate was out of custody, the better the chance that he would not recidivate.

TABLE VIId

Frequency And Percentages Of Recidivists
For Intervals Of Time Out
By Types Of Release

| Type Release | | TIME OUT | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 0-6 Months | 7-12 Months | 13-18 Months | 19-24 Months |
| Expiration Of Sentence | % | 9.1 | 39.4 | 27.3 | 24.2 |
| | cum% | 9.1 | 48.5 | 75.8 | 100.0 |
| | (n) | (3) | (13) | (9) | (8) |
| Parole | % | 30.7 | 35.6 | 19.8 | 13.9 |
| | cum% | 30.7 | 66.3 | 86.1 | 100.0 |
| | (n) | (31) | (36) | (20) | (14) |
| Mandatory Conditional Release | % | 19.2 | 42.3 | 26.9 | 11.6 |
| | cum% | 19.2 | 61.5 | 88.4 | 100.0 |
| | (n) | (5) | (11) | (7) | (3) |
| Total | % | 24.4 | 37.5 | 22.5 | 15.6 |
| | cum% | 24.4 | 61.9 | 84.4 | 100.0 |
| | (n) | (39) | (60) | (36) | (25) |

Type of Release by Type of Return

Table VIII presents the percentages for the type of release by type of return. Over half (51.5%) of all parolees returned were charged with technical violations of their parole. Overall, 36.9% of the recidivists were returned for technical violations under supervised release (parole or MCR). The remaining 63.1% of the recidivists were returned as a result of the commission of a new offense.

TABLE VIII

Frequency And Percentages Of Types
Of Readmissions By Type Of Release
For Recidivists

| Type of Release | New Commitments | Violators Old Sentences | Violators New Sentences | Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| End of Sentence | % 100.0 n (33) | % 0.0 n (0) | % 0.0 n (0) | % 100.0 n (33) |
| Mandatory Conditional Release | % 38.5 n (10) | % 26.9 n (07) | % 34.6 n (9) | % 100.0 n (26) |
| Parole | % 20.8 n (21) | % 51.5 n (52) | % 27.7 n (28) | % 100.0 n (101) |
| Totals | % 40.0 n (64) | % 36.9 n (50) | % 23.1 n (37) | % 100.0 n (160) |

Old Offense and New Offense

Tables IXa, b, present the relationship between the original offense and the new offense. One might expect that there could be consistency in criminal behavior. That is, offenders would follow patterns of behavior.

Comparing the totals column, observe that crimes against persons constituted 16.8% of the old offenses and 27.7% of the new offenses. Percentages for property crimes declined from 72.2% for old offenses to 51.5% for new offenses. Among recidivists who were originally incarcerated for property crimes, 23.3% were committed for a new offense involving a crime against a person.

TABLE IXa

Frequency And Percentage For Type Of
Old Offense By Type Of New Offense
For Recidivists*

| New Offense | Old Offense | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | Persons (n) | Property (n) | Sexual (n) | Narcotic (n) | Other (n) | Total (n) |
| Persons | 47.1% (8) | 23.3% (17) | 0% (0) | 30.0% (3) | 0% (0) | 27.7% (28) |
| Property | 17.6% (3) | 63.0% (46) | 0% (0) | 30.0% (3) | 0% (0) | 51.5% (52) |
| Sexual | 5.9% (1) | 4.1% (3) | 100% (1) | 10.0% (1) | 0% (0) | 5.9% (6) |
| Narcotic | 0 % (0) | 5.5% (4) | 0% (0) | 10.0% (1) | 0% (0) | 5.0% (5) |
| Other | 29.4% (5) | 4.1% (3) | 0% (0) | 20.0% (2) | 0% (0) | 9.9% (10) |
| Total | 100.0% (17) | 100.0% (73) | 100.0% (1) | 100.0% (10) | 00.0% (0) | 100.0% (101) |

*Excludes persons returned to custody for technical violations.

Table IXb presents the frequency distribution of the original offense and the new offense as compared to the original cohort. The difference between the types of crimes on first offense and second offense was clearly indicated.

