350

The Effect of Community Reintegration on Rates of Recidivism: A Statistical Overview of Data for the Years 1971 Through 1987

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The Effect of Community Reintegration on Rates of Recidivism: A Statistical Overview of Data for the Years 1971 Through 1987

The Research Division of the Massachusetts Department of Correction routinely collects and publishes on an annual basis data on rates of recidivism. In these reports a series of descriptive variables on all individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions is correlated with rates of recidivism. Comparisons between current findings and trends discerned in prior studies are made. Additionally, comparisons between specific correctional institutions of varying security levels and comparisons between varying modes of correctional programming are also made. The state correctional institutions include maximum, medium and minimum security facilities as well as state run prerelease centers and sub-contracted privately operated halfway houses. From these studies data are currently available for the releasee cohorts for the years 1971 through 1987. This report attempts to draw together data generated from the recidivism studies of the past 17 years and to present a summary statistical overview of the findings.

The annual statistical monitoring of recidivism data since the year 1971 has led to the detection of a number of significant trends occuring within the Massachusetts correctional system. Dominant among these trends was the occurrence of a systematic reduction in the recidivism rates from 1971 through to 1978. For example, in the year 1971 the recidivism rate for the combined population of state prison releases was 25%; in 1973 it had dropped to 19%; and in 1976 it had dropped to 16%. By 1977, the recidivism rate was 15%. Later data, however, revealed that a reversal had occurred in this historical trend. The 1979 and 1980

releasee populations represented the first statistically significant increase in recidivism rates in a nine year period. From 1980 to 1983 recidivism rates dropped from 26% to 21%, followed by an increase in recidivism rates for the last 4 years of the period, 1984 to 1987.

A second major trend concerned the home furlough program in the Massachusetts correctional system, a program begun in 1972. Recidivism studies demonstrated that inmate participation in the furlough program may be an important variable in accounting for the systematic reduction in recidivism rates occurring in Massachusetts. The data revealed that those individuals who had experienced a furlough prior to release from prison had significantly lower rates of recidivism than did individuals who had not experienced a furlough prior to release. When selection factors were controlled, the relationship remained positive. This trend continued in a consistent pattern for the fifteen successive years for which data were available.

Recidivism studies have also revealed that participation in prerelease programs prior to community release leads to reduced rates of recidivism. Again, when selection factors were controlled the relationship remained constant.

A final documented trend that has emerged from the recidivism studies focused on the process of graduated movement among institutions in descending level of security and size. Analyses revealed that individuals released from prison directly from medium or minimum security institutions (including prerelease centers and halfway houses) had significantly lower rates of recidivism than did individuals released directly from a maximum security institution. Again, this relationship held even when selection factors were controlled.

When follow-up periods were extended from one to two and then to five years, the above findings with respect to furloughs, prerelease centers, and security level of releasing institution remained constant.

The major findings of the research were collectively interpreted as tentative evidence of a positive effect of the reintegrative community based correctional programming. That is, correctional programs operating in the Massachusetts

system which are geared to maintain, to establish, or to reestablish general societal links such as family, economic, political, and social roles may be associated with a subsequent reduction in recidivism. Also associated with the reduction in recidivism is the graduated societal reintroduction of the offender. This is accomplished through a series of movements among institutions in descending levels of security and size along with the awarding of increased increments of community contacts through participation in furloughs, education release, and work release programs.

The above conclusions hold through the documented trend of increased recidivism and the more recent drop in the rates. Despite the fluctuations in overall recidivism, participation in reintegration programs remains associated with lower rates of recidivism.[1]

[1] A bibliography of the research data referred to in this summary is presented at the end of this report.

Method

Definition of Recidivism: A recidivist was defined as any subject who was returned to a state or federal correctional institution, to a county house of correction, or to a jail for a period of 30 days or more during the period of follow-up.

Follow-Up Period: For each of the releasee cohorts a one year time criterion constituted the follow-up period. That is, each subject was followed for one full year after release to the community. In addition, two relesee cohorts (1973 and 1976 releases) used follow-up criteria varying from one to five years.

