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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents a review of current research conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Correction, Research Unit during 1979. Included in this report are abstracts which summarize specific findings of the individual studies cited.

This year's report is divided into three sections which reflect the different emphases integrated within the Research Unit. The first section contains abstracts geared toward community reintegration, a major focus of the unit. Abstracts include: overall recidivism rates of 1977 releasee population, a fact sheet on the furlough program, a follow-up evaluation of the pre-release training experience, a look at inmates released directly from a maximum security institution and some theoretical implications of positive research findings.

Section two contains four studies which evaluate the administrative management process of the Massachusetts Department of Correction for incoming offenders and newly trained correction officers. The studies include: an evaluation of the area board classification, a policy analysis report on the training academy for correction officers, a thesis submitted to the Boston University School for social work on sentencing and a study which analyzes the institutional experience of major violators in Massachusetts. In addition, a special study analyzes the trends in commitments to correctional institutions from the years 1935 to 1977.

The final portion of this report consists of eight annual, statistical reports which describe background characteristics of inmates committed to and released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions and Houses of Correction.

Copies of the complete studies may be obtained by writing to:

Research Unit
Massachusetts Department of Correction
100 Cambridge Street 21st Floor
Boston, MA 02202

SECTION I

OVERALL REINTEGRATIVE STUDIES

During the past year, a continued emphasis of the Research Unit has been to study the effectiveness of the state's correctional programs which were implemented in 1972 following the passage of the Correctional Reform Act. This act instituted various work and educational release programs, pre-release centers and the Home Furlough Program. Abstracts in this section deal with studies that test the effectiveness of these reintegrative programs on the incarcerated and present an analysis using recidivism rates as an outcome measure of effectiveness.

AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG RESIDENTS
RELEASED FROM MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN 1977

NOVEMBER, 1979

YVETTE SMART

As one of a continuous series, this study presents an analysis of recidivism rates for individuals released from the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions in the year 1977.

Maintaining the downward trend documented in previous departmental recidivism research, the overall recidivism rate for the 1977 releasee population is 15%. For releases in the years 1971 through 1976, the rates were as follows: 25%, 22%, 19%, 19%, 20%, and 16% respectively.

The results of this study reaffirmed prior major findings. Individuals who participated in the Home Furlough Program and a graduated release process prior to their release (to the streets) had significantly lower recidivism rates compared with those who did not participate.

New results that have emerged in the 1977 analysis included:

- 1) significantly lower rates in recidivism for the Concord population;
- 2) total prior incarcerations as a distinguishing variable between recidivists and non-recidivists;
- 3) a significantly lower return rate for the black population of inmates as compared with whites.

In summary, this study along with prior recidivism research attributes the reduction in rates to three major factors: 1) participation in the Home Furlough Program; 2) release from a pre-release center; 3) the combined effect of the two programs. Therefore, we can conclude that graduated release programs along with various reintegrative efforts, are germane to the reduction in recidivism rates of the incarcerated.

INMATES RELEASED DIRECTLY FROM A MAXIMUM SECURITY INSTITUTION
DURING 1977 AND 1978

NOVEMBER, 1979

LAWRENCE T. WILLIA

Recent reports published by the Research Unit have shown the increased use of pre-release centers as evidenced by the increase in the number of inmates released from pre-release centers. However, there remains a significant number of individuals who are being released on parole or discharged directly from maximum security status at Walpole into the community. It would seem logical that if an individual is ready for parole, he should not be in Walpole still.

This paper examines the inmates released from a maximum security institutions, MCI-Walpole, in 1977 and 1978. The sample for both years is divided to reflect and identify those individuals of the sample who spent all of their institutional life in Walpole as compared with those who had also been placed in medium security and those who had some exposure to a forestry camp or pre-release center.

The investigation resulted in several findings. Sixty-seven individuals or 56% of the population in 1977 and 70 individuals or 49% of the population in 1978 had spent all their institutional life at Walpole. Seventeen individuals or 15% of the population in 1977 and 33 individuals or 24% of the population in 1978 had been placed in a medium security institution during their incarceration. Thirty-five individuals or 29% of the population in 1977 and 39 individuals or 27% of the population in 1978 had some exposure to a forestry camp or pre-release center during their incarceration. The recidivism rate in 1977 for individuals who had some exposure to a forestry camp or pre-release center was 19% which is lower than the similar rates for the other sub-groups of the sample. The recidivism rate for these individuals in the 1977 sample who participated in the furlough program was 9% compared to 31% for those who did not participate. The number of individuals who participated in the furlough program decreased from 1977 to 1978. Individuals who were returned to Walpole from a medium security institution or a forestry camp or pre-release center had a recidivism rate of 14% if they spent six months or less in Walpole before their release. If they spent more than six months in Walpole the rate was 29%.

