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AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM RATES  
AMONG RESIDENTS RELEASED FROM  
MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
DURING THE YEAR 1975

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## ABSTRACT

The following study presents an analysis of differential recidivism rates for individuals released from Massachusetts correctional institutions in the year 1975. Included within the analysis is a comparison between the findings of the 1975 releasees and the findings of the years 1966, 1971, 1972, 1973 and 1974.

The present analysis supports many of the basic findings that have emerged in past research studies by the Department of Correction. One trend that has persisted is the occurrence of lower recidivism rates in recent years. For releases in 1966, the mean recidivism rate was 30%. For 1971 it was 25%; for 1972, 22%; for 1973, it was 19%; for 1974, 19% and 20% for 1975. Since the recidivism rates for 1973, 1974 and 1975 are consistent, it is possible that a levelling off of the downward trend exists.

Another trend previously identified and supported by the present analysis was that participation in the furlough program significantly reduces the incidence of recidivism. The analysis revealed that the reduction in recidivism is directly related to the furlough program and not to a selection bias in choosing inmates for participation in the program. This finding is consistent with the results of the recidivism studies for 1973 and 1974.

Also consistent with past recidivism research is the fact that a lower proportion of recidivists are being returned for a technical violation of parole conditions and instead are being returned for reason of a new arrest or a new court commitment. A possible explanation for this may be the implementation of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision. This trend also emerges in its effect upon recidivism rates in recent years.

In sum, the present analysis substantiates previously published research findings which had attributed the reduction in rates of recidivism to the interactive effects of three events: (1) the inception of the furlough program; (2) the introduction of graduated release programs (i.e., pre-release centers, halfway houses, work-release programs, and education-release programs); and finally, (3) the implementation of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision in the parole revocation process.

## INTRODUCTION

The Correctional Reform Act of 1972 introduced several innovative programs to the Massachusetts Department of Correction, such as the creation of pre-release centers, halfway houses, a home furlough program and the expansion of work and education release programs. In order to assess the operational and rehabilitative effectiveness of the programs, extensive research evaluations were undertaken by the Research Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

As part of this continuing effort of research evaluation, a series of studies of recidivism rates has been produced. The first study which was produced concerned releases from Massachusetts correctional institutions during the year 1971, just prior to the implementation of the Correctional Reform Act and the introduction of various community-based correctional programs. Thus, with 1971 serving as a base year for comparison purposes, studies were also undertaken for the years 1972, 1973 and 1974.<sup>1</sup> These subsequent studies contained populations that had to varying degrees participated in programs created by the Correctional Reform Act. Moreover, a series of recidivism studies has been produced on individual pre-release centers and halfway houses.<sup>2</sup>

These studies have illustrated a series of findings: first, the recidivism rate in Massachusetts has consistently dropped in the last number of years. For releases in the year 1966, the first year for which recidivism data was analyzed, the mean recidivism rate was 30%; for 1971, 25%; for 1972, 22%; for 1973, 19% and for 1974, 19%.

Secondly, controlling for the selection factors in furlough participation, it is evident that participation in the furlough program accounts most highly for the reduction in recidivism rates in Massachusetts.

Thirdly, participation in pre-release programs prior to release led to the lowest rate of recidivism, controlling for selection biases.

It was contended that these findings support the recently enacted community-based correctional network of programs in Massachusetts: pre-release centers, halfway houses, work and education release programs, co-educational institutions, and most importantly, the furlough program.

In order to continue to study these trends, the Research Unit collected data describing the background characteristics and the recidivism rates for all individuals released from Massachusetts correctional institutions in 1975. As in the previous recidivism studies, these statistics are available for releasees from MCI's Walpole and Concord (maximum security institutions); MCI-Norfolk (medium security institution); forestry camps and pre-release centers (minimum security); and MCI-Framingham (a co-educational institution which functions as a maximum, medium and minimum security facility).