Variables Collected: For the analysis that follows in this report, four categories of variables were collected: **(1)** current offense commitment variables; **(2)** personal background characteristics variables; **(3)** criminal history variables; and **(4)** recidivism variables. Data were collected from the files of the Department of Correction, the Parole Board, and the Board of Probation.

Base Expectancy Rates: At several important junctures in the analysis, it is necessary to conduct a test for possible differences in the recidivism risk potentials of two populations. Such a test is important when separately comparing yearly cohorts as well as when comparing sub-populations within these cohorts. Base Expectancy tables are used in these studies for this purpose.[2]

[2]For a copy of the specific base expectancy table, a description of the method of construction, and a listing of variables utilized see: LeClair, Daniel P., "Development of Base Expectancy Prediction Tables for Treatment and Control Groups in Correctional Research," DOC Report No. 134, August, 1977.

Format of the Report

The report is divided into three sections. Section I provides a general overview of the recidivism data for a fifteen year span. Additionally, data on the specified individual trends are also provided in this section.

Section II presents data on trends for which a control for program selection biases has been performed. That is, Base Expectancy Tables have been utilized to construct expected rates of recidivism. Data for each of the trends are therefore analyzed in terms of expected vs. actual results and tests of significance are performed.

Section III reviews the data patterns discerned in terms of extended follow-up periods. It addresses the question of whether or not trends uncovered in a one year follow-up remain valid when the follow-up is extended up to five years.

At the end of the report a bibliography is provided which contains a listing of all the published recidivism reports that this statistical overview summarizes. Copies of these reports are available at the Department of Correction.

SECTION ONE

OVERVIEW OF RECIDIVISM DATA

Table 1

Rates of Recidivism for Releases From State Prisons
During the Years 1971 Through 1987

Year of Release	Number of Releases	Recidivism Rate
1971	1107	25%
1972	1550	22%
1973	966	19%
1974	911	19%
1975	806	20%
1976	925	16%
1977	1138	15%
1978	1118	16%
1979	1053	26%
1980	941	26%
1981	1032	24%
1982	1221	23%
1983	1726	21%
1984	1888	25%
1985	1979	27%
1986	2767	27%
1987	2859	28%

Table 2

COMPARATIVE RECIDIVISM RATES FOR YEARS 1971 - 1987

Year	Concord	Walpole	Norfolk	Gardner	Framingham	SECC[1]	OCCC[1]	Bay State C.C.[1]	NCC[1]	Medfield	Forestry	Pre-[3] Release	Total
1971	28%	27%	18%	-	29%	-	-	-	-	-	14%	-	25%
1972	27%	21%	15%	-	18%	-	-	-	-	-	14%	-	22%
1973	26%	21%	14%	-	17%	-	-	-	-	-	14%	12%	19%
1974	27%	22%	19%	-	12%	-	-	-	-	-	7%	12%	19%
1975	26%	27%	12%	-	18%	-	-	-	-	-	15%	14%	20%
1976	25%	24%	22%	-	19%	12%	-	-	-	-	5%	9%	16%
1977	18%	25%	15%	-	23%	20%	-	-	-	-	14%	8%	15%
1978	27%	21%	23%	-	14%	23%	-	-	15%	-	6%	9%	16%
1979	43%	31%	31%	-	33%	33%	-	0%	20%	-	12%	16%	26%
1980	39%	38%	34%	-	23%	32%	-	33%	33%	-	22%	15%	26%
1981	35%	36%	29%	33%	22%	29%	-	0%	23%	-	19%	18%	24%
1982	27%	41%	28%	28%	24%	39%	-	0%	18%	-	19%	17%	23%
1983	23%	28%	25%	30%	29%	32%	-	8%	22%	-	17%	15%	21%
1984	33%	37%	32%	29%	31%	33%	-	38%	15%	-	12%	16%	25%
1985	26%	37%	38%	32%	32%	30%	-	37%	33%	0%[2]	21%	20%	27%
1986	41%	52%	32%	38%	24%	36%	-	65%	26%	0%[2]	31%	18%	27%
1987	40%	50%	43%	37%	26%	32%	75%[4]	42%	8%	NA[5]	31%	19%	28%