TABLE IXb

Frequency And Percent By Type Offense
For Cohort And Old And New Offense
For Recidivists

| Type Offense | Cohort | Recidivists* | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Old Offense | New Offense |
| Persons | % 24.1 n (226) | % 16.8 n (17) | % 27.7 n (28) |
| Property | % 49.4 n (463) | % 72.2 n (73) | % 51.5 n (52) |
| Sexual | % 2.3 n (22) | % .9 (1) | % 5.9 (6) |
| Narcotic | % 18.1 n (170) | % 9.9 (10) | % 5.0 (5) |
| Other | % 6.1 n (57) | % 0 (0) | % 9.9 n (10) |
| Total | %100.0 n (938) | %100.0 n(101) | %100.0 (101) |

*Excludes persons returned to custody for technical violations.

Section III. Rate Analysis

A major objective of this study was to develop rates for recidivism for various sub-populations. This section analyses the recidivist rates for selected variables.

Race and Sex by Type of Original Offense

Table X presents recidivism rates for various racial and sexual categories by types of original offense. Females had a much lower rate of return than males (8.6 vs. 17.8). Black males had a higher rate of return than white males (21.3 vs. 14.6).

TABLE X

Recidivist Rates Per 100 Releases
For Race And Sex By Original Offense

| Original Offense | Race and Sex | | | | Total |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-------|
| | White Male | White Female | Black Male | Black Female | |
| Persons | 11.1 | 0 | 14.7 | 5.0 | 12.4 |
| Property | 20.1 | 21.4 | 26.4 | 25.0 | 23.1 |
| Sex | 8.3 | 0 | 30.0 | 0 | 18.2 |
| Narcotics | 7.3 | 0 | 20.0 | 0 | 9.4 |
| Other | 10.8 | 0 | 5.9 | 0 | 8.8 |
| Total | 14.6 | 9.1 | 21.3 | 9.1 | 17.1 |

Type of Institution of Release by Type of Release

Table XI presents rate of return per 100 releases for recidivists released by various methods as the type of institution release. It was noted that the overall rate was 17.1 recidivists per 100 releases. In other words, for every 100 inmates released, approximately 17 were expected to return as recidivists within a two year period. Releasees from Community Correctional Centers had a lower rate of recidivism (15.5) than did those releases from major institutions (17.8 per 100). Mandatory conditional release had the

highest rate of recidivism of all types of release (24.3 per 100).

Table XI presents rate of return per 100 releases for type of institution by type of release.

TABLE XI

Recidivist Rates Per 100 Releases
According To Type Of Institution At Release
By Type Of Release

| Type of Institution At Release | Type Of Release | | | Total |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | Parole | Mandatory Conditional Release | Expiration Of Sentence | |
| Major Institutions | 17.2 | 28.0 | 14.5 | 17.8 |
| Road Prisons | 14.9 | 14.3 | 18.7 | 15.7 |
| Community Correctional Centers | 15.7 | 14.3 | 15.6 | 15.5 |
| Other | 15.4 | 25. | 0 | 16.7 |
| Total | 16.6 | 24.3 | 14.9 | 17.1 |

V. DISCUSSION

Race and Sex

Previous studies indicated that race was highly associated with type of offense. One analysis indicated that twice as many blacks as whites were committed for crimes against persons. In this study, it was found that crimes against persons had a lower return rate than did crimes against property. Therefore, it might be expected that blacks would have a lower return rate than any

other race. This assumption was not supported by the data. Black males in fact had the highest return rate of all race/sex categories.

Type of Offense

As expected, crimes against property show the highest rate of return.

Location of Release

It was expected that persons released through some pre-release programs such as Community Correctional Centers would have a lower return rate. This is the case. CCC's in fact had a slightly lower recidivism rate than did major institutions.

Type of Release

It was found that persons released under supervision (parole, or MCR) had higher rates of return than did persons released through expiration of sentence. Again, this finding is in conflict with the popular opinion that the hard-core incorrigibles are released by expiration of sentence and are most likely to recidivate. These findings might be explained by the fact that persons under supervision are often returned for technical violations of the rules of supervision whereas inmates released by expiration of sentence are not subject to these technical rules. Also it should be noted that persons with short sentences are seldom paroled because of the time that it takes for a parole hearing to be set up and for parole plans to be developed.

Major Offenses

It is interesting to note that for both the cohort and the recidivist groups, the two most common offenses were for breaking and entering and armed robbery.

Association of Type of Release with Type of Original Offense

There seemed to be no unexpected relationship between the type of release and the type of original offense. Most of the persons originally convicted of crimes against persons were released by parole. This was quite logical and expected, since crimes against persons usually carry longer sentences and consequently release is most likely to be effected by parole.