The study concludes that individuals released from a maximum security institution experiencing some exposure to reintegration programs have lower rates of recidivism than those not exposed to reintegration programs.

A FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION OF THE PRE-RELEASE
TRAINING EXPERIENCE (T.N.T.)

JUNE, 1979

S. WITTENBERG &
D.P. LECLAIR, Ph.D.

In an attempt to reduce the level of unsuccessful terminations from departmental pre-release centers, a pre-release training program was implemented whereby selected inmates deemed high risks for pre-release placement would participate in an intensive work-shop before being sent to a final pre-release destination. The purpose of the present study was to determine whether or not this program has any impact on reducing non-completion rates for program participants. The specific research questions addressed were as follows: (1) Are individuals assigned to participate in the program in fact at higher risk of non-completion than individuals transferred directly into pre-release? and (2) Does successful completion of the training program have any effect on reducing pre-release non-completion rates?

Analysis determined that there was no evidence that high risks of pre-release non-completion were selected for training, and that there was no evidence that the training reduces an individual's chance for pre-release completion. Some implications of these findings are discussed.

MASSACHUSETTS FURLOUGH PROGRAM
STATISTICAL FACT SHEET

FEBRUARY, 1979

RANDI MERSHON

The Home Furlough Program was first implemented in Massachusetts on November 6, 1972. Since then, the program has become an integral component of the Massachusetts Correctional System. The Research Unit of the Department of Correction has produced several statistical and evaluative studies on the Furlough Program since its inception. The following report presents a concise description of the most recent furlough statistics, as well as a listing of other available furlough information.

The report is divided into three sections. The first section gives an overview of pertinent furlough statistics both since the inception of the program and for 1978: the number of furlough granted; the number of individuals furloughed; escape rates; trends in furlough statistics; and the effect of furlough participation in recidivism rates.

Following the first section are two appendices. Appendix I consists of a series of tables based on the statistics presented in the first section. Appendix II contains a listing of other available departmental research studies on the furlough program.

COMMUNITY BASE REINTEGRATION: SOME THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS
OF POSITIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

NOVEMBER, 1979

D.P. LECLAIR, Ph.D.

The present study provides an overview of recidivism research conducted by the department over the last 10 years and attempts some theoretical interpretations of the data. The reduction in recidivism rates experienced in Massachusetts is attributed to the department's introduction and expansion of a reintegration model whereby inmates are gradually reintegrated into society through a process of increased increments of freedom. It is concluded that the model directly impacts the counterproductive influences of the prisonization process, thus becoming an effective device for reducing the repeated criminal behavior of the prison releasee. The study was prepared by Dr. Daniel P. LeClair, Deputy Director of Research and was previously read at the November, 1979 meetings of the American Society of Criminology meetings in Philadelphia.

SECTION II
OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES

The administrative and management technique utilized by the Department of Correction is an important process designed to efficiently and effectively maintain the operational functions of the department. This section evaluates and makes recommendations to the management of the Massachusetts' correctional system.

THE INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE OF MAJOR VIOLATORS IN MASSACHUSETTS

APRIL, 1979

ELLEN CHAYET

The attention of corrections administrators is becoming increasingly focused upon major violators, as the national scene witnesses a proliferation of prosecution programs which successfully convict and impose lengthy terms of incarceration upon this offender type. Corrections thus assumes the responsibility of determining if these inmates present special needs while in prison; and if so, to develop corresponding programs and strategies.

This study assesses the needs of the institutionalized Major Violator in Massachusetts. These individuals have been prosecuted by the Suffolk County District Attorney's Major Violators Division, and primarily sentenced to MCI-Walpole, the state's maximum security facility. The research continues to utilize the original cohort of inmates originally sentenced under this program between mid-1975 and 1976. Three research objectives sought to ascertain if major violators experience more difficulty than other inmates in adjusting to institutional life; whether programmatic needs appeared to be different; and whether this group could be differentiated on the basis of needs demonstrated upon commitment and during an initial period of incarceration.

The institutional experience of major violators was compared to two control groups: a contemporary control (men sentenced to Walpole from the same court during the period in which major violators were sentenced); and a historical group (men convicted during the previous year from the same court who were also sentenced to Walpole). A wide range of institutional variables was collected.