The present study provides the more striking preliminary findings that have thus far emerged from the data analysis. Throughout the discussion, comparisons will be made with the findings of previous years in order to disclose whether the trends previously identified continue to exist. The format of this study as well as the issues to be addressed will be based upon the recidivism study for 1974 (LeClair, 1977), in order to facilitate comparison of the findings. The raw data for this report has been published as a separate study.<sup>3</sup>

## RESEARCH DESIGN

### Definition of Recidivism:

A recidivist was defined as any subject returned to a federal or state correctional institution or to a county house of correction or jail for 30 days or more.

### Follow-up Period:

The follow-up period was one year from the date of the subject's release to the community.

### Variables Collected:

The analyses following in this report are based on five categories of variables: commitment variables, personal background variables, criminal history variables, furlough variables, and recidivism variables. Appendix I gives a specific listing of the variables.

Data was derived primarily from the computerized data base developed by the Correction and Parole Management Information System. Additional data was collected from the files of the Department of Correction, the Parole Board, and the Board of Probation. The data was analyzed on the Massachusetts State College Computer Network.

FINDINGS

In the year 1975 a total of 806 individuals were released from Massachusetts' State Correctional Institutions to the street. Of the 806 individuals, 645 (80%) were not returned to a correctional institution within one year of their release, whereas 161 (20%) were reincarcerated within the specified amount of time. Thus, the overall recidivism rate for the follow-up period was 20%.

Recidivism rates for individual institutions showed considerable variation, ranging from a high of 27% for MCI-Walpole, to a low of 12% for MCI-Norfolk. In Table I below recidivism rates for each institution are summarized.

TABLE I  
RECIDIVISM RATE BY RELEASING INSTITUTIONS, 1975

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RELEASES</u>	<u>PERCENT OF TOTAL</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Concord	237	( 29)	26%
Walpole	125	( 16)	27%
Norfolk	73	( 9)	12%
Framingham - Men	22	( 3)	18%
Framingham - Women	84	( 10)	18%
Pre-Release	224	( 28)	14%
Forestry Camps	41	( 5)	15%
TOTAL	806	(100)	20%

A great deal of variation occurs when a comparison is made between individual pre-release centers. However, some of this variation is accounted for by the relatively small sample size of individual centers (i.e., THP and 3rd Nail). The recidivism rates are shown below in Table II:

TABLE II  
RECIDIVISM RATES OF INDIVIDUAL PRE-RELEASE CENTERS

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RELEASEES</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Shirley	49	( 22)	18%
Boston State	56	( 25)	7%
Roxbury	26	( 12)	0%
Charlotte House	11	( 5)	0%
Coolidge House	36	( 16)	14%
Brooke House	26	( 12)	23%
THP	1	( 0)	100%
699 House	18	( 8)	33%
3rd Nail	1	( 0)	100%
TOTAL	224	(100)	14%

Prior research has demonstrated that the variation in recidivism rates of the specific pre-release centers is a function of the risk potential of the population upon which that particular center draws.<sup>4</sup>

When the overall recidivism rate for 1975 is compared with the rates of previous years, it appears that the rates are possibly stabilizing. There is no variation in 1973 and 1974, and only one percentage point difference in 1975. However, when the rates for each institution are taken separately, variations continue to occur each year. The recidivism rates for Walpole, Framingham, and Forestry



Camps increased from 1974 to 1975. Conversely, the recidivism rate for MCI-Norfolk dropped in 1975. None of the fluctuations, however, was statistically significant.

A summary of the comparative recidivism rates for 1966-1975 is presented in Table III below.

TABLE III  
COMPARATIVE RECIDIVISM RATES FOR 1966-1975

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CONCORD</u>	<u>WALPOLE</u>	<u>NORFOLK</u>	<u>FRAMINGHAM</u>	<u>PRE- RELEASE</u>	<u>FORES- TRY CAMPS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1966	30%	33%	28%	32%	-	27%	30%
1971	28%	27%	18%	29%	-	14%	25%
1972	27%	21%	15%	18%	-	14%	22%
1973	26%	21%	14%	17%	12%	14%	19%
1974	27%	22%	19%	12%	12%	7%	19%
1975	26%	27%	12%	18%	14%	15%	20%

Specific Category of Recidivism for Releases in the Year 1975:

Recidivism does not refer to only one type of return to prison but three specific categories of return: a technical infraction of parole conditions; a new arrest in association with a parole violation; and a new conviction (i.e., a new court sentence).