1. SECC is Southeastern Correctional Center
   Bay State C.C. is Bay State Correctional Center
   NCC is Northeastern Correctional Center
   OCCC is Old Colony Correctional Center

2. Based on two releases.

3. Some facilities in pre-release may hold mixed security level populations of minimum and pre-release.

4. Based on four releases.

5. There were no releases from Medfield during 1987.

Table 3

Comparative Recidivism Rates for Individual Pre-Release Centers for Years 1971-1987

Year	Long-Wood TC	Hodder House	Shirley	Boston State	Park Drive	Char-lotte House	Cool-idge House	Brooke House	THP[2]	699 House	Drug Houses	BOSP	METAC	577 House	South Middle-Sex PR	Lan-Caster	Norfolk Pre-Release	Western Ave.PR	Hill-side	Total
1971	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1972	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1973	-	-	18%	8%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12%
1974	-	-	21%	7%	-	14%	6%	11%	0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	12%
1975	-	-	18%	7%	-	0%	14%	23%	100%	33%	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14%
1976	-	-	9%	3%	-	8%	6%	10%	7%	21%	29%	15%	10%	11%	0%	6%	0%	-	-	9%
1977	-	-	12%	5%	0%	7%	7%	13%	6%	25%	5%	0%	0%	4%	13%	0%	16%	-	-	8%
1978	-	-	11%	5%	3%	8%	0%	5%	6%	29%	14%	0%	9%	10%	25%	9%	0%	0%	-	9%
1979	-	-	17%	13%	9%	40%	7%	6%	26%	23%	26%	-	-	22%	12%	20%	0%	0%	-	16%
1980	-	-	16%	7%	19%	0%	5%	19%	29%	22%	25%	-	-	20%	17%	5%	0%	-	0%	15%
1981	-	-	15%	11%	11%	0%	17%	23%	21%	33%	0%	-	-	20%	13%	15%	0%	-	18%	18%
1982	-	-	19%	0%	9%	-	20%	19%	20%	5%	17%	-	-	30%	23%	13%	18%	-	0%	17%
1983	-	-	18%	13%	13%	0%	3%	14%	19%	16%	0%	-	-	9%	13%	20%	18%	-	10%	15%
1984	-	-	17%	12%	0%	10%	13%	13%	18%	12%	0%	-	-	20%	17%	26%	20%	-	0%	16%
1985	4%	0%[1]	24%	4%	17%	10%	21%	23%	25%	21%	0%	-	-	25%	28%	29%	21%	-	16%	20%
1986	6%	25%	31%	17%	13%	8%	21%	21%	25%	35%	0%	-	-	32%	18%	22%	21%	-	19%	18%
1987	5%	16%	31%	17%	16%	10%	23%	24%	30%	12%	0%[1]	-	-	18%	23%	30%	23%	-	21%	19%

1 Based on 1 release.

2 THP is Temporary Housing Program.

Table 4

Yearly Recidivism Rate Differentials Furlough Program Participation, 1971 Through 1987

Year of Release	Total Number of Releases	Percentage Furloughed Before Released	Recidivism Rate for Furlough Participants	Recidivism Rate for Furlough Non-Participants	Recidivism Rate for Total Population
1971[1]	1107	0%	-	-	25%
1972[1]	1550	0%	-	-	22%
1973	966	69%	16%	25%	19%
1974	911	74%	14%	31%	19%
1975	806	59%	14%	30%	20%
1976	925	51%	9%	25%	16%
1977	1138	50%	7%	23%	15%
1978	1118	49%	8%	24%	16%
1979	1053	44%	14%	36%	26%
1980	941	42%	14%	35%	26%
1981	1032	44%	15%	30%	24%
1982	1221	35%	9%	30%	23%
1983	1726	36%	10%	27%	21%
1984	1888	34%	12%	31%	25%
1985	1979	32%	16%	31%	27%
1986	2767	29%	16%	31%	27%
1987	2859	24%	16%	31%	28%

[1] Because the Home Furlough Program began after 1972, individuals in the 1971 and 1972 cohorts lacked participation in the program.