The most overwhelming finding was that for the majority of the variables, there was no significant difference between major violators and the control groups. Some of the distinctions obtained appeared to be a result of factors specific to the year during which the cohort was committed; for example, major violators and the contemporary control were more likely than the historical control to have received disciplinary reports, to have a drug problem, and to have spent time in isolation. Characteristics that did distinguish major violators from both groups tended to be related to the type of prosecution received; i.e., they were more likely to have been sentenced with pending court cases or outstanding warrants, to have longer minimum and maximum sentences, and to be incarcerated for a property or person offense.

The study concludes by reemphasizing the similarity of institutional experience of major violators with other inmates, and cautions against applying this potentially damaging label in the form of special programs until further and more long range research is conducted.

EVALUATION OF AREA BOARD CLASSIFICATION AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

APRIL, 1979

ELLEN CHAYET

Classification plays a prominent role in both the management of a correctional system, and in the maximization of the benefits of individualized program planning. This study is the first in a comprehensive series of reports concerning Area Board classification in the Massachusetts Department of Correction (DOC). These Boards are basically charged with periodically reviewing inmate status subsequent to the initial intake classification, to determine eligibility and suitability for inter-institutional transfers. Although unified in overall approach, each of the three DOC regions administers its own Boards for men housed within the Area's facilities.

The major objective is to describe the operation of the three Area Boards by developing an historical perspective; depicting the components of the process; providing a statistical summary of the numbers seen, types of recommendations made, and Central Office actions vis-a-vis these recommendations; and conducting a preliminary follow-up analysis to determine the outcome of these recommendations. The period under study was July, 1977 through January, 1978. The process and outcomes of all cases heard by Area Boards during this time was characterized with both qualitative and quantitative techniques employed for the research.

The Area Board system was instituted in mid 1976 following a general Department reorganization into three distinct regions. These Boards review cases that are referred by other sources (as institutional classification committees) and evaluate inmates' eligibility for transfer, and suitability for the various placement options. The final decision is incumbent upon the administrative level at the Central Office to supply final approval over the transfer. A variety of factors are weighed during the placement determination. Among these are statutory eligibility requirements, institutional behavior, and program availability.

Intensive interviews conducted with both line level and classification management staff yielded perceptions of the process as effective; but due to the double layered decision-making, not as efficient as the previous system. Training and increased communication were cited as important needs to be addressed.

The quantitative analysis utilized a base population of the approximately 1200 cases seen during the time parameter. Although limited data was gathered, several interesting findings emerged. Most Area Board recommendations (60.7 percent) were for lower custody. Central Office approved a majority of the recommendations (66.7 percent) but evidenced a more conservative orientation by approving more transfers to higher custody than the original recommendations. For example, approvals for maximum security constituted an increase of 28 percent over the original recommendations, and approvals for community-based programs represented a decrease of 23 percent over the Area Board determinations. However, actual Central Office approvals were generally

highest in the security level recommended by the Area Boards.

The length of the classification process was found to be greater than expected: a two-week median for Central Office to decide upon Area Boards recommendations; two weeks from the decision to a transfer; and a four to five week median time period overall for classification to be completed (from hearing to transfer).

The outcome analysis of Area Board recommendations demonstrated a fairly high degree of consistency between the security level of the original placement recommended by the Board, those approved by Central Office, and the actual placements following the hearings. These latter two were slightly more conservative than the original recommendations. Finally, examination of six-month placements evidenced a substantial degree of movement through the various security levels of the corrections system. A large proportion (36.5 percent) were residents of a community-based program or on parole.

No definite conclusions are offered, since little empirical support could be gleaned from the available data. The second study draws a sample of these cases and employs a more in-depth analysis utilizing additional variables. These include a continuous institutional movement tracking the rationales upon which decisions are premised, and incarceration experience data. Thus, questions regarding the bases for the decisions, and the accuracy of the placements, will be addressed. Implications of the present study did note the need for more training and communication, and an upgrading in the efficiency of the decision-making.

POLICY ANALYSIS REPORT ON TRAINING ACADEMY PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITIES FOR
CORRECTION OFFICER RECRUITS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION*

JANUARY, 1979

CHARKHUFF ASSOCIATES

This independently contracted evaluation addresses six primary objectives concerning the recruitment, screening, selection, and training for correction officers. These are: 1) to describe the process; 2) to profile recruits throughout all stages of the process; 3) to identify the correlates of recruit attrition for these stages; 4) to describe the minority recruitment, selection, and training process; 5) to predict correction officer on-the-job performance from recruitment, selection, training, and background characteristics; and 6) to describe the impact of academy training.

The research began with initial inquiries regarding employment made to the academy during one year, and continued to refine the sample through the various stages from initial inquiry to actual on-the-job experience. Nearly 100 discrete variables were utilized resulting in a 450 page final report and executive summary. A variety of statistical techniques, ranging from simple frequency distributions to complex regression analyses, were performed in the study.