Of the total 161 recidivists in the 1975 sample, 20 or 12% were reincarcerated due to a technical infraction of their parole conditions. Eighty-four individuals, or 52%, were returned to prison because of a new arrest associated with their parole violations, although at the time of their reincarceration they may not have been tried for the new offense. Fifty-seven (35%) of the 161 recidivists were reincarcerated for a new conviction, having received a new sentence from the court. Table IV summarizes the findings:

TABLE IV  
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN FOR RELEASEES IN 1975 BY CATEGORY OF RETURN

	<u>WALPOLE</u>		<u>CONCORD</u>		<u>NORFOLK</u>		<u>FORESTRY CAMPS</u>		<u>FRAMINGHAM WOMEN</u>		<u>FRAMINGHAM MEN</u>		<u>PRE RELEASE</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Non Recidivists</u>	89	( 71)	173	( 73)	62	( 85)	33	( 80)	64	( 76)	21	( 95)	203	( 91)	645	( 80)
<u>Recidivists</u>																
Parole violation, Technical	5	( 4)	8	( 3)	1	( 1)	1	( 2)	2	( 2)	0	( 0)	3	( 1)	20	( 2)
Parole violation, New Arrest	16	( 13)	34	( 14)	7	( 10)	3	( 7)	10	( 12)	0	( 0)	14	( 6)	84	( 10)
New Court Commitments	15	( 12)	22	( 9)	3	( 4)	4	( 10)	8	( 10)	1	( 5)	4	( 2)	57	( 7)
TOTAL	125	(100)	237	(100)	73	(100)	41	(100)	84	(100)	22	(100)	224	(100)	806	(100)



When compared with the findings from 1974 a similar pattern of reincarceration is found. Moreover these results support the findings of past research, which documented a change in patterns of reincarcerations. Three trends show up when analyzing the data from the past five years:

- 1) a lower proportion of returns for technical infractions of parole conditions,
- 2) a higher proportion of returns for a new arrest in association with the parole violation,
- 3) a higher proportion of returns for reason of a new court sentence.

Thus, it is clear that those individuals who were returned to prison were most likely to be returned due to a new arrest or a new court commitment, rather than a technical violation of their parole.

Table V further clarifies these trends:

TABLE V

BREAKDOWN OF RECIDIVISM BY CATEGORY OF RETURN FOR YEARS 1966, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974 AND 1975

	<u>1966</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>	<u>1971</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>	<u>1972</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>	<u>1973</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>	<u>1974</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>	<u>1975</u> <u>N</u> <u>%</u>
Non Recidivists	648 ( 70)	835 ( 75)	1204 ( 78)	780 ( 81)	739 ( 81)	645 ( 80)
<u>Recidivists:</u>						
Parole Violation, Technical	93 ( 10)	118 ( 11)	76 ( 5)	65 ( 7)	40 ( 4)	20 ( 2)
Parole violation, New Arrest	96 ( 11)	128 ( 12)	190 ( 12)	85 ( 9)	85 ( 9)	84 ( 10)
New Commitments	81 ( 9)	26 ( 2)	80 ( 5)	36 ( 4)	47 ( 5)	57 ( 7)
TOTAL	918 (100)	1107 (100)	1550 (100)	966 (100)	911 (100)	806 (100)



A possible explanation for the shift in category of return may be the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision, which having taken effect in Massachusetts on October 16, 1972, substantially altered the parole revocation process by requiring that two revocation hearings be held before final revocation action could occur. The first hearing was to specify whether a probable cause existed to remove the parolee from the street; while the second hearing was to decide whether there was justification to revoke the parole.

Because the 1972 releasees were followed in the community for one full year, all parolees in the sample were on parole status for at least a portion of time subsequent to the policy taking effect. Because the pattern mentioned above has continued to exist since 1972, and the number of individuals returned in 1975 for a technical infraction of parole conditions was the lowest since the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision took effect, it can be assumed that this decision has had a strong impact upon reincarceration patterns.

