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# INMATE CLASSIFICATION:

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## A Review of the Literature

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October 1986

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Program Services Unit  
Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation

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October 1986

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INMATE CLASSIFICATION:

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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## Preface

This paper presents both a summary and an annotated bibliography of recent literature on the classification of prison inmates.

This review is the seventh in a series produced by the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, Program Services Unit. All reviews issued will be periodically updated and reissued, with the intent of providing a useful resource to those involved in the treatment of juvenile offenders.

We would like to acknowledge the effort of Denise Lishner in developing this review.

### Other reviews:

The Sex Offender (October, 1984)

Social Skills Training for Juvenile Offenders (February, 1985)

The Treatment of Drug/Alcohol Abuse Among Juvenile Offenders (July, 1985)

Education as Rehabilitation for Juvenile Offenders (October, 1985)

Recidivism Among Criminal Offenders (April, 1986)

Parole Classification and Guidelines (June, 1986)

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH LITERATURE: INMATE CLASSIFICATION

### I. Introduction

Inmate classification is a systematic procedure for assigning inmates to security and custody levels based on behavioral and/or psychological data (Hanson et.al., 1983). The traditional model for designating security and custody levels emphasizes subjective expertise and clinical judgment, relying on diagnostic tests and assignments by a classification committee. More recently, objective models have been implemented which propose to improve equity, reduce costs, and make the decision making process more explicit (Austin, 1983). These models utilize objective procedures and criteria as a basis for placing inmates in appropriate facilities, developing inmate supervision plans, and managing prison resources. They have also been the basis for treatment programming tailored to specific offender types (Annis and Chan, 1983; Palmer, 1984). Palmer (1984) reports that various methods of intervention are more likely to be associated with positive behavioral outcomes for some types of offenders (e.g., middle risk) and some conditions (e.g., smaller caseloads).

The impetus for change in classification procedures resulted from the courts, budget conscious administrators, and reformers promoting fairness and uniformity (Gettinger, 1983). Holland and Holt (1980) suggest that prison personnel are poor predictors of behavior; they can be excessively punitive and often base assignments on availability of resources rather than appropriate criteria. A more accurate system for predicting future behavior was requested. The Prison Classification Project determined that many inmates were overclassified, often based on overcrowding or issues of convenience rather than the offender's needs or risk to security. These factors culminated in a court order in the 1970's to develop guidelines for assignment to maximum security facilities. A variety of classification systems have since been developed and implemented.

Megargee (1977) formulated the following criteria for an inmate classification system: completeness, clear operational definitions, reliability, validity, ability to allow for change, ability to match inmates with appropriate correctional interventions, and economic feasibility. Gettinger (1982) describes five principles underlying equitable classification procedures:

1. No inmate should be placed in a higher security classification than warranted.
2. Inmates should be informed of the reasons for their classification at a hearing.
3. Decisions should be objective and consistent.
4. Overrides should be defined and the process should be open to review.
5. Reclassification should be made at regular intervals.

Classification systems are generally based on past behavior or on psychological and personality assessments. Points are allotted for specified attributes or behaviors, and the total score is linked with a particular security or custody designation.

Austin (1983) describes two types of inmate classification models:

1. Predictive-based models distinguish inmates by potential risk of escape, institutional misconduct, and recidivism. These models rank offenders' clinical, socioeconomic, and criminal characteristics to derive the optimal security level. These models promote equity, yet their predictive validity has been questioned (Austin, 1983).
2. Equity-based models use only a few variables reflecting current and present criminal attributes. These models are a consensus building approach which do not involve prediction.

While objective classification systems claim to predict more accurately and are more equitable than subjective judgment, they have been criticized for relying on cut and dry numbers, dehumanizing the decision-making process, and failing to reflect offender need (Gettinger, 1983).

## II. Personality-Based Classification Systems

The most commonly employed personality-based model is the typology developed by Megargee (1977). Ten clusters of offender profiles are identified, including operational definitions of profile characteristics. These ten types were found to differ significantly on 75 of 86 non-MMPI variables (Megargee and Bohn, 1977), and reliability was demonstrated (Megargee and Bohn, 1979). Numerous validation studies have been conducted to assess the applicability of this system to different populations, with mixed results. The typology was validated with a state prison population (Booth and Howell, 1980), a halfway house setting (MRAD et al, 1983), a mental health unit and a unit serving violent males (Edinger et al, 1983), and a medium security Federal institution for male juvenile offenders (Megargee, 1984). Bohn (1980) demonstrated that, one year after classifying inmates, the rates of violence within the institution decreased significantly, and two-thirds of the assaults occurred in the unit designated for "predators."

On the other hand, Johnson et. al, (1983) found that the Megargee typology was unstable, with only 16 of a sample of 85 retaining their original designation over time. Moss et. al, (1982) compared five groups identified as violence-prone to five non violence-prone groups and showed that the groups did not differ significantly on prior violence, institutional violence, or future violence. In a study of the efficacy of predicting dangerous behavior in a penitentiary, Louscher et. al, (1983) determined that the system was not effective in predicting which inmates would be antisocial or aggressive when examining institutional rule infractions and confinements to the detention unit. They concluded that this typology appears to be of minimal value for high security settings.

Another personality-based classification system is the 16 Personality Factor questionnaire which consists of the Eber battery of test scales used to predict prisoner behaviors (Gettinger, 1982). This system is used in five states (Colorado, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia and Arizona), yet it has not been validated.

The I-Level system (Warren, 1971) is also an interpersonal maturity typology. It has been adopted as a guide to differential treatment for rehabilitation by the California Youth Authority (Andrew, 1980). The procedure requires extensive interviewing by trained interviewers. Jesness developed a system for deriving I-Levels through the Jesness Inventory and Behavior Checklist (Palmer, 1984). Researchers have reported that differential assignment of juveniles to treatment on the basis of interpersonal maturity has improved outcomes (Jesness, 1971; Palmer, 1975; Warren, 1977 in Andrew, 1980), yet methodological problems have been noted (Lerman, 1975).

### III. Behavior-Based Classification Systems

The classification system used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons is largely based on current offense and prior criminal record, and recommends appropriate levels of custody and security (Austin, 1983). Custody level, indicating the degree of required staff supervision (maximum, in, out, or community), also considers institutional behavior (time served, alcohol/drug use, mental stability, disciplinary reports, responsibility, family and community ties). This score is assigned six months after admission, and recalculated every six months. Security level is based on type of detainer, severity of current offense, projected length of incarceration, type of prior commitment, history of escape or attempts to escape, history of violence, and precommitment status (Hanson et. al., 1983).

The model implemented by the California Department of Corrections derives a score based on the inmate's background (five social factors), institutional behavior, and sentence length (Austin, 1983). Inmates scoring above a cut-off score are sent to a maximum security prison. New points are added or subtracted for institutional violence or escapes, superior work performance, and time served.

The system used by the National Institute of Corrections is a composite of the models used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons and California Department of Corrections (Austin, 1983). Point values are assigned to different factors, and the total point score determines whether the inmate is assigned to minimum, medium, or maximum custody. This system employs history of institutional violence, severity of current offense, prior assaultive offense, and history of escape to determine security level. Points are added for substance abuse, outstanding detainers, and prior felony convictions, and points are subtracted for stability.

The Multi-Method Screening System (Baker et. al., 1979), used in Kentucky, is a computerized screening system for classifying and assigning felons. The system consists of psychological tests, self report inventories, rating scales, and detailed observations. A case history supplies information about

the felon's background, interests, strengths and weaknesses in 27 criminological, demographical, sociological and psychological areas. High internal reliability was found and validity coefficients were low though positive and statistically significant (Baker et. al., 1979).

In a recent evaluation of the MDOC system used in Missouri, it was recommended that a two-level system include consideration of both inmate's security risk and need. This would involve use of an objective security/custody determination process, to be used in conjunction with a Correctional Classification Profile to assign inmates on the basis of most outstanding need and facility capabilities. This profile reflects a transaction approach (Toch, 1981) which proposes that classification should be person-oriented and program-relevant as well as system-oriented (i.e., influenced by resources and space available).