Table 5

Yearly Comparison of Recidivism Rates By Pre-Release Participation: 1971 Through 1987

Year of Releases	Number of Releases	Percentage of Population Released From Pre-Release Centers	Recidivism Rate of Releases Pre-Release Security	Recidivism Rate of Releases From Higher Security Institutions	Recidivism Rate of Total Releases Population
1971	1107	0%	-	25%	25%
1972	1550	1%	- - 1	- - 1	22%
1973	966	11%	12%	20%	19%
1974	911	25%	12%	21%	19%
1975	806	28%	14%	22%	20%
1976	925	40%	9%	21%	16%
1977	1138	42%	8%	19%	15%
1978	1118	36%	9%	21%	16%
1979	1053	35%	16%	32%	26%
1980	941	34%	15%	32%	26%
1981	1032	41%	18%	28%	24%
1982	1221	41%	17%	26%	23%
1983	1726	40%	15%	25%	21%
1984	1888	37%	16%	30%	25%
1985	1979	40%	20%	31%	27%
1986	2767	46%	18%	34%	27%
1987	2859	47%	19%	35%	28%

1 Figures not available for sub-samples in this year.

Table 6

Security Level of Releasing Institution by Recidivism During the Years 1971 Through 1987

	Maximum			Medium			Minimum			Pre-Release			Total		
Year	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
1971	677	(61)	28%	234	(21)	18%	196	(18)	21%	-	-	-	1107	(100)	25%
1972	982	(63)	26%	318	(21)	15%	250	(16)	16%	-	-	-	1150	(100)	22%
1973	464	(48)	25%	211	(22)	14%	182	(19)	16%	109	(11)	12%	966	(100)	19%
1974	418	(46)	26%	130	(14)	19%	137	(15)	9%	226	(25)	12%	911	(100)	19%
1975	362	(45)	27%	73	(9)	12%	147	(18)	17%	224	(28)	14%	806	(100)	20%
1976	307	(34)	25%	111	(12)	19%	142	(15)	15%	365	(39)	9%	925	(100)	16%
1977	370	(33)[1]	21%	120	(11)[1]	18%	165	(15)	18%	473	(41)	8%	1128	(100)	15%
1978	142	(13)[1]	20%	480	(42)[1]	22%	88	(8)	11%	408	(36)	9%	1118	(100)	16%
1979	137	(13)	31%	449	(43)	36%	105	(10)	16%	362	(34)	16%	1053	(100)	26%
1980	99	(11)	38%	426	(45)	32%	91	(10)	26%	325	(35)	15%	941	(100)	26%
1981	89	(9)	36%	421	(41)	28%	99	(10)	20%	423	(41)	17%	1032	(100)	24%
1982	74	(6)	41%	527	(43)	27%	121	(10)	17%	499	(41)	17%	1221	(100)	23%
1983	64	(4)	28%	718	(42)	27%	252	(15)	19%	692	(40)	15%	1726	(100)	21%
1984	81	(4)	37%	950	(50)	31%	150	(8)	16%	707	(37)	16%	1888	(100)	25%
1985	69[2]	(3)	36%	964	(49)	32%	150	(8)	24%	796	(40)	20%	1979	(100)	27%
1986	120[3]	(4)	51%	1206	(44)	32%	157	(6)	33%	1284	(46)	18%	2767	(100)	27%
1987	125	(4)	50%	1216	(43)	35%	170	(6)	29%	1348	(47)	19%	2859	(100)	28%

1 In 1978, the security designation of MCI-Concord was changed from maximum to medium security. This explains the difference in the percentage of releases from maximum and medium security which occurred after 1977.