#### Recidivism Rates by Committing Institutions:

In Massachusetts the courts make direct commitments to three institutions. Women are committed to MCI Framingham, and men are committed either to MCI Concord or MCI Walpole. Individuals incarcerated at MCI Norfolk, Forestry Camps, MCI Framingham, or Pre-Release Centers are placed there as a result of a transfer, after having been carefully screened for eligibility and suitability for a medium and/or minimum security status.

The judge sets only the maximum sentence in the case of men sentenced to Concord. The individual is sentenced to the authority of the superintendent without a minimum sentence. Concord inmates are characteristically individuals with less lengthy criminal histories, and thus tend to be younger offenders.

However, with respect to MCI Walpole, the judge must fix both a minimum and a maximum term (except for life sentences and sentences for habitual offenders). The minimum sentence must not be for less than two and half years; the maximum not more than that established by statute.

Because of the above stated distinctions, the 1975 releasee sample was analyzed in terms of the institution to which each individual was originally committed. Of the 806 releases, 95 (12%) had been originally committed to MCI Framingham, 407 (50%) to MCI Concord, and 302 (37%) to MCI Walpole. The recidivism rates for these institutions were 16%, 25%, and 15%, respectively. The results are summarized below in Table VI:

TABLE VI  
RECIDIVISM RATE BY COMMITTING INSTITUTION

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
MCI Framingham	95	( 12)	16%
MCI Concord	407	( 50)	25%
MCI Walpole	302	( 37)	15%
TOTAL	806	(100)	20%

It is important to note that half (50%) of the total releasee population had been originally sentenced to Concord, and that the MCI Concord commitments had the higher recidivism rates. This phenomenon may be a result of the relatively young age of Concord residents.

Differential Recidivism Rates for Committing Institutions by  
Institution of Release:

In May, 1975, a report was issued which documented an interesting trend in Walpole commitments.<sup>5</sup> For the 1971 releasee population it was found that for individuals originally committed to MCI Walpole, differential recidivism rates occurred with respect to the specific institution from which they were subsequently released. Specifically those who had been originally committed to Walpole, but who had been transferred to a pre-release had lower rates of recidivism than those either remaining at Walpole or those transferred from Walpole but eventually returned and released from Walpole.

The author suggested that such differential recidivism rates may be explained by one of two situations: either low recidivism risks may have been selected for transfers to institutions of lower security; or a transfer to an institution of lesser security may provide for a reintegrative effect which is not found in an abrupt release from a maximum security institution.

The Massachusetts Department of Correction's Research Unit conducted a separate study in an attempt to discern whether or not either of these two explanations was valid. For this study Base Expectancy Tables were developed and applied to the portion of the Walpole commitments in the sample that were transferred



to and released from MCI's Norfolk and Forestry Camps to test whether or not there was in fact a disproportionate number of lower recidivism risk groups within the population.

The results of the study supported the hypothesis that there exists a reintegrative or rehabilitative quality in the movement from maximum to medium and to minimum security levels as opposed to an abrupt release directly from a maximum security institution.

The data for releases in 1972 and 1973 also supported these findings. In 1974, however, Walpole commitments released from medium security institutions no longer had lower rates of recidivism than those released from maximum security.

A partial explanation of this phenomenon stems from a recent pattern of greater movement from medium to minimum security prior to final release. In previous years, nearly 40% of Walpole commitments were released from medium security institutions, and 24% from minimum. In 1974, only 21% were released from medium security institutions and 39% from minimum. The selection procedures moved a greater number of individuals into minimum security status (including pre-release centers) without increasing the overall recidivism rates of the total releasee population.

In 1975, however, Walpole commitments released from medium security institutions did indeed have lower recidivism rates than those released from maximum security institutions. The fact still remains that a greater proportion of individuals are being moved to minimum security status. In 1975, 49% of the Walpole commitments released from minimum security institutions, while only 14% were released from medium security.

It is clear that for Walpole commitments the lower security levels of releasing institutions have lower rates of recidivism. Moreover, an increase in the number of individuals released from minimum security does not increase overall recidivism rates.