Despite the wide use of classification procedures, rigorous cross validation studies have not yet been conducted to determine the predictive value of many of these models (Austin, 1983). Where studies have been conducted, the research has generally been disappointing (Hanson, et. al., 1983). These same authors report that personality-based systems have generally been found ineffective in predicting above chance (Gearing, 1979; Heller and Monahan, 1977) and that the Megargee typology fails to generalize to other medium security institutions or penitentiaries (Baum et. al., 1980; Louscher et. al., 1981). They report that some demographic variables correlate with some institutional adjustment criteria but specific variables change from study to study (Hanson, et. al., 1983).

In a cross-tabulation study of the Jesness I-Level system and the MMPI typology (Carbonell, 1983), it was found that the MMPI and I-Level, while both capable of classifying inmates, perform their classifications on different dimensions. Little overlap was seen between the classification made by each instrument. Hanson, et al (1983) examined the relative efficacy of four classification systems in predicting inmate institutional adjustment in the penitentiary: demographic variables, the Megargee typology, Security Designation and Custody Classification. Data on 337 inmates demonstrated that the custody classification (based on past institutional behavior) was the best predictor of overall inmate adjustment. Results of a multiple regression analysis indicated that the custody classification and three of ten Megargee typologies constituted the most effective single predictor.

Austin (1983) used computer simulation to test the effects of three models on the Nevada State Prison population. The models were those used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, California Department of Corrections, and National Institute of Corrections. Results showed that adoption of any of these three models would provide similar results -- massive expansion of the minimum security beds, increased equity, and explicitness in classification decisionmaking (Austin, 1983).

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrew, June M. "Verbal IQ and the I-Level Classification System for Delinquents," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 7(2), 1980, 193-202.

### Summary

Previous work suggested that the I-Level (interpersonal maturity) typology for offenders might depend heavily upon verbal IQ (Warren, 1971). This article confirms that I-Level and verbal IQ are significantly related for males but not females. However, the effect among males disappeared when age was introduced as a variable. Age and verbal IQ related strongly, prompting questions as to why lower verbal IQs were characteristic of younger vs. older offenders.

The I-Level system was adopted as a guide to differential treatment by the California Youth Authority (Jesness, 1971; Palmer 1974; Zaidel, 1973). Among delinquents, more mature youths seemed less troublesome (Frank and Quinlan, 1976) and less recidivistic (Davis and Cropley, 1976), and recidivism was generally reduced when treatment and offender were matched on basis of developmental needs (Palmer, 1974). This study hypothesized that I-Level would vary by ethnicity (e.g., Anglos would be more mature than blacks), not vary by sex, and vary positively with age and with verbal IQ. The subjects were 109 male and female, white and black, juvenile and young adult, offenders. Classification categories included passive conformist, power oriented, and neurotic. As hypothesized, I-Level varied with ethnicity. Anglo females demonstrated higher I-Levels than males. The three I-Levels were related as hypothesized to increasing levels of age for all males except Blacks, but the relationship disappeared when a multivariate analysis was used. The three I-Levels accompanied appropriately increasing levels of verbal IQ because a confounding relation appeared between verbal IQ and age.

Annis, Helen M., and Chan, David. "The Differential Treatment Model," Empirical Evidence from a Personality Typology of Adult Offenders, Criminal Justice and Behavior, 10(2), 1983, 159-173.

### Summary

To determine if different offender types are differentially impacted by different treatment programs, a randomized control group design was implemented. The design included the assignment of 100 adult offenders with drug/alcohol problems to an intensive eight-week group therapy program, and 50 such offenders to routine institutional care. Two types of adult offenders were identified by a clustering procedure using 11 personality measures. Although neither assignment to the treatment group nor personality type were significantly related to the three measures of recidivism at one year following release, there was evidence of a treatment by offender-type interaction on two of the recidivism measures. Offenders who were classified high in self-image showed greater improvement in the group therapy program, while offenders who were low in self-image did worse in group therapy than under institutional care.

Increased attention is being focused on tailoring of treatment programming to specific offender types, e.g., "differential treatment strategy." The likelihood of developing successful rehabilitation programs is greater if offenders can be classified according to treatment relevant strategies. The California Treatment Project employed the I-Level System (Warren, 1969) so that juveniles could be assigned to treatment according to their level of interpersonal maturity. Successful outcomes were obtained (Palmer, 1972, 1975; Warren, 1977). Other reports have indicated, however, that methodological problems in this research undermined the conclusions (Lerman, 1975). Alternative classification systems have been applied as a basis for differential treatment, but they have not been adequately assessed in terms of treatment effectiveness. In general, little research has been performed in applying typologies and differential treatment models in the rehabilitation of adult offenders. There is no consensus on the best method for developing a treatment-relevant typology.

This study was directed towards the identification of types of adult offenders on the basis of self-esteem and interpersonal behaviors, and the testing of differential treatment effects of identified offender types on three recidivism measures. Eleven personality measures formed the basis for development of an offender typology. Utilizing multiple discriminant analysis, three significant discriminant functions correctly classified 78 percent of the offenders. A two-type classification in terms of positive or negative self-image was then developed, and 87 percent were correctly classified.

Multivariate analysis of variance was performed on three measures of recidivism. Treatment type and offender self-image were not significantly related, but an interaction effect of treatment condition by offender self-image approached significance. Intensive group therapy failed to produce overall lower recidivism rates than routine institutional care. Typology of offenders on basis of self-image and interpersonal behaviors also failed to predict probability of recidivism. Although no significant overall effect of either treatment condition or offender type was observed, there was evidence of a significant differential treatment effect of offender type on recidivism. Offenders with a positive self-image had fewer reconvictions and less severe offenses upon reconviction when in therapy, and offenders with a negative self-image had more reconvictions and serious reoffenses in group therapy than under institutional care. This finding provides evidence for the need to tailor treatment programming in corrections to specific types of offenders. Further refinement of offender typology based on self-image and interpersonal behavior may hold promise as a basis for differential assignment of offenders.

Austin, James. "Assessing the New Generation of Prison Classification Models," Crime and Delinquency, 1983, 29(4), 561-576.

#### Summary

A number of new prison classification models are being promoted in the United States. These objective models propose to improve equity, reduce costs, and make the decision-making process itself more explicit to inmates and staff. In this study, computer simulation was used to test the effects

of three models on the Nevada State Prison population. Results show that adoption of any of the three models would provide similar results: massive expansion of minimum security beds, increased equity, and explicitness in classification decision making. Whether or not correctional officials utilize these models will depend upon the administrator's willingness to accept these models as designed. Assuming these findings apply to other states, the nation's current inventory of minimum security beds and community placements needs to be expanded to handle the large number of lower security inmates now occupying expensive medium and maximum security bed space.

Interest in classification has increased as prison population exceeds capability and funding has become scarce. Traditional models stress subjective expertise and clinical judgement. Reception and diagnostic centers give batteries of social, psychological, and medical tests to determine initial assignment. Classification committees then make housing, work, and program assignments. As populations outpace resources, more efficient and less costly models are required.

Pressured by adverse litigation and fiscal constraints, several states developed objective classification models, with dual objectives of equity and explicitness. Two types of models are:

1. Predictive Based: These models purport to distinguish inmates in relation to their potential risk of escape, institutional misconduct, and future criminal behavior by ranking clinical, socio-economic, and criminal characteristics to derive the appropriate security level. This method promotes equity (classified according to explicit criteria) but raises concerns regarding validity (accuracy of prediction).
2. Equity Based: These models discourage the use of inmate characteristics for predictive purposes. They use only a few variables reflecting current criminal attributes.

Both models are efficient and inexpensive to operate (i.e., they may be administered by line staff), and can be useful in program projections and planning. A consideration, however, is the absence of complete comparative research data so that states can select the model best suited to their needs.

This paper used situational analysis to isolate differences in models. Simulations were based upon a systematic random sample of 1,026 prison admissions in Nevada from 1979-81.

Three equity-based models were chosen for testing:

1. Federal Bureau of Prisons
2. California Department of Corrections
3. National Institute of Corrections (NIC)

The federal model limits itself strictly to current offense, detainer, and prior criminal record. Social status factors are not utilized. The California model is most elaborate, using negative and positive previous institutional behavior, five social factors, and sentence length as its measure of current offense. The NIC model is a composite of the two, excluding sentence length and previous institutional behavior. It uses the person's felony convictions and history of substance abuse, plus a two-step additive method to compute scores (first scored on history of institutional conduct, severity of offense, prior assaultive offenses and escape histories). Each model uses unique definitions of security designations.