Association Between Offense and Time to Return

There appeared to be little association between type of offense and length of time between release and return. Approximately the same time out was spent by all types of offenders.

Association by Type of Release with Type of Return

As was indicated earlier, a large percentage of persons on conditional release (parole and MCR) were returned to the Division for technical violations.

Association of Original Offense with Second Offense

Perhaps one of the most significant findings was that there was no apparent correlation between the original offense and the second offense. As noted previously, however, there was a slight trend for persons who committed property crimes as an original offense to be recommitted for crimes against persons on the second offense.

Interaction of Type of Release and Type of Institution

This study reflects a slight difference between the rates of return for persons released from major institutions and those released from Community Correctional Centers. Noting this slight difference, it would be misleading to assume that there is no difference in program effectiveness. There may be many forces influencing results which may obscure the true picture. For example, it must be assumed that the Parole Commission selects the best candidates for successful rehabilitation while the inmates are resident in a major institution. Those passed over by the Parole Commission as prime candidates for parole directly from a major institution may either be placed on pre-parole work release in a Community Correctional Center, may qualify for regular work release placement in a Community Correctional Center if they are within twelve months of the end of their sentence, may be released upon expiration of their sentence, or may be released under Mandatory Conditional Release. Thus, the selection process implies a hierarchy in terms of risk--from lowest to highest, with Mandatory Conditional Release constituting the highest risk group.

Comparing releases from major institutions with those from Community Correctional Centers, it may be interpreted that the programs of the Community Correctional Centers are more effective, reflecting an overall lower recidivism rate, although they receive less desirable subjects as participants in the program. Moreover, participants in the Community Correctional Center program included

in this study cohort received the benefits from the program while it was in an early phase of its development. Although the program is a dynamic one, evolving and being molded to meet ever changing needs, it might be expected that subsequent program refinements will be even more salutary. Clearly, further study is needed to determine if the work release program does contribute significantly to a reduction in recidivism.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The data from this study indicates emphatically that there is a much lower recidivism rate in Florida than is generally cited in the press--based on recidivism being defined as a return to correctional custody within a twenty-four month period. Although definitions may vary, the data itself reveals that recidivism defined as reincarceration contributes negligibly to the overcrowding currently confronting corrections in Florida.

Assuming that type of release from type of institution reflects specific selection criteria, the study indicates that decisions by the Parole Commission are no more effective--as a whole--than the criteria which results in a man being released by expiration of sentence. This observation holds true except for expirees from Road Prisons.

The data indicates that special attention needs to be focused on individuals who are released from Major Institutions by Mandatory Conditional Release. Clearly, this cohort of releasees constitutes the highest risk group. For persons in this

risk group, program managers may profitably consider providing additional orientation in a pre-release program or assure more extensive supervision following release.

VII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As noted at the beginning of this report, the study is a very limited inquiry into one aspect of recidivism. Several lines of inquiry have been suggested which may serve as the basis for further study or analysis.

1. One suggestion for further study is to broaden the definition of recidivism to include arrests and convictions as well as recommitments. Although the records are at present quite incomplete with regard to disposition of sentence, a study of post-release performance in Florida might be pursued using records from the Florida Crime Information Center and the Florida Parole and Probation Commission.

2. Should resources permit, the study might be extended to include information about reinvolvement in the Criminal Justice System for persons arrested outside of Florida.

3. Additional analysis of existing data may be undertaken, as time and staff resources permit, to pick up possible interaction effects.

4. Attention needs to be directed specifically to a study of the effectiveness of the work-release program in reducing recidivism.

5. Trend data may be derived by replicating the present study using a different cohort from a comparable time period.

The allocation of limited resources for further study awaits a determination by program managers and policy makers concerning that line of inquiry which can best support the decision making process which impacts upon the total Criminal Justice System.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Crime in the United States: Uniform Crime Reports--1971.
Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972.
2. Fox, Vernon. Introduction to Corrections. Englewood Cliff,
N. N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.
3. Glaser, Daniel. The Effectiveness of a Prison and Parole System.
Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964.
4. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and
Goals. Corrections. Washington, D.C.: United States
Government Printing Office, 1973.
5. National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and
Goals. Criminal Justice System. Washington, D.C.: United
States Government Printing Office, 1974.
6. Search Group, Inc. OBSCIS. VOLUME I. The OBSCIS Approach.
Sacramento: Search Group Inc., 1975

END