Table VII presents these supportive findings:

TABLE VII

RECIDIVISM RATE OF WALPOLE COMMITMENTS BY SECURITY LEVEL OF  
INSTITUTION OF RELEASE, 1975

	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Walpole commitments released from maximum security institutions	114	25%
Walpole commitments released from medium security institutions	42	10%
Walpole commitments released from minimum security institutions	44	16%
Walpole commitments released from pre-release centers	102	7%
TOTAL	302	15%

Table VIII shows the specific institutions and their recidivism rates:

TABLE VIII

RECIDIVISM RATE OF WALPOLE COMMITMENTS BY INSTITUTION OF RELEASE, 1975

<u>INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
1 MCI Walpole	111	( 37)	24%
2 MCI Norfolk	42	( 14)	10%
3 MCI Concord	3	( 1)	33%
4 Framingham Men	21	( 7)	19%
5 Forestry Camps	23	( 8)	13%
6 Pre-Release	102	( 34)	7%
TOTAL	302	(100)	15%

A breakdown of MCI Concord commitments by institution of release demonstrates the same findings. Again, it is clear that the higher the security level of the releasing institution, the higher the recidivism rate and vice versa, although the recidivism rate for pre-release had risen from 1974. This point is shown by the following security level categories:

TABLE IX

RECIDIVISM RATE OF CONCORD COMMITMENTS BY SECURITY  
LEVEL OF INSTITUTION OF RELEASE, 1975\*

	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Concord commitments released from maximum security institutions	248	27%
Concord commitments released from medium security institutions	31	16%
Concord commitments released from minimum security institutions	19	16%
Concord commitments released from pre-release centers	109	23%
TOTAL	407	25%

The specific institutions and their recidivism rates are presented in Table X below:

TABLE X

RECIDIVISM RATES OF CONCORD COMMITMENTS BY INSTITUTION  
OF RELEASE 1975 COHORT

<u>RELEASING INSTITUTION</u>	<u>NUMBER OF RELEASEES</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
MCI Concord	234	( 57)	26%
MCI Walpole	14	( 3)	50%
MCI Norfolk	31	( 8)	16%
MCI Framingham	1	( 0)	0%
MCI Forestry	18	( 4)	17%
Pre-Release	109	( 27)	23%
TOTAL	407	(100)	25%

\* In 1975 MCI Concord was defined as a maximum security institution

Recidivism Rate by Type of Release:

The 1975 releasee sample was next analyzed in terms of differential recidivism rates by category of type of release - parole or discharge. The results are shown in Table XII below. Those individuals released on parole had higher recidivism rates than those released on discharge.

The reason for the higher recidivism rates for parolees is clear. Because the dischargees are not on parole status and therefore not under strict supervision, they would not be returned for parole infractions, nor would their criminal violations be so detectable.



TABLE XII  
TYPE OF RELEASE

	<u>WALPOLE</u>			<u>NORFOLK</u>			<u>CONCORD</u>			<u>FORESTRY CAMPS</u>			<u>FRAM- INGHAM MEN</u>			<u>FRAM- INGHAM WOMEN</u>			<u>PRE- RELEASE CTRS.</u>			<u>TOTAL</u>		
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>
Parole	92	( 74)	32	56	( 77)	11	182	( 77)	29	39	( 95)	13	21	( 95)	19	38	( 45)	21	211	( 44)	14	639	( 79)	21
Discharged	33	( 26)	15	17	( 23)	18	55	( 23)	16	2	( 5)	50	1	( 5)	0	46	( 55)	15	13	( 6)	16	167	( 21)	16
TOTAL	125	(100)	27	73	(100)	12	237	(100)	26	41	(100)	15	22	(100)	18	84	(100)	18	224	(100)	14	806	(100)	20

FURLOUGH PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Of the total number of releasees from prison in 1975, 304 (38%) did not receive a furlough while incarcerated. The recidivism rate for such individuals was 30%. On the contrary 502 (62%) individuals did experience a furlough while incarcerated and had a recidivism rate of 14%.