Variables were weighted, total scores computed, and appropriate security designations indicated as instructed by the models. Application of these models to admission population produced major shifts in security level distribution, expanding the minimum security category (all three models classified 53-57% of inmates as minimum security compared to 16% by the subjective committee process). Scores were relatively uniform across the three models. A regression analysis was performed, indicating the rank order of relative significance of each criterion variable in explaining variation in security levels. All three models were driven by the inmate's current offense and previous criminal history (explaining 87-92% variation in total classification scores). Social factors exerted minimal influence.

The analysis showed that criterion variables used in these models were unable to explain more than ten percent of the variation in the committee's classification scores, so new models are more explicit in specifying criteria. Rigorous cross-validation studies have not been conducted to determine the predictive value of those models. The author points out the potential need to construct or redesign facilities, or modify sentencing practices to more frequently use community-based facilities, to reflect inmate security needs.

Baker, Robert A., Stewart, Gary, Kaiser, Stephen, Brown, Robert, and Barclay, James R. "A Computerized Screening System for Correctional Classification," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 6(3), Sept. 1979, 251-273.

#### Summary

A new multi-method, computerized screening system for classifying and assigning all felons entering Kentucky's Correctional Institutions was developed and implemented. This system, consisting of psychological tests, self-report inventories, rating scales, and detailed observations, requires approximately two hours for administration. A detailed case-history summary covering nine major classification categories and supplying information about the felon's background, interests, strengths, and weaknesses in 27 criminological, demographical, sociological, and psychological areas is provided. This new system appears both reliable and valid and should prove useful both for initial classification and assignment, and for reclassification and parole review.

Because of limited staff and facilities as well as an influx of new commitments, there is less time available for detailed testing, diagnosis, and classification of each inmate. However, valid and reliable information is necessary to maintain security within institutions. A screening procedure to determine the inmate's potential for aggressive behavior, depression and suicide potential, intellectual status, vocational skills and interest, level of socialization, criminal sophistication, and physical and mental health was requested of the state. Most traditional systems are based on a clinical, psychological diagnostic model.

Researchers in Kentucky opted for a multi-method approach utilizing psychological tests, self-reports, structured interviews, and behavior ratings. A 90-item psychological prediction scale was given to inmates. A behavioral criterion was constructed based on nature of offense, number of personal offenses committed, and other offense variables. Scores from aggression and delinquency criterion scales were correlated, and a 42-item scale resulted. The same procedures were employed for depression, good judgment, recidivism, and other criterion measures.

After initial administration and refinements, 25 predictor scales were retained and served as a basis for the Multi-Method Screening System (MMSS). High internal reliability was found. An independent study of the system's predictive validity was carried out and validity coefficients were low, though positive and statistically significant. Additional validation methods were employed. Inmates were correctly classified an average of 82.6 percent of the time on an overall basis for all of the MMSS scales; thus it appears that the MMSS has potential to identify and predict which inmates may be hostile, aggressive, and trouble-making. Highly aggressive and non-aggressive inmates also differed significantly on other socioeconomic and life-history factors associated with aggression and criminal behavior.

After scale validity and reliability were determined, the 25 subscales were grouped into nine major classification categories and scoring and weighing procedures established. Computer analysis compared each inmate with the total population, and norms were calculated. Assignments were based primarily upon type of offense, length of sentence, number of prior offenses, and administrative types. The system was put into operation in 1977. Additional testing is needed to provide data to maximize treatment assignment effectiveness.

Bohn, Martin J. "Management Classification for Young Adult Offenders," Federal Probation, 43(4), 1979, 53-59.

#### Summary

In 1977, the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Florida assigned young adult males to one of three categories: those most likely to act out aggressively, those likely to be victims, and neither. Classification was based on MMPI groups, staff behavior ratings, and record review. Inmates were assigned to one of three open dormitories, with the two extreme inmate

groups separated, or a fourth, more intensive program. Results comparing inmates nine months before and after showed no differences in the number of inmates sent to maximum security or reports of rule infractions, and decreases in the number of serious incidents and assaults. This classification system was described as economical and able to facilitate management decisions.

The MMPI typology system was developed by Megargee and associates (1977). MMPI groupings reflect personal differences in histories, family backgrounds, educational and vocational accomplishments, and motivation. Of the ten groups, the first four are most stable, and the last two the most disturbed. In this study, the initial population was classified systematically, the unit was established to classify incoming inmates, and the existing population was rearranged. This produced three treatment units with distinctive populations (aggressive, victim, and general groups).

As part of the program to evaluate the classification system, a management information system was developed, including data on caseload, management classifications, releases, incident reports, escapes, and educational enrollments. Results were an increase in cell house count, no difference in rule infractions, a drop in discipline referrals (especially from the "aggressive" unit), and a decrease in assaults (except for the "aggressive" unit). With the segregation of troublesome inmates, less staffing was needed for the general unit, permitting extra coverage for the "aggressive" unit. This supports the concept of differential use of custodial staff in response to differing inmate requirements.

Bohn, Martin, J. "Inmate Classification and the Reduction of Institutional Violence," Corrections Today, July/August, 1980.

An inmate classification system which assures an effective program for inmate's progress during confinement and beyond, is basic to correctional operations. The Federal Bureau of Prisons (1979) recently established a custody classification procedure in conjunction with institutional security designations. This paper describes a Management Classification System introduced in 1977 in a Tallahassee medium security institution.

The inmate population was divided into predators, victims, and others. A reclassification assigned predators plus some of the others to two dorms, others to a third dorm, and a volunteer program unit to a fourth dorm. The Management Classification System utilized information from the MMPI, scores on a behavior rating checklist, and scores from a review of inmate records. Based on procedures developed by Megargee, et al.(1979), ten MMPI types found to differ in demographic background variables, institution adjustment, and post-release success were used. Inmates were assigned to appropriate units according to their MMPI type, assuring that racial balance, bed space, and equivalent assignments to each unit were given primary consideration in the assignment.

Systematic information collected on institutional variables was used to compare the nine-month period before the system was instituted with periods that followed. After one year, the general rate of violence within the

institution decreased significantly (46 percent). More than two-thirds of the assaults occurred in the predators unit. Other results were less positive, e.g., incident reports and cell house counts increased. After two years, the general level of violence stayed at the reduced level, and most assaults were in the predator dorms. Incident reports showed a 16 percent drop, but this may reflect staff discretion.

It is suggested that management classifications can be effectively utilized in treatment programs.

Carbonell, Joyce Lynn. "Inmate Classification Systems, A Cross-Tabulation of Two Methods," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 10(3), 1983, 285-292.

#### Summary

Two inmate classification systems were cross-tabulated to examine concordance between them. I-Level ratings (Jesness, 1974) and MMPI types were obtained on a sample of medium-security inmates admitted to a Federal Corrections Institution. I-Level subtypes and MMPI types were collapsed into subsets and cross-tabulated. Although there was a significant relationship, the only groups that appear to be concordant between the systems are those which each system labels as most pathological. Regression analysis provided support for this finding, as only a small proportion of the variance in I-Level is accounted for by the MMPI. It appears that the MMPI and I-Level, while both capable of classifying inmates, perform their classifications on different dimensions.

Both the MMPI and I-level are widely used classification systems that have differential implications to treatment and management of offenders. The I-Level system (Sullivan, et al., 1957) is based on the notion that individuals pass through various stages of interpersonal maturity--stalling at one of the levels of development. This level should determine the inmate's needs and treatment. I-Level classification requires extensive interviewing by trained interviewers. Jesness (1974) developed a system for deriving I-Levels through two psychometric instruments--the Jesness Inventory and instruments--the Jesness Inventory and Jesness Behavior Checklist. The MMPI system is easy to use, and sorts offenders into one of ten categories or types. There is little overlap between the classifications each group makes and the prospects of correspondence between the two systems appears poor.

Chaiken, Marcia A. and Chaiken, Jan M. "Offender Types and Public Policy," Crime and Delinquency, 30(2), 1984, 195-226.

#### Summary

Analysis of self-report and official record data obtained from nearly 2,200 male prison and jail inmates in California, Michigan, and Texas show that offenders can be effectively classified according to the combinations of crimes they commit. The most serious inmates, those who concurrently commit robbery, assault, and drug dealing, disproportionately commit these

crimes at high rates. They often also commit burglaries, thefts and other crimes at high rates, frequently at higher rates than other types of criminals. Unfortunately, information available from such sources as official arrest and conviction records do not permit criminal justice officials to distinguish meaningfully between these high-rate serious offenders and other types. Low-rate offenders can be more accurately identified using information on other key characteristics, such as multiple drug use, unstable employment, juvenile use of hard drugs, and violence before the age of 16.