2 Includes 1 release from Lemuel Shattuck Hospital.

3 Includes 4 releases from Lemuel Shattuck Hospital.

Table 7

Recidivism Rates for Inmates During the Years 1973 Through 1987
According to Pre-Release and Furlough Experience

Released From a Pre-Release Center	Received Furloughs Prior to Release	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
No	No	9520	(45)	32%
Yes	No	3208	(15)	24%
No	Yes	3567	(17)	17%
Yes	Yes	5035	(24)	15%
TOTAL		**21,330**	**(100)**	**24%**

SECTION TWO

DATA ON TRENDS, CONTROLLED FOR SELECTION FACTORS

Data on Trends, Controlling for Selection Processes

Collectively, the data presented in Section One of this report provide a foundation which supports the proposition that the use of the community reintegration model is associated with a reduction in recidivism. Such a proposition remains tentative, however, pending the resolution of issues regarding program selection processes. Therefore, Section Two of this report reexamines the data on recidivism trends from the standpoint of controlling for program selection biases.

When possible, the most ideal method of evaluating the effects of a particular correctional treatment program is to impose an experimental design at the initial stage of program development. The random allocation of subjects into treatment and non-treatment (control) groups would occur administratively as part of program operation. This allows the researcher to have confidence that the selection process at the time of intake does not bias the treatment sample. An uncontrolled selection process always is subject to the criticism that less serious offender risks, in terms of recidivism outcome, have been chosen for treatment. Thus, if and when treatment effects are demonstrated, the researcher is faced with the criticism that the treatment group consisted of good risks who would have done well with or without treatment.

Nevertheless, more frequently than not the random assignment of subjects to treatment and control groups is not possible in the correctional setting. One reason for this situation is that the program administrators frequently insist upon having a say in who is and is not admitted to their programs. A second reason, also an administratively related one, is that random assignment of subjects can be cumbersome and difficult to operate. It often ties the administrator's hands when faced with practical day to day decisions. If unanticipated vacancies suddenly occur in programs and the administrator, conscious of the costs of resources

unused, cannot find enough individuals immediatley available in the treatment pool the temptation is often great to select eligible subjects from the control pool.

A third inhibition to the use of random allocation is the inmate. Often inmates prefer to choose or reject involvement in treatment programs for a variety of personal reasons, such as: the program may be located too far away from their families thus preventing normal family visitation patterns; the inmate may know of an individual already in the program with whom he has a serious "beef" and would therefore be placed in danger; or the inmate may be reticent about leaving a known and secure social status at the present site and thus prefer to remain.

A final inhibition to random allocation is a moral or civil rights reason. Should inmates be denied treatment simply for the purposes of research? In many correctional systems, especially in our time of growing conscciousness of inmate rights, administrators as well as inmates would answer that to do so would be to deny basic inmate rights--the right for treatment and the right of choice of treatment.

Because of the many difficulties of utilizing random selection at the point of intake into the treatment programs alternative strategies are often used. Some researches use matching techniques whereby the control group is constructed by matching background and criminal history characteristics with the treatment sample. A second technique has been to go back to a prison population prior to the existence of the treatment program and select inmates who would have been eligible for the program had it existed utilizing the population thus selected as a control group. A third technique is to utilize Base Expectancy Prediction Tables.

In correctional research, the Base Expectancy Table has been developed as a device whereby an estimation is made of the varying degrees to which individuals in a given prison population, or sub-group such as a particular treatment group, are at risk of

continuing their criminal careers subsequent to release. It is a classification technique in which individuals are placed in risk groups. The basis for the assignment of individuals into the appropriate risk group is determined on the experience of a separate population of prisoners not receiving that specified treatment and for whom criminal behavior subsequent to release is already known. Background information known prior to release is collected on this separate population and these items are correlated with the known outcome criteria-subsequent criminality or recidivism. Those items found to have the most predictive value are combined into a table whose resultant interaction effects are believed to constitute a more powerful predictive instrument than the individual items alone. At this point, the treatment sample (whose outcome criteria is not yet known) is divided into the same risk categories and an **expected outcome rate** is determined. The degree to which the **expected rate** of the treatment group approximates the **actual rate** of the control group determines the degree to which non-random selection has occurred.