From these results it can be assumed that furlough participation has an impact on recidivism rates. Those individuals experiencing one or more furloughs while incarcerated had significantly lower recidivism rates than those never experiencing a furlough.

When compared with the 1974 data, the recidivism rates are consistent. In 1974, the recidivism rate for those not having received a furlough was identical to 1975 - 30%, whereas the rate for those receiving a furlough in 1974 was 15%, as compared to 14% for 1975. However, it is interesting to note that in 1974 a larger proportion (74%) of the releasees had experienced a furlough than in 1975 (62%).

The recidivism rate broken down by participation in the furlough program is shown below in Table XIII:

TABLE XIII

RECIDIVISM RATE BROKEN DOWN BY PARTICIPATION IN FURLOUGH PROGRAM

	<u>NUMBER</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>	<u>RECIDIVISM RATE</u>
Did not receive a Furlough	304	( 38)	30%
Received a Furlough	502	( 62)	14%
TOTAL SAMPLE	806	(100)	20%

Variation in recidivism rates occurs when the furlough variable is broken down by specific releasing institutions. In all cases with the exception of the Forestry Camps, the recidivism rates for individuals not receiving furloughs were higher than the rates for individuals experiencing furloughs. The results are shown in Table XIV:





TABLE XIV

RECIDIVISM RATE OF INDIVIDUALS RECEIVING FURLOUGHS PRIOR TO RELEASE  
COMPARED TO THOSE RELEASED WITHOUT RECEIVING A FURLOUGH

	<u>WALPOLE</u>		<u>CONCORD</u>		<u>NORFOLK</u>		<u>FORESTRY</u>		<u>PRE RELEASE</u>		<u>FRAM- ING- HAM MEN</u>		<u>FRAM- ING- HAM WOMEN</u>		<u>TOTAL</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>RR</u>
Rate of Recidivism of Individuals not Receiving Furlough prior to Release	72	29%	115	32%	17	35%	7	0%	39	38%	1	100%	53	21%	304	30%
Rate of Recidivism of Individuals Who Had Received Furloughs Prior to Release	53	25%	122	20%	56	5%	34	18%	185	11%	21	14%	31	13%	502	13%
Recidivism Rate of TOTAL POPULATION	125	27%	237	26%	73	12%	41	15%	224	14%	22	18%	84	18%	806	20%

Similar to the situation of selection of individuals for minimum security status, the question arises as to whether or not the selection process for granting furloughs works in such a way that low recidivism risks are disproportionately chosen to receive furloughs and high risks disproportionately excluded. So as to determine the validity of the finding that furlough participation reduces the incidence of recidivistic behavior, a test for possible selection biases is needed. Base Expectancy Tables were used to accomplish this, by which an expected recidivism rate is calculated and compared to the actual recidivism rate. The Base Expectancy Table was constructed on the population of inmates released from Massachusetts correctional institutions in 1971, just prior to the introduction of the furlough program (as well as pre-release and other community correctional programs) in Massachusetts. Thus no one in this total release population had received a furlough.

Once constructed, the Base Expectancy Table was first used to calculate the Expected Recidivism Rate of the total releasee population for 1975. This population was then broken down into two segments: a group consisting of males having received one or more furloughs prior to release; and a group of males not having received a furlough. Base Expectancy Rates were calculated for each of the sub-groups. The following table shows the results of the tests:

TABLE XV  
EXPECTED AND ACTUAL RECIDIVISM RATES  
BROKEN DOWN BY FURLOUGH PARTICIPATION, 1975

<u>GROUP</u>	<u>NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS</u>	<u>EXPECTED RATE OF RECIDIVISM</u>	<u>ACTUAL RATE OF RECIDIVISM</u>
I. All males released in 1975 who did not receive a furlough	248	25.7%	30%
II. All males released in 1975 who did receive a furlough	463	23.3%	14%
III TOTAL MALE RELEASEE POPULATION	711	24.1%	21%

For those individuals not experiencing a furlough, the difference between the expected and observed rates of recidivism was not statistically significant. By contrast, the difference between the expected and observed rates for those experiencing one or more furloughs proved to be statistically significant.