This article describes the diversity of criminal behavior such that various subgroups of offenders can be distinguished. The proposed model considers prior record adjusted for age, history of early and frequent juvenile violence, specific forms of drug and alcohol abuse, employment record, and marital status. A framework is established for classifying criminal offenders according to combinations of crimes they commit, persistence in committing crime, and personal characteristics. "Violent predators," for example, were more likely to commit burglaries, thefts, and other property crimes at high rates, use hard drugs, and commit violent crimes before age 16.

The study typologized ten types of offenders by crimes committed, and arranged by seriousness. Offenders in the lower categories not only committed fewer serious crimes and at lower rates, but also had more socially acceptable patterns of employment, drug use, and juvenile behavior. Characteristics associated with violent predators have been associated with high probability of recidivism in many studies. The report claims that, at present, incarceration is the only method known to be effective with serious offenders under 16.

Earlier searches for typologies were unsuccessful because these studies were unable to indicate consistency in criminal behavior over time. This study defined subgroups based on self-reported behavior over one to two year periods and contained hundreds of offenders from three states.

The study found indications of substantial stability in varieties of criminal behavior. Most offenders either commit the same combinations of crimes or stop offending. More serious offenders are very likely to also commit less serious crimes. Yet most importantly, the study found that the more serious the offender's crime, the more likely the offender was to commit similar crimes and less serious crimes at high rates in the future.

Certain personal characteristics seem to correlate strongly with the different varieties of criminal behavior--making it possible to identify and distinguish serious criminals. Violent predators are typically young, have a long history of serious crimes, have spent considerable time in juvenile facilities, have had parole revoked, are socially unstable, are unmarried, have trouble holding jobs, and have histories of drug use and dealing. They are hard to identify from official records due to their youth, lack of records, and lack of previous convictions for certain low-rate, yet serious offenses. Record limitations may be due to plea bargaining, imprecise definition of drug use, and successful evasion of arrest and conviction for crimes committed frequently.

There is a strong likelihood that some offenders will not commit crimes at the rates their characteristics would suggest (false positives). Proponents of the just deserts model criticize the notion of sentencing for past crimes that have never been adjudicated and claim that sentencing them for predicted future crimes runs counter to the concept of justice.

Drug use patterns tell officials a great deal about the kinds and rates of crimes that an offender might commit. Specific forms of drug use correlate strongly with crime types and rates. Drug use should be viewed as another clue in determining whether the youth's offenses are characteristic of an especially antisocial life style.

The authors oppose implementing selective incapacitation policies that focus on high-rate offenders, but suggest diversion for low-rate, non-serious offenders to reduce overcrowded prison populations. The most effective program for violent predators may involve early crime and drug prevention.

"Classification of Prison Inmates with the MMPI and Extension and Validation of the Megargee Typology," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 7(4), 1980, 407-422.

#### Summary

In order to determine how well Megargee's MMPI-based system for classifying federal prisoners could be extended to a state prison population, a sample of 641 male state prisoners was obtained. A key question was whether this system was related to inmate adjustment in the state prison population. Eighty-eight percent of this sample were classified, but the distribution of types differed from Megargee's. The ten types differed significantly on several non-MMPI variables and on three of the six measures of prison adjustment which were obtained to assess the predictive validity of the system. Similarities and differences between the findings of the current study and Megargee's study were reviewed, with the conclusion that Megargee's system can be generalized to a state prison population with some adjustments.

Two personality-based classification systems are Warren and Palmer's (1965) I-level system used by California Youth Authority, and Quay and Parson's (1970) juvenile and adult classification systems. Initial research has demonstrated meaningful distinctions between incarcerated offenders in terms of custody placement and treatment, but they rely on costly data collection and require specially trained raters. Meyer and Megargee (1977) obtained nine empirically derived groups, and developed a set of rules describing their profiles which allowed independent raters to classify a new set of profiles with 87 percent agreement. Megargee and Dorhout (1977) developed a computer program which classified 63 percent of a sample with 91 percent accuracy, and identified a tenth group. The ten types were labeled with nicknames. They were found to differ significantly on 75 of 86 non-MMPI variables (Megargee and Bohn, 1977).

This study applies the Megargee MMPI typology system to a state prison system. To obtain information for evaluating the predictive validity of Megargee's system, institutional records were examined, including rule infractions. Six measures of institutional adjustment were obtained. The first step in the analysis was to classify the MMPI of each subject into one of the ten groups using rules specified by Megargee and Dorhout (1977). The next step was to determine if the ten MMPI groups of inmates differed on non-MMPI variables such as personality test results, intellectual and educational information, etc. To test the predictive validity of the system, measures of prison adjustment were then analyzed across the ten groups.

Of the 641 profiles in the sample, 88 percent were successfully classified, 5 percent were invalid, and 7 percent did not fit criterion for any group. All ten of Megargee's profile types were identified in this sample; however, of the 14 demographic variables, only previous psychiatric hospitalization was significantly different across the types. Group differences were significant on level of education, IQ, several personality scales, four of nine variables reflecting criminal background characteristics, and two of three prison adjustment variables.

Advantages of this system are that empirically derived descriptions can be determined for each type; it is comprehensive in its ability to classify a large proportion of the inmate population; and it is dynamic and reflects change. Future research is needed to assess how different types respond to various custody placements and rehabilitation approaches. The system is easy to use and economical, relying on inmates' performance on a single group-administered test, and classified with the aid of a computer.

Clements, Carl B. "The Future of Offender Classification - Some Cautions and Prospects," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 8(1), 1981, 15-38.

This article employs a set of criteria (Megargee, 1977) against which classification schemes can be assessed and evaluated, reviews some of the deficiencies of current classification approaches, and points to some promising developments. The author notes that classification systems lose some precision at the individual level in their efforts to describe similar subgroups. The fewer the subgroups, the more crude the assessment of individuals. The matter of how to subdivide is controversial, i.e., whether one can validly categorize using personality traits or behavioral risk factors.

Criteria used for assessing the classification schemes included:

1. Completeness: every offender should be assigned to a classification level.
2. Clear operational definitions: concepts should be objective.
3. Reliability: different staff or different classification teams should consistently arrive at similar conclusions about the same inmate.

4. Validity: categories must be meaningfully different from each other, predictions made via classification should be accurately borne out, and no other factors beyond those considered in the classification matrix should strongly influence inmate behavior.
5. Dynamic requirement: system of categorization must be flexible, allowing for and reflecting change.
6. Implications for treatment: classification should assign inmates to appropriate correctional interventions, rather than solely the appropriate security level.
7. Economic requirement: system must be inexpensive.

Recent classification efforts include:

1. MMPI-based classification

Megargee and Bohn (1979) undertook a massive factor analysis study using the MMPI as a classification instrument, adhering to Megargee's criteria. Validity studies are ongoing. One application in Tallahassee showed decreases in assault and infraction rates (Bohn, 1979).

2. Multi-Method Data Collection

One study in Kentucky (Baker et. al., 1979) is utilizing information from a wide range of sources to determine whether a stronger prediction base can be generated. Computer printouts are used in initial screening, yet so far their use is limited.

3. 16 Personality Factor-Based Classification

Eber's (no cite) computer statements predict escape potential, violence, recidivism, management problems, and other attributes, using data from the 16 Personality Factor questionnaire. Selected test scales are used to predict prisoner behaviors. An exploratory study demonstrated small correlations, but the score was not validated. Despite this, the system is being used in five states.

4. Salient Environment Features

Toch (1977) suggests that in addition to custody and programmatic needs, we should consider matching offenders to various living conditions that promote readjustment. The author developed eight environmental features for which inmates can express preference (freedom, activity, social stimulation, feedback, support, structure, safety, and privacy). Offenders should be placed in settings that maximize psychological equilibrium. Classification, according to this model, is a transactional decision pertaining to the inmates' environments.

## 5. Court Intervention

Many courts have imposed minimal guidelines to eliminate classification approaches that were mere paper shuffling or space available tactics. Correctional systems should not ignore individual differences nor should they make arbitrary or irrational decisions.

According to the author, overcrowding increases misclassification and overclassification errors. Inappropriate placements make it difficult for inmates to adjust, they increase disciplinary infractions, and they slow movement through and out of the system. Parole, early release, and minimum/community custody decisions are often made on the basis of in-prison adjustment. Rational and valid classification planning is therefore critical.