Among the over 100 findings and implications was the high rate of attrition prior to employment: six-sevenths of the original pool had either never worked or had terminated; the vast majority of these were self-initiated rather than academy initiated dropouts. The highest dropout rate is at the beginning of the process. Profiles of the retained versus dropped recruits indicated most distinguishing characteristics that were in the expected direction; some, however, were not, as in the association of minority status and prior experience in human services with attrition.

Minority recruitment efforts were found to be improved. Patterns of attrition for minorities and whites were found to be similar, although dropout rates were greater for minorities. This was more often a result of academy action, and associated with characteristics as age, education, size, sex, criminal record, employer ratings, prior work with other minorities, and training performance.

Attempts to predict correction officer on-the-job performance were partially thwarted by missing data and problems with responses to the outcome measure (performance evaluations). Supervisor ratings of officers exhibited a small range; actual officers were rated slightly higher than the hypothetical "adequate" officer. Sick leave increased with length of employment and was associated with attrition, but unrelated to performance. Significant variations were obtained in sick leave across the various institutions. Finally, correlations between various background, interpersonal, and training characteristics with performance were extremely low.

* This research was funded by the Committee on Criminal Justice Model Evaluation Program, and managed by the Research Division.

Supervisors rated newly trained recruits as at least as adequate as those trained in the past. Overall, recruits considered training at least somewhat valuable and helpful, and the trainers as displaying desirable qualities.

The study concludes by offering a series of recommendations that are premised upon a "model" training academy. They address the three goals of establishing functional training programs, developing a functional delivery system for the curriculum, and instituting a functional follow-up and monitoring system. In all, twenty-three pragmatic recommendations are presented.

A STUDY ON SENTENCING

MAY, 1979

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
THESIS

This research addressed two general areas related to sentencing:

- (a) A survey of opinions and perceptions of sentencing practices and related issues; and,
- (b) An examination of the relationship between time served and recidivism.

The survey questionnaire was completed by 180 correctional administrators and supervisors. The sentencing model most frequently selected by respondents as most appropriate for Massachusetts was presumptive sentencing. Indeterminate and mandatory minimum sentencing models were also selected with some frequency. Flat-time sentencing was clearly rejected.

The survey results indicated that there was more agreement on the need for change in existing sentencing practices than there was on the direction for such change.

The most important variable affecting the relationship between time served and recidivism was criminal history. The results suggested that criminal history factors should be taken into consideration as aggravating or mitigating circumstances in sentencing.

All in all, the results of this study tended to be supportive of a presumptive sentencing model as an approach which would curtail, but not eliminate, discretion in the sentencing process. There was also some support for indeterminate sentencing, and to a somewhat lesser extent, mandatory minimum sentencing. The results indicated virtually no support for flat-time sentencing.

TRENDS IN COMMITMENTS TO CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS
AN ANALYSIS FROM 1935 TO 1977

NOVEMBER, 1979

CHARLES METZLER

As a result of the passage of the Correctional Reform Act of 1972, the state of Massachusetts underwent a major change in its correctional policies. Included in this act were programs such as pre-release and furloughs. Other reforms such as the decriminalization of drunkenness and the deinstitutionalization of the juvenile correctional system were enacted. With these reforms a major responsibility of the Department of Correction has been to examine the effects of these programs and changes. Among the studies researched has been the continuation, expansion and refinement of the Annual Statistical Reports which describe the characteristics of our prison populations. However, little effort has been made which focuses on specific inmate population changes independent of program effects even though data has been consistently provided since 1935.

The purpose of this report was to isolate and analyze major trends in total commitment populations over time. Data which has been consistently collected for at least ten years, was chosen for analysis to discover discernible trends. These data elements include: total number of commitments, institution committed to, offense, sex, sentence, age at commitment, prior incarcerations, and educational level.

It was found that the number of commitments to Massachusetts correctional institutions has increased slightly over the years 1935 to 1977. While the number of males committed to the state prison and Concord Reformatory increased, the number of female commitments substantially decreased. For the offense variable, upward trends occur for all offenders convicted for offenses against the person and drug offenses. In addition, upward trends occur for women convicted for offenses against property and prostitution. For the sentence variable, men committed to the state prison and to Concord Reformatory are receiving longer sentences now than in the past, while females have a mixed trend. For the age at commitment variable, the trends differ in regard to the institution committed to. More men are committed to the state prison at younger ages now than in the past. The trend for women is similar. For the prior incarcerations variable male commitments to the state prison and the reformatory have fewer prior incarcerations now than in the past. Females have a mixed trend. Finally, there has been an upward trend in the educational level of commitments over the years. There are more commitments who are high school graduates now than in the past.