We can thus conclude that participation in the furlough program significantly reduces the chances that a person will recidivate upon his release to the community. It is important to note that the reduction in recidivistic behavior is not due to the types of inmates selected for furlough participation, but due to the furlough program itself.

VARIABLES FOUND TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN RECIDIVISTS AND NON-RECIDIVISTS

The final section of this report focuses on specific background variables that distinguished between individuals who recidivated and those who did not. Each variable was dichotomized to determine the best split for high and low recidivism risk categories. Those variables which produced a statistically significant difference between high and low recidivism risk groups were chosen for the following discussion.

Four categories of variables were found to distinguish between the incidence of recidivism and non-recidivism. Unlike the results from 1974, marital status, employment history and type of offense were not found to be statistically significant. The distinguishing categories are summarized below in the following outline:

I. Furlough History

II. Criminal Career Pattern

- (1) Age at Release
- (2) Age at First Arrest
- (3) Age at Incarceration
- (4) Total Prior Incarcerations
- (5) Prior Juvenile Paroles
- (6) Prior Court Appearances
- (7) Prior Juvenile Incarcerations
- (8) Prior Court Appearances for Property Offenses

III. History of Known Drug Use

IV. Security Status of Institution of Release

Individuals who had one or no furloughs at the time of release had a significantly higher recidivism rate than those who had experienced two or more furloughs. The recidivism rates were 29% for those having one or no furloughs, and 13% for those having two or more. Moreover, individuals experiencing one or no successful furloughs had a recidivism rate of 28%, whereas those experiencing two or more successful furloughs had a recidivism rate of 12%.

Those individuals who had longer criminal careers tended to recidivate more than those who were not deeply involved in a criminal career. Specifically, those first arrested at the age of 18 years or less had a higher recidivism rate than those who were over 18 (24% as opposed to 8%). Individuals incarcerated at the age of 26 or below had a higher recidivism rate (24%) than those over 26 (12%). Age at release also proved to be significant,

evidenced by the fact that those individuals 30 years old or under when released had a higher rate of recidivism (24%) than individuals over 30 (9%). Individuals with more than three total incarcerations had a higher rate of recidivism than those with three or fewer incarcerations. Releasees who had experienced one or more juvenile paroles had a higher recidivism rate than individuals not having received a juvenile parole. Moreover, those with 19 or fewer court appearances had a lower recidivism rate than those with more than nineteen. Related to this, individuals with more than one juvenile incarceration had nearly twice the recidivism rate as those without a juvenile incarceration (35% vs. 18%). Also, those individuals with nine or fewer court appearances for property charges had a lower recidivism rate than those with 10 or more appearances (17% vs. 32%). Table XVI summarizes these findings:

Another category which proved to be a strong indicator of high and low recidivism risk potential was history of known drug use. The recidivism rate for individuals who used drugs was significantly higher than for those not having used drugs. The rates were 26% and 14%, respectively.

As indicated earlier in this report, security level of the institution of release is highly correlated with recidivism risk potential. Individuals released from medium security institutions had the lowest risk potential (12%), followed by pre-release centers and minimum security institutions (15% and 16%, respectively). Maximum security institutions had the highest recidivism risk potentials (27%).

Also pointed out earlier, furlough program participation is a strong indicator of recidivism risk potential. Individuals experiencing at least one furlough had a recidivism rate of 14%, as opposed to 30% for those not experiencing a furlough.

TABLE XVI

RECIDIVISM RISK POTENTIAL BY CRIMINAL CAREER PATTERN

<u>VARIABLE</u>	<u>LOW RISK CATEGORY</u>	<u>RECIDI- VISM RISK</u>	<u>HIGH RISK CATEGORY</u>	<u>RECIDI- VISM RISK</u>
1 Age at first arrest	19 yrs or older	8%	18 yrs or below	24%
2 Age at incarceration	27 yrs or older	12%	26 yrs or below	24%
3 Age at release	31 yrs or older	9%	30 yrs or below	24%
4 Total number of incarcerations	3 or less	17%	4 or more	32%
5 Prior Juvenile paroles	None	17%	1 or more	30%
6 Number of prior court appearances	19 or less	18%	20 or more	33%
7 Prior juvenile incarcerations	1 or less	18%	2 or more	35%
8 Prior court appearances for property charges	9 or less	17%	10 or more	32%



## DISCUSSION

The present analysis of the 1975 releasee population has provided further evidence that the patterns which emerged from previous departmental recidivism research continue to exist. Prior research has indicated that the Furlough Program, the inception of pre-release centers, and the gradual movement from maximum security level institutions to lower security institutions have all led to lower rates of recidivism. The results of this study coincide with the results of past research.