Clements, Carl B. "The Relationship of Offender Classification to the Problems of Prison Overcrowding," Crime and Delinquency, 28(1), 1982, 72-81.

Offender classification, when properly conceived and used as a correctional management tool, holds promise as a device for reducing the effects of overcrowding. Overcrowding taxes the capabilities of prisons, and efforts to match offenders with programs (a major goal of classification) are undermined. When prisons are overcrowded, classification decisions are haphazard and restricted, and prisoners are overclassified. It is difficult for inmates to earn their way out of maximum security, and inappropriate classification is perpetuated. Errors made in classifying offenders are compounded in an overcrowded setting.

The most flagrant abuse of classification is initial assignment according to space availability, thereby leading to overclassification. The failure of prison systems to recognize that some offenders (mentally disabled, drug abusers) need special care is widely criticized. This often results in more restrictiveness and less access to specialized services. The number of infractions increases in an overcrowded system--a compounding problem given that failure to adjust is a criterion for progress through the system. The problem is exacerbated by parole boards which may withhold parole from those who do not exhibit improved behavior. Overcrowded prisons often work against healthy behavioral change. There is little evidence to indicate that adjustment to prison life predicts an offender's parole success.

Most prisons have developed objective guidelines for classification, which reduces subjectivity and discretion, and enhances equity. However, the author claims that classification guidelines are frequently related to administrative convenience and unsupported assumptions about prediction, ignoring enormous variation within comparable groups. Furthermore, each step below maximum security often requires substantial justification. Regressive reclassification is used often for nonserious infractions for punitive reasons (and not security interests).

If correctional systems employed valid classification procedures based on the least restrictive setting, security concerns could be better balanced

with needs of inmates. The author proposes that prisoners would be more likely to adjust to institutional expectations if placed appropriately and given access to treatment alternatives. The alternative is to open up the system so placement is controlled more by systematic decision-making than the limitations of an overtaxed system.

Edinger, Jack E., Rentefors, David, and Logue, Patrick E. "Cross-Validation of the Megargee MMPI Typology, A Study of Specialized Inmate Populations," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 9 (2), 1984, 184-203.

#### Summary

To determine the applicability of the Megargee MMPI-based typology to inmates in specialized programs, two samples of inmates were obtained: the first consisted of adult males attending the mental health unit (n = 255), the second consisted of violent males in the research unit (n = 114). Subjects were classified, and all ten of Megargee's profile types were found. Significant differences were found in the proportion of the various types identified. Some differences between corresponding types in each sample were noted.

MMPI-based typology for prisoner classification identified ten profile configurations, which could be identified clinically, and with computer, in cross-validation samples of federal offenders. All ten types have been previously identified in cross-validation samples of federal prisoners (Edinger, 1979); jail inmates (Cassady, 1979), state prisoners (Edinger, 1979; Nichols, 1979), adolescent offenders (Doren, Megargee, and Schreiber, 1980), and female prisoners (Edinger, 1979; Sink, 1979). Descriptions of the types are summarized. The MMPI system can divide large, heterogeneous inmate populations into homogeneous groups with unique management/treatment needs, although research on practical applications is limited.

This study explores whether the majority of inmates in two specialized treatment units could be classified by this system, if those types resembled those identified in other studies using MMPI scores, how the proportion of types in the samples compared with those found in general population samples, and if types differ from each other in a manner consistent with other samples.

Subjects were classified, the proportion of the ten types in the samples was determined, and further data were collected. Within the samples, 69.6 percent were uniquely classified, and 21.7 percent multiply classified. Ultimately, 91.3 percent of all subjects were classified. Profile configurations closely resembled those reported by Megargee and Dorhout (1977). The defining characteristics of the types varied slightly across the two samples. Proportional distribution of the types did not differ significantly from those found by Megargee and Dorhout (1977) although the two current samples differed significantly from each other. MMPI characteristics were not merely reflective of age or racial differences. Observed diagnostic differences support the validity of the typology and suggest differential treatment needs of the various groups.

The findings suggest that even with specialized samples, the Megargee system may be useful for differential classification. It has been suggested that characteristics of the population to which the Megargee system is applied may affect the results obtained; however, this study was generally successful in demonstrating applicability to a specialized inmate sample. The study cross-validated many previously observed differences among types, but suggests further investigation of the effects of population differences on classification results.

Gearing, Milton L. "The MMPI as a Primary Differentiator and Predictor of Behavior in Prison: A Methodological Critique and Review of the Recent Literature," Psychological Bulletin, 1979, 86(5), 929-963.

Seventy-one investigations of MMPI usage in prison work were systematically evaluated. Additional studies were examined to provide a methodological basis for the comparisons of the research, which were made according to sampling procedures, sources of variance and their effects on test results, protocol validity, and methods of profile interpretation. Several methodological shortcomings and various differences in procedure across studies limit the generalizability of the findings. However, research in the area of hostile-assaultive offenders has produced preliminary MMPI indicators for a type of violently aggressive behavior pattern that is otherwise difficult to detect. Other areas in which the MMPI shows promise include homosexuality, recidivism, and classification of psychopathological behavior. More research is needed in the areas of institutional adjustment and suicide. Recommendations for future investigations prescribe adequately controlled sampling procedures, modifications in the interpretation of protocol validity, consideration of more than one aspect of profile data, the use of base-rate probabilities in predictive studies, and the pursuit of longitudinal studies with thorough follow-up procedures.

Gettinger, Stephen. "Objective Classification," Corrections Magazine, June 1982, 24-37.

California has adopted an elaborate new classification system in which inmates are scored on background and behavior in prisons. Inmates with a greater score are assigned to the highest security prisons. Critics claim that huge numbers have been overclassified, yet this, according to the authors, has been rectified. Classification systems are now reducing the number of inmates assigned to maximum security and have expanded work release programs. For example, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons instituted a new classification system in 1979, resulting in reduction of security levels.

The impetus for change came from the courts, budget-conscious administrators, and reformers promoting fairness and uniformity. The common assumption is that most inmates are not very dangerous, and maximum security prisons should be reserved for those likely to escape or pose a danger. The challenge is to sort out these inmates accurately. Behavior-based systems link predictions to past behavior as distinct from psychological or subjective assessments.

Florida uses a less subjective "model" (yes/no questions lead to a classification decision). Other states use a computerized personality profile

based on psychological tests. Behavior-based approaches involve point systems based on characteristics correlated with escapes and violence. In general, point systems claim to predict more accurately than subjective judgment. The primary factor determining placement is security; a secondary consideration is offender's needs. However, criticisms abound, especially the concern that relying on cut-and-dry numbers dehumanizes the criminal justice process.

The "old" system classified most inmates as maximum security. The impetus of change came from the court directives in the 1970's to establish a national system for determining maximum security. A landmark case was Pugh vs. Locke in 1976 in which the Alabama state prison system was declared unconstitutional and the judge ordered prison to designate each inmate for reasonable assignment. A subsequent prison classification study found that many were overclassified.

According to the author, the following principles should govern classification process:

1. No inmate should be placed in higher security classification than that inmate's background warrants;
2. Inmates should be informed of reasons for current classification, should be present at hearings, and should be able to challenge decisions;
3. Classification decisions should be objective and consistent;
4. Overrides should be defined, limited, and open to review;
5. Reclassification should occur at regular intervals.

One of the newest instruments in classification is the one developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). Based on factors demonstrated by research to predict escape and violence, the instrument assigns point values to different factors, producing a total score that determines assignment to minimum, medium, or maximum custody. This model excludes institutional factors other than escape or violence, using factors such as history of institutional violence, severity of current offense, prior assaultive offense, and history of escape, to determine which custody level is to be assigned. In cases where the youth scores below the cutoff for maximum security, a different set of factors determines whether the inmate should be assigned to minimum or medium level factors such as alcohol or drug abuse, outstanding detainers, prior felony convictions, and stability factors (over 26, high school diploma, employed or in school six months prior to arrest) are considered.

Another system was developed by Psychological Resources, Inc., utilizing psychological tests for selection procedures. They market a computer scoring service for five standardized tests that make predictions about institutional adjustment, suicide proneness, escape and violence potential, and submission to authority. The system is currently used by Colorado, Oklahoma, Alabama, Georgia, and Arizona. Evaluations are thus far mixed on this system.