Additionally, if persons to be given various treatments are classified according to the risks that would have been expected before treatment began, a base line is formed against which the outcomes of treatment can be assessed. The risk estimate for each of the individuals in the treatment sample is combined to form an **Expected Outcome Rate** for the entire sample. When treatment is completed and after the subsequent follow-up period in the community occurs, data on the **Actual Outcome Rate** are collected and determined. At this point, the **Expected Outcome** is compared to the **Actual Outcome.** After appropriate statistical tests for differences are computed, a judgement can be made as to whether or not the treatment program appears to reduce the **Actual Outcome Rate** below the **Expected Outcome Rate** and thus measure the effectiveness of the program under study.

The data presented in the following section summarize a series of research studies that examine selection issues in the

material associating lower recidivism with participation in reintegration programming. Each of the studies utilizes the Base Expectancy methodology discussed above. It should be noted that the analyses have included only the males in the release populations. Characteristics of male and female populations were felt to be sufficiently divergent to warrant separate Base Expectancy tables. However, the female populations were too small for table construction and validation purposes.

Therefore, the reader is alerted to the fact that the samples that follow are slightly lower in number than the similar material presented in Section One. These difference are solely the result of the exclusion of the female populations (usually less than 10% of the total sample).

The first research study that controlled for selection factors in the assignment of individuals to reintegration programs was related to participation in two prerelease centers - Boston State and Shirley Prerelease. The research evaluation resulted in two major findings. First, it was found that individuals who had completed the combined prerelease programs under study had significantly lower rates of recidivism than a control group of similar types of inmates who had not participated in a prerelease program and a significantly lower actual recidivism rate than their derived expected recidivism rate. Secondly, a series of inmate types which seem to be disproportionatey helped by prerelease program participation was tentatively identified. This material is summarized in Table 8.

A second study looked at Home Furlough Program participation during the years 1973 and 1974. The research provided initial supportive evidence that participation in Furlough Programs reduces the probability that an individual will recidivate upon release from prison. Analysis indicated that the determined reduction in recidivism was due to the impact of the furlough program and not simply to the types of inmates who were selected for furloughs. These results are summarized in Table 9.

The third study included in this section, summarized in Table 10 focused on the combined participation in both furlough and prerelease programs and controlled for selection factors. Results showed that the greater the participation in the model, the lower the recidivism rate.

The final study in this section graded the level of security of the releasing institution with the level of recidivism. Again, selection factors were controlled. The results presented in Table 11, were similar to the other studies. That is, participation in the reintegration model is associated with reduced recidivism even when selection factors are controlled.

Table 8

Expected Rates of Recidivism Compared to Observed Rates, Boston State and Shirley Releases During the Years 1972 and 1973

Sample	Expected Recidivism Rate	Observed Recidivism Rate	Probability Level
Shirley Prerelease	30.9%	17.7%	.02
Boston State Pre-Release	21.5%	8.0%	.01
TOTAL SAMPLE	**25.7%**	**12.4%**	**.001**

SOURCE: LeClair, Daniel P., Preparing Prisoners for Their Return to the Community: The Evaluation of the Rehabilitative Effectiveness of Two Pre-Release Programs Operated in Massachusetts; Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tulane University, July, 1975.

Table 9

Expected and Actual Recidivism Rates by Furlough Participation

		Expected Rate of Recidivism	Actual Rate of Recidivism
GROUP A:	Releases in Year 1973		
I.	All males released in 1973 who received a furlough	25%	16%
II.	All males released in 1973 who did not receive a furlough	27%	27%
III.	Total group of all males released in 1973	26%	19%
GROUP B:	Releases in Year 1974		
I.	All males released in 1974 who did receive a furlough	24%	16%
II.	All males released in 1974 who did not receive a furlough	26%	31%
III.	Total group of all males released in 1974	25%	20%

SOURCE: LeClair, Daniel P., "Home Furlough Program Effects on Rates of Recidivism", **Criminal Justice and Behavior,** Volume 5, No. 3, September, 1978.