Implicit in the theoretical and policy aspects of research on recidivism is the process of reintegration through graduated release and its effects upon further criminal behavior by an individual. The system of graduated release involves certain areas that are discussed in this study - the furlough program, the movement from maximum to medium to minimum security institutions, pre-release centers - as well as work-release and education-release programs. It is important to realize that such graduated release programs occur during different stages of an individual's incarceration, thus providing for a gradual reintegration to the community. For example, participation in the furlough program may begin early in the period of incarceration and continue to the time of release, facilitating maintenance of community linkages as well as possible broadening of societal ties. Participation in pre-release centers occurs during the final stages of incarceration, providing for an opportunity for greater freedom which the individual will encounter upon release to the community. Work and education release programs, which an offender may experience at pre-release centers or occasionally at minimum security institutions allow the individual to participate in activities within a normal societal environment. The effects of these programs are twofold: 1) they offer the individual a chance to readjust to life experiences outside of the prison; and 2) they provide preparation for greater employment opportunities through training.

In conclusion, the major findings of departmental research over the past five years have been reinforced by the present study. Specifically, it has been shown that the processes of graduated release programs and reintegrative programs have been highly effective. Together with the effects of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision on the parole revocation process, the above-stated programs have produced lower rates of recidivism in releasees from the Department of Correction. Therefore, it can be assumed that the policy of continued and expanded reintegrative and graduated release programs should be maintained.



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APPENDIX I

VARIABLES

A. COMMITMENT VARIABLES

1. Institution of Original Commitment
2. Number of Jail Credits
3. Age at Commitment
4. Present Offense (most serious charge)
5. Number of Charges Involved in Present Offense
6. Type of Sentence
7. Minimum Sentence
8. Maximum Sentence

B. PERSONAL BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS VARIABLES

1. Race
2. Marital Status
3. Military Service
4. Last Civilian Address
5. Emergency Addressee
6. Occupational Field
7. Length of Employment at Most Skilled Position
8. Longest Time Employed at Any One Job
9. Type of Education
10. Last Grade Completed
11. History of Drug Use

C. CRIMINAL HISTORY VARIABLES

1. Age at First Arrest
2. Age at First Drunk Arrest
3. Age at First Drug Arrest
4. Total Number of Court Appearances
5. Number of Court Appearances for Person Offenses
6. Number of Court Appearances for Property Offenses
7. Number of Court Appearances for Sex Offenses
8. Number of Court Appearances for Narcotic Offenses
9. Number of Court Appearances for Drunkenness Offenses
10. Number of Court Appearances for Escape Offenses
11. Number of Juvenile Commitments
12. Number of House of Correction Commitments
13. Number of Prior State or Federal Commitments
14. Number of Juvenile Paroles
15. Number of Adult Paroles
16. Number of Juvenile Parole Violations
17. Number of Adult Parole Violations
18. Age at Release

D. FURLOUGH VARIABLES

1. Total Number of Furloughs
2. Total Number of Successful Furlough Outcomes
3. Total Number of Late-Under Furloughs
4. Total Number of Late-Over Furloughs
5. Total Number of Escape Furlough Outcomes
6. Total Number of Arrest Furlough Outcomes
7. Specific Institution Granting Furlough
8. Months Served Before Receiving First Furlough
9. Months Served Before First Furlough Escape

E. RECIDIVISM VARIABLES

1. Category of Return
2. New Arrests
3. Types of Parole Violations
4. Disposition of New Arrests
5. Date Returned to Custody
6. Date Parole Warrant Issued



**END**