A major area of dispute concerns "stability factors." The controversy is heightened because these factors are often tied to social class. All systems provide for overrides due to psychiatric problems, medical needs, age, etc., yet some critics claim that the overrides are too loose. Many of these concern focus on initial intake classification, yet the use of reclassification is also affected directly by this controversy. In the California system, the initial score follows the inmate throughout his or her stay in prison. Scores are adjusted for institutional violence or escapes, superior work performance, and time served. The NIC model utilizes a separate scoring form for reclassification which emphasizes disciplinary reports and severity of infractions.

Behavior-based classifications have been criticized because they are solely dependent on information about past behavior--often based on presentence reports that are unreliable. Further, the scoring systems usually apply to men only. Some systems have few community programs or minimum security beds so classification for these levels becomes rigid.

California reclassified all its inmates in 1980, and found a great deal of overclassification resulting in massive transfers. Most classification officers voiced mistrust of the new system, fearing an increase in dehumanization and less one-to-one interaction. Other critics suggested that these new models are untested by critical research.

In New York, inmates are classified within the first 14 days they are in jail. The disciplinary infraction rate has declined since classification was instituted. In Boulder, Colorado, inmates start on the strictest security area and work their way through seven levels of confinement with greater privileges as they progress. Movement is based on observed behavior.

Hanson, Richard W., Moss, C. Scott, Hosford, Ray E., and Johnson, Mark E. "Predicting Inmate Penitentiary Adjustment - An Assessment of Four Classification Models," Criminal Justice & Behavior, 10(3), 1983, 293-309.

### Summary

This study examines the relative efficiency of four classification systems in predicting inmate institutional adjustment in a penitentiary setting. The four systems are: 1) Security Designation, 2) Custody Classification, 3) Psychological Data including Megargee Typologies, and 4) Demographic Variables. Data on 337 male inmates' adjustment as measured by four criterion variables of a) number of disciplinary reports received, b) days spent in disciplinary segregation, c) days of statutory good time forfeited and d) work performance ratings were obtained and analyzed in relation to the four classification systems. Results indicate that Custody Classification was the single best predictor of overall inmate adjustment with the demographic variable of age a distant second best (i.e., younger inmates are more likely to be problematic). Recommendation for establishing a classification formula based on these variables is made by the authors.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons advocated the implementation and evaluation of a variety of inmate classification systems so that their efficiency in discriminating violent from non-violent inmates can be examined. The goal of the research was to improve the administration of institutions. Main systems in use are:

1. Security Level Designation, used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons to assign inmates to institutions in relation to security level of the facility. Correctional institutions are assigned to one of six levels of security, and inmates are assigned a security level using a standardized form measuring type of detainer, severity of current offense, projected length of incarceration, type of prior commitments, history of escape or violence, and precommitment status.
2. Custody Level Designation, also used by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and indicates the degree of staff supervision required for the individual inmate. Custody level is based on characteristics of inmates' behavior while incarcerated using a standard form and the following criteria: percentage of time served, involvement with drugs or alcohol, mental/psychological stability, type of most serious disciplinary report, frequency of disciplinary reports, and family and community ties. Inmates are assigned a score six months after admission based on points on all seven variables, and this is recalculated every six months to determine custody level.
3. Psychological test data for differentiating personality types across various characteristics, including the Megargee typology, which classifies the inmate into one of ten typology groups based on the MMPI. Earlier systems based on psychological data are Warren's Interpersonal Maturity Level for classifying juvenile offenders and Quay's typology for adult offenders.
4. A combination of demographic variables for predicting inmate institutional adjustment (e.g., age, ethnicity, education, intelligence, length of sentence, and criminal history).

Research has thus far indicated disappointing results. Personality-based procedures have generally been found to be ineffective in improving predictions above chance (Gearing, 1979; Heller and Monahan, 1977) and the Megargee typology failed to generalize to other institutions (Baum et al., 1980; Louscher, Hosford and Moss, 1981). For demographic variables, various indices correlate significantly with some institutional adjustment criteria, but specific variables change from study to study. Yet, institutions using a particular classification procedure generally indicate a decrease in management problems.

This study provided strong support for use of custody classification for differentiating institutional adjustment. Only one of ten Megargee typologies was found to relate significantly with overall institutional adjustment. Security level designation demonstrated the least predictive ability. The authors suggest a combination of custody classification, age, and inclusion of one of the Megargee types.

Holland, Terrill R., and Holt, Norman. "Correctional Classification and the Prediction of Institutional Adjustment," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 7(1), 1980, 51-60.

### Summary

Each of 293 minimum security prisoners were classified according to the likelihood of serious disciplinary infractions and escapes from custody. Follow-up data were then obtained and the predictive validity of these ratings was compared with selected information from the files of inmates. In predicting outcomes, only the ratings of escape likelihood were significantly (though not strongly) related to the outcome measures. The findings were discussed in terms of the need for both increased predictive accuracy and consideration of the welfare of inmates when making correctional classification decisions.

Implicit in many correctional classification systems are predictions of the future behavior of inmates in custody--especially serious disciplinary infractions and/or escapes. Efforts are made to select a sufficiently secure level of custodial control. There is a need for investigation of prison classification practices given doubts about prediction accuracy in case dispositions. This study examined ratings that were both subjective (classification personnel's assessment of the inmate's likelihood of discipline problems and escapes) and objective (age, race, offense, etc). Two follow-up measures were observed: serious misconduct and escape. The decision maker's ratings were not correlated significantly with the occurrence of disciplinary incidents and were only marginally correlated to the inmate's subsequent escape record. In general, classification personnel seemed to have adopted a response set that is inaccurate.

Due to constraints demonstrated in this study, there is justifiable pessimism about the ability of decision makers and statistical procedures to predict the behavior of offenders, and about the advisability of using such predictions in making decisions regarding the disposition of individual cases. There is a need for further attempts to increase accuracy of predictions. In most efforts to predict institutional adjustment, focus was restricted to few items of data reflecting offender performance on group personality inventories. Data from other types of sources such as measures of impulse control, measures of avoidance learning, behavior ratings of inmates by staff, and social and ecological data should also be included in decision-making.

In addition to increasing quality and quantity of the data, the second step should involve application of appropriate quantitative methods. While highly accurate prediction is difficult due to the infrequent and situational nature of criterion behaviors, multivariate techniques could be used to identify associations among variables and to form composites to maximize predictive validity. There is also a need for consideration of the negative effects of confinement when making correctional placement decisions--especially in the case of a non-violent or naive offender who is neither antisocial nor expected to reoffend. Prison personnel are poor predictors of behavior and can be excessively punitive or indifferent to the welfare of others, and may assign inmates on the basis of convenience factors.

Holland, Terrill R. and Levi, Mario. "The MMPI in Presentence Decision Making--Personality Patterns Associated with Unanimous Versus Disputed Case Dispositions," Crime Justice and Behavior, 6(4), 1979, 359-364.

MMPI profiles of 560 adult male offenders undergoing felony presentence evaluation for institutional confinement or formal probation were analyzed according to type and unanimity of sentencing recommendations made independently by clinicians and caseworkers. Those offenders who were unanimously recommended for institutional confinement were characterized by higher levels on five of the MMPI scales than their counterparts recommended for probation, and cases with mixed recommendations exhibited intermediate scores on the five scales.

Offenders recommended for confinement were distinguishable from probation-recommended counterparts in terms of poor judgment and higher levels of hostility, social alienation, anxiety, and thought confusion. Profiles of mixed recommendation groups suggest that when abnormal personality features are at an intermediate level, response biases of decision makers are more likely to result in differing appraisals.

Louscher, P. Kent, Hosford, Ray E., and Moss, C. Scott. "Predicting Dangerous Behavior in a Penitentiary using the Megargee Typology," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 10(3), 1983, 296-284.

This study investigates the efficiency of the Megargee typology system for classifying inmates in a high-security penitentiary setting and for predicting institutional adjustment. A random sample of 520 inmates were classified into types according to Megargee procedures. A variety of demographic and criminal history variables were analyzed to determine subject characteristics for each of the ten groups. Institutional adjustment was assessed by data on inmate behavior routinely collected and recorded by prison staff.

When compared on 116 different demographic, social history, psychometric, and behavioral adjustment criteria, the ten groups were found to differ significantly on 97 of these variables, suggesting differential programming and management options.