SECTION III

ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS

The annual reports contain statistical descriptions of residents committed to Massachusetts correctional institutions, houses of correction, their various movements during time incarcerated, furloughs, releases and recidivism rates. The statistical tables in these reports were derived from data collected by the Data Processing Unit and were produced on the Massachusetts State College Computer Network. The following reports are prepared yearly and represent the population at M.C.I.'s.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF COMMITMENTS TO MASSACHUSETTS
HOUSES OF CORRECTION DURING 1978

CHARLES METZLER

Information in this report contains descriptions of commitments to Massachusetts houses of correction during 1978. Variables mentioned in the previous report are included here. However, the figures reflect those of the 1978 commitment population.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF COMMITMENTS TO MASSACHUSETTS
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING 1978

CHARLES METZLER

This report is a statistical description of characteristics of court commitments to the Massachusetts Department of Correction during 1978. The tables in this report contain information on the nature of present offense, personal background characteristics, and criminal history of admissions from the courts to MCI-Walpole, MCI-Concord and MCI-Framingham. These tables were derived from the computerized data base developed by the Correction and Parole Management Information System.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF RESIDENTS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS ON 1/1/79

CHARLES METZLER

This point-in-time profile contains information on present offense variables, personal background characteristics, criminal history and furlough participation. The report is divided into a combination of pre-release institutions with non-pre-release institutions and specific pre-release institutions.

1978 YEARLY STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE FURLOUGH PROGRAM

CHARLES METZLER

The present report contains a statistical description of the furlough program for the year 1978 as well as a trend analysis of the program since its inception in 1972. An analysis of available statistics revealed that although the number of furloughs granted over the years has fluctuated, the escape rate has decreased from 1.9% in 1972 to 0.4% in 1978, remaining relatively stable during the last three years of the time period. Finally this report presents frequencies and escape rates of background characteristics for each furlough granted during 1978.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF RELEASES FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING 1978

CHARLES METZLER

This report is a statistical description of the characteristics of releases to the street from the Massachusetts Department of Correction during 1978. The tables contain information on the nature of the present offense, personal background characteristics, criminal history variables, furlough participation and release variables for all inmates released to the streets from Massachusetts correctional institutions.

POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION DURING 1978

LAWRENCE WILLIAMS

This report is a description of admissions, releases and transfers within the institutions of the Massachusetts Department of Correction during the year 1978. The information in this report is broken down into a number of specific categories including: type of admission, type of release, institutional transfers, returns from hospitals, releases to hospitals, transfers of houses of correction inmates to Department of Correction facilities, transfers to houses of correction, returns of Department of Correction inmates from houses of correction, transfers to houses of correction on a from and after sentence, admissions from out of state, releases to out of state, and court of commitment.

STATISTICAL TABLES DESCRIBING THE BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS
AND RECIDIVISM RATES OF RELEASES FROM MASSACHUSETTS
CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING 1977

CHARLES METZLER

The following report is a statistical description of characteristics of inmates released to the street from Massachusetts correctional institutions during 1977 with corresponding recidivism rates. The statistics are available for men released from MCI's Walpole, Concord, Framingham, Norfolk, SECC (Southeastern Correctional Center), the three forestry camps (Plymouth, Warwick and Monroe), seven drug rehabilitation pre-release facilities (Hospitality House, Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center, Meridian House, Center for Attitude Change, Boston VA Hospital, Third Nail, and Trio House), fourteen pre-release centers (Boston Offenders Service Project), 577 House, 699 House, Temporary Housing, Shirley, Boston State, Coolidge House, Brooke House, South Middlesex, Park Drive, Lancaster, Norfolk Pre-Release, Medfield, and Metac), and four other facilities (Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, RDC (Reception Diagnostic Center), Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane and the Sexually Dangerous Persons Treatment Center). Statistics are also available for women released from MCI-Framingham and two pre-release centers (Charlotte House and Brooke House). A total of 1138 individuals (1007 males and 131 women) were released from the correctional institutions listed above. The follow-up period is for one year from the date of the individual's release to the community.

A STATISTICAL DESCRIPTION OF COURT COMMITMENTS TO
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSES OF CORRECTION DURING 1977

CHARLES METZLER

The data contained in this report represents a brief description of commitments to Massachusetts Houses of Correction, which are county facilities during 1977. Variables included in the report give information regarding present offense, sentence, month committed, facility committed to, age at incarceration, sex and marital status for each resident.