Analysis of the data shows that: 1) the Megargee typology could classify inmates in a high-security setting into ten groups proportionately similar to those in a medium-security institution, 2) the groups did not differ significantly from one another on age, race, or offense type, and 3) contrary to predictions by Megargee et al. for a medium-security prison, the typology groupings were not effective in predicting which inmates would be antisocial or aggressive in a penitentiary setting, based upon the number of institutional rule infractions, type of infractions, and the number of confinements to the detention unit.

Although the setting in this study was high-security, there were less inmates assigned to "aggressive" groups as identified by Megargee and Bohn (1979) for a medium-security sample. Potential of the typology for determining differential management needs appears minimal for a high-security setting. Only one group was distinguishable in terms of prison adjustment. This study may be limited since 26 percent refused to take the MMPI or

answered randomly, and 282 profiles were omitted because they were not uniquely classified by computer program--possibly resulting in selection bias.

Megargee, Edwin I. "The Need for a New Classification System," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 4 (2), 1977, 107-114.

#### Summary

No single etiology, explanation, or treatment is universally applicable to all forms of criminal behavior, so behavioral scientists are delineating more homogeneous subjects. Approaches based on personality characteristics are judged most nearly satisfactory, but current systems require well-trained personnel and/or specially collected data. It is proposed that the MMPI be used to develop a more economical taxonomic system, and steps involved in determining a system's feasibility and validity are outlined.

A taxonomic system for classifying offenders must: 1) be complete, 2) have clear operational definitions of the various types, 3) be reliable so two different raters will arrive at the same classification for a given individual, 4) be valid so that individuals within a given classification actually have hypothesized attributes, 5) be dynamic so changes in an individual will result in a change in classification, 6) carry with it implications for treatment, and 6) be economical.

Offense-based systems are limited since many offenders cannot be limited to a single offense category, individuals convicted of similar offenses often have little else in common, and the offense for which the individual was committed may be a product of plea bargaining. It is similarly difficult to categorize criminal careers. Systems using data on demographic characteristics tend to be static. Psychological systems based on behavior patterns are dependent on case history; there are questions of rater reliability, and data collection is expensive. Systems based on personality characteristics can reflect changes and have implications for differential treatment strategies. Two such systems are Warren's I-level system used by the California Youth Authority and Quay's juvenile and adult classification systems used in the Federal Prison System. The basis of the Warren system is an unstructured interview by a skilled diagnostician, resulting in one of nine categories. The Quay system relies on self-report, a behavior checklist, and a background checklist.

Research currently being conducted by the author is aimed at developing a reliable personality-based MMPI classification system which could be widely implemented with less cost and fewer personnel. Such a system was administered to male youth offenders at Federal Correctional Institution in Tallahassee. MMPI profiles of youthful offenders fell into distinctive groups, and these clusters were reliable and valid.

Megargee, Edwin I. "A New Classification System for Criminal Offenders, VI, Differences Among the Types on the Adjective Checklist," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 11(3), 1984, 349-376.

### Summary

The MMPI was administered to 1214 male youthful offenders upon entry into a medium-security federal institution; the 1,164 with valid profiles were classified into the ten types delineated by Megargee and Bohn (1979). Valid Gough-Heilbrun Adjective Checklists (ACL's) were obtained from 1,061 subjects, 1,093 of those were evaluated based on their ACL by clinical psychologists. Significant differences across MMPI types were obtained on 44 of 48 comparisons using the ACL. This finding increases support for the notion that there are significant qualitative differences among the ten MMPI-based types.

Earlier research identified ten clusters of offender profiles using MMPI-based classification system; reliability was demonstrated (Megargee and Bohn et al., 1979), operational definitions of profile characteristics were formulated; and the ten types were found to differ significantly on a broad array of variables (Megargee and Bohn, 1977) as well as in their adjustment to the correctional institution and recidivism (Megargee and Bohn, 1979). This article examines the groups using the Gough-Heilbrun (1965) Adjective Checklist (ACL). Types were found to differ significantly, indicating that MMPI-based types differ significantly not just in MMPI profiles but other aspects of behavior as well.

Megargee, Edwin I. and Bohn, Martin J. "Empirically Determined Characteristics of the Ten Types," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 4(2), 1977.

This study reports the characteristics of ten groups of youthful male offenders defined on the basis of their MMPI profile characteristics. The MMPIs of 1214 youthful male offenders admitted to a Federal correctional institution over a two-year period were classified according to the procedures described by Megargee and Dorhout (1977). The ten groups were then compared on a number of variables derived from intake interviews, presentence investigation reports, psychologists' Q-sorts, and a number of personality, ability, and achievement tests. Highly significant differences were obtained on 75 of 86 comparisons, and it was concluded that the ten groups did differ substantially in their behavior, social histories, life styles, and personality patterns. A model description of each group is offered, with the understanding that marked individual variations from these stereotypes can be expected and that individuals may also change from one group to another over time. Recommendations as to the modes of management and treatment for each group are offered.

Megargee, Edwin I. and Dorhort, Brent. "Revision and Refinement of the Classification Rules," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 4(2), 1977, 125-148.

Classification rules for the MMPI typology system were refined and revised, and a computer program was developed which could classify 63 percent of the profiles encountered in an institution for youthful male offenders with 91 percent accuracy. Clinical inspection of the profiles that were unclassified or multiply classified resulted in 96 percent of the profiles being assigned to types. Mean profiles and operational definitions are provided for each type.

Meyer, James and Megargee, Edwin I. "Initial Development of the System," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 4 (2), 1977, 115-124.

The MMPI profiles of three samples of 100 youthful offenders were subjected to analysis. Results indicated that there were nine reliable naturally occurring groups of offenders. Each profile type was characterized and two independent clinicians agreed on the correct classification of 87 percent of the individual profiles in a new sample. The nine types were given alphabetic labels. Individuals within each type should share common characteristics that set them apart from individuals in other groups.

"Missouri Study Recommends Major Classification Changes," Corrections, 13(3), 29, 1982, 1-3.

According to a recent evaluation of the state of Missouri correctional classification system, the Division of Adult Institutions could make better use of its scarce resources by adopting a more objective and standardized approach to determining an inmate's security requirements and program needs. The objectives of the Missouri study were to improve operational classification procedures; assess outcomes of classification decisions as to escapes,

violence, program participation, etc.; establish a system to monitor classification program plans; develop a more objective and standardized approach to determining security requirements and institutional assignment; determine a physical plan and staffing needs for classification and reduce the number of inappropriate interinstitutional transfers.

Findings from that study included:

1. Over 19 percent of inmate population were overclassified or placed in a more secure institution than warranted, while 13 percent were underclassified. Only 7 percent were extremely misclassified. Reclassification used the custody determination instrument employed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons with case-by-case review of each inmate.
2. The division could improve the initial classification process and gain more control by (a) developing a priority intake system based on capabilities of the division, committing county, and individual offender, (b) by increasing the length of initial classification period to two weeks for non-problem offenders and four weeks for those with special management needs, (c) obtaining timely and accurate information, and (d) constructing a new diagnostic center.
3. The division should shift from the present decentralized classification system to a more centralized approach in order to monitor classification decisions, oversee inmate population management, and provide for maximum review of decisions that could pose a risk to the public.
4. Additional staff are needed in the classification and assignment unit and the institutions. A preservice training program should be developed to insure application of these policies and procedures.

5. The division should establish a separate institution for the confinement and programming of protective custody inmates and for those with chronic mental problems.

A new two-level system has been recommended to include consideration of both an inmate's security (public) risk his custody (institutional) risk. This system involves the use of an objective security/custody determination instrument for the initial classification and reclassification processes. It would be used in conjunction with Correctional Classification Profile (CCP) to assign inmates on the basis of their most outstanding needs and facility capabilities (e.g., availability of health care, mental health care, security risk, education, etc.). The profile is utilized to monitor inmate progress relative to nine individual needs and division capabilities during his confinement.

Moss, C. Scott, Johnson, Mark E., and Hosford, Ray E. "An Assessment of the Megargee Typology in Life-Long Criminal Violence," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 11(2), 1984, 225-234.

#### Summary

The Megargee typology was examined to determine its effectiveness in predicting institutional adjustment and future recidivism. The MMPI scores of 96 black inmates from a medium-security prison that had experiences in prison riots were classified into the ten typology groups. The inmates in the five typologies that are reported to be more assaultive and violence prone were compared with those in a non-violence prone typology in terms of violent incidents while incarcerated, recidivism, and future violent criminal activity. Chi-square analyses revealed no significant differences between the two sets of typologies in relation to any of the three criteria.

The objective of the study was to establish a psychological procedure that can differentiate violent from non-violent inmates effectively, and improve prison administration and the rehabilitative system. The foci of concern in classification are institutional adjustment and recidivism. Studies have indicated different treatment needs for different types based on characteristics of each group (Megargee and Bohn, 1979). Recent studies have failed to support the hypothesis of differential behavior relative to MMPI typology (Baum, Hosford and Moss, 1982, Louscher, Hosford and Moss, 1982).

This study used archival data and criminal records, including MMPI scores. Chi-square analyses were performed to assess efficiency of Megargee typology classification system through the lifetime of criminal activity: prior violent criminal activity, institutional violent behavior, and recidivism. Five typology groups identified as violence prone were compared with five non-violence prone groups. Inmates in these groups did not differ significantly on prior violence, institutional violence, or future violence.

The authors suggest the typology system has limited utility for predicting which inmates would engage in antisocial and/or aggressive crimes, which would be involved in institutional violence, and which would be arrested for future violent criminal activity. They question the use of psychometric

scores as a basis for classifying the severe career criminal. While no particular classification system has been proven most effective, data reported by institutions using various classification procedures generally indicate a decrease in management problems. The authors suggest that this may be due to a Hawthorne effect. They suggest examining inmate's past criminal history and institutional adjustment, rather than using psychological data to predict future criminal and violent behavior.

Mrad, David F., and Duckro, Paul. "Validation of the Megargee Typology in a Halfway House Setting," David F. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 10(3), 1983, 252-262.

This study attempts to replicate a derivation of the MMPI classification system developed by Megargee and his colleagues. Several studies attempted to cross-validate the system by applying rules for categorization to different populations, but only one other study (Nichols, 1979) tried to replicate the derivation of types. The results of this study, using a diverse halfway house population, are largely supportive of the Megargee method, but three types could not be replicated when a heterogeneous sample was subjected to clustering procedures. These three groups may be the least reliable of the types. Additionally, different classification methods for black and white inmates may be required.

"NIC Pushes Prison Classification," Criminal Justice Newsletter, 14:5, (2/28/83), p. 5.

The National Institute of Corrections is "pushing" prison classification through training seminars, individual assistance, and grants to develop and implement programs based on the NIC model approach. Seven states have been funded to implement model programs (Kentucky, Vermont, New Jersey, Virginia, Wisconsin, Nevada, and Washington). Through systematic and objective classification, i.e., placing offenders in appropriate facilities, the ability to plan for the future and properly manage resources can be enhanced.

Palmer, Ted. "Treatment and the Role of Classification: A Review of Basics," Crime and Delinquency, 30(2), 1984, 245-267.

The primary treatment goal of prisons should be the increased protection of society, with the secondary goal being attitude change, improved coping skills, etc. among offenders. Treatment, as opposed to society protection strategies, should focus on factors that have generated the individual's illegal behavior and factors that offset or eliminate the causal factors. Treatment should attempt to modify the adjustment patterns, the immediate environment, or both. These efforts may also include external controls or punishment (e.g., withdrawal of privileges). Positive treatment programs should focus on methods that increase the individual's worth.

In evaluating the effects of treatment programs on recidivism, no single program category is consistently effective. Different levels of implementation or measures of recidivism influence results. For any given treatment method, approaches may reduce recidivism for one particular subgroup, but not the total target group. Approaches which work in some settings or

conditions may not work in others. Reduced recidivism has been observed for certain combinations of approaches, subgroups, settings, or conditions. For example, middle risk offenders are better suited to probation or parole, or to minimum security settings, than high risk (lower maturity, more delinquent, aggressive, younger, etc.) offender.

Most program evaluations are flawed and limited. Most researchers agree that two major preconditions to effective treatment are necessary:

1. Single-modality approaches may be too narrowly focused to deal with the complex problems of more serious offenders; therefore, a combination of methods may be required.
2. Program-input may have to be more intense if one wishes to generate lasting behavioral change in serious offenders (Palmer, 1983).

It is important to match offenders and programs. Resources should be organized according to the particular needs, interests, and limitations of the offender. Classification For Treatment (CFT) is an alternate to provide individualized treatment within specific areas of focus. Classification should be reflected in planning decisions.

The simplest classification systems focus on one or two dimensions, such as personality type, and place the offender into one of several personality categories, e.g., asocial, conformist, etc. Some complex systems focus on additional dimensions and may consist of several categories. These are more informative but more difficult to implement. No classification system yet exists that satisfactorily combines the advantages of relative simplicity and relative complexity.

Promising classification systems include the I-level system, the Conceptual level system, the Wisconsin classification system, and the Jesness Inventory (Warren et al., 1966; Hunt, 1971; Benoit and Clear, 1981; Jesness and Wedge, 1983). There are differing views as to how many and which dimensions are crucial to the goal of reduced recidivism. Classifications should be reviewed and updated about every six months. With improved treatment-centered classification systems, decision-makers might consider varying treatment settings while implementing specific treatment plans. Not all offenders need identical types and equal amounts of treatment. Treatment is not a panacea but a legitimate option, and should be considered as a partner of long-range responses to crime and delinquency such as prevention, education, etc.

Toch, Hans. "Inmate Classification as a Transaction," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 8(1), 1981, 3-14.

A problem with classification in prisons is that of disjunctions between recommendations based on classification data and the process whereby inmate assignments are made. This is aggravated by crowding, which limits assignment to the most restrictive levels to extreme cases only. Classification recommendations must be program-relevant and updated to take adjustment

data into account. Nonclassification staff and inmates must have input (preferably collaborative) into classification decisions. When classifiers protect confidentiality, they risk having recommendations ignored or circumvented.

Classification is system-oriented rather than person-oriented, often influenced by resources and space available. Classifiers should know assignment options and assignments must be monitored by classifiers over time. Staff who are impacted by the classification decision are entitled to two categories of information:

1. They must be told what sort of person to expect.
2. They must be apprised of the inmate's probable reactions to the assigned environment.

Offenders should also be informed of classification specifics. Where clinical judgments and projective or psychometric instruments are developed, provision must be made for inmate input.

U.S. National Institute of Corrections. "Classification Instruments for Criminal Justice Decisions," Volume 3: Institutional Custody Sourcebook, the American Justice Institute with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Washington D.C., 1979.

Information gathered from four site visits, six telephone interviews, and a review of the literature are synthesized in a state-of-the-art report on classification instruments. The four sites visited were Los Angeles County Jail, the Santa Clara (California) County Jail, the Colorado Department of Corrections, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Almost every institution in the country classifies inmates according to risk, but relatively few use formal instruments in making custody level decisions. Those using formal instruments report a trend toward less secure housing, fewer escapes and infractions within the institution, and greater consistency in custody level assignments.

Instruments developed for use in housing decisions are some of the best researched in the criminal justice system, and none of the agencies surveyed reported legal challenges implicating the instruments they use for classification. Nonetheless, agencies contemplating the use of instruments for housing decisions should be aware of the potential legal problems associated with classification for custody assignment. Potential problems may also relate to staff resistance to the introduction of "mechanical" classification procedures, the need for research and basic data collection, and practical considerations that may limit the use of standardized instruments in decision-making.

Zager, Lynne D. "Response to Simmons and Associates, Conclusions About the MMPI-Based Classification, System's Stability are Premature," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 10(3), 1983, 310-315.

- (a) Sample characteristics and biases;
- (b) Procedures; and
- (c) Lack of collateral data.

The study by Simmons, et.al. (1981) found that 92 percent of their sample could be classified into one of the Megaree types, but 72 percent of the inmates changed type on retest. The author criticizes that study due to the small sample (50) who completed the retest, the selection of the subject pool (only those who remained at the institution for 10 months were in the retest sample, eliminating the most disturbed), the use of inmates who volunteered to retake MMPI, the lack of information on procedures followed, the inappropriate weighing of statistical procedures to assess stability of the classifications, and failure to interpret changes in classification to determine if they actually reflected changes in inmate status or inmate adjustment. According to the author, it is not possible to determine if the system is dynamic or unstable unless researchers use standard procedures, the system is readministered after prisoners are settled into prison routine, and collateral data are obtained.