Table 10

Matrix of Differential Participation in Two Reintegration Program Selection Factors Controlled by Base Expectancy Tables: Males Released from Years 1973 Through 1976

Category		Number	Expected Recidivism Rate	Actual Recidivism Rate
I.	Prerelease, Furlough	769	22.2%	9%
II.	Non-Prerelease, Furlough	1393	25.2	17%
III.	Prerelease, Non-Furloughs	115	23.0%	26%
IV.	Non-Prerelease, Non-Furloughs	967	26.3%	29%

SOURCE: LeClair, Daniel P., "Societal Reintegration and Recidivism Rates", Massachusetts Department of Correction Report Number 159, August, 1978.

Table 11

Differential Recidivism Rates of Security Level of Institution of Release for Male Population Released in 1974

Category		Number of Releases	Expected Recidivism Rate	Actual Recidivism Rate
I.	Maximum Security	418	27.9%	26%
II.	Medium Security	130	21.1%	19%
III.	Minimum Security	81	22.1%	9%*
IV.	Prerelease	212	21.1%	12%
V.	Total Male Releases	841	24.6%	20%

***Statistically Significant**

SOURCE: LeClair, Daniel P., "An Analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Residents Released From Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During the Year 1974", Massachusetts Department of Correction Report Number 136, September, 1977.

SECTION THREE

OVERVIEW OF RECIDIVISM DATA, EXTENDED FOLLOW-UP PERIODS

Trend Discerned Through Extended Follow-Up Periods

Data presented in sections one and two of this report incorporate a definition of recidivism that utilizes a one year follow-up criterion. Though subject to limitations, the one year follow-up period used in this definition allows planners and administrators to receive feedback in a reasonable time frame for the decision-making process. For example, many of the individual program components of the reintegration model had been federally funded for experimental trial purposes and were planned for pick up by permanent state funding at a later date if and when programmatic effectiveness could be demonstrated. The series of one year follow-up studies allowed timely input, and thus relevant research data were available in the decision-making processes, leading both to an expansion of the reintegration programs and to the permanent state funding of these programs.

In studying recidivism, however, correctional researchers have pointed to the problem of "cross-over effects" whereby results found using a one year follow-up period become changed or reversed when the follow-up period is extended. Such concerns have prompted the National Advisory Commission of Criminal Justice Standards and Goals to recommend a three year follow-up period as a response to this problem. Therefore, a concern existed that the limitations of the one year follow-up studies cast doubt on the validity of the overall research findings. This prompted replications of some of the earlier studies of prison releases which used a one year follow-up to see if emerging trends had remained consistent after additional years of follow-up. A first replication attempt involved a two year follow-up of releases in the year 1973 (LeClair, 1976). In this study no evidence of "cross-over effects" was found. The major findings from the two year follow-up analysis fully supported the original one year follow-up study. A second replication involved a five year follow-up of the releases in the year 1973 (LeClair, 1981). Again the major

findings of the former one and two year follow-up studies remained consistent. But because only a small percentage of the releases in the 1973 sample had participated in reintegration programs (approximately 10% of the sample), the results were viewed as tentative. For this reason a second five year follow-up study was conducted using the population of releases in the year 1976 (LeClair, 1983). For the 1976 releases, more than 50% of the sample had been involved in the reintegration model programming. Analysis revealed that all trends previously identified remianed unchanged upon extension to five years of follow-up, thus denying a significant role to "cross-over effects" in the Massachusetts research.

Table 12

Recidivism Rates Broken Down by Furlough Participation: Five Year Follow-Ups for Releases in Years 1973 and 1976

		Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
I.	**Sample I: Releases in 1973[1]**			
	Furlough Participants	661	(69)	40%
	Non-Participants	290	(31)	52%
	TOTAL	**951**	**(100)**	**44%**
II.	**Sample II: Release in 1976[2]**			
	Furlough Participants	500	(54)	33%
	Non-Participants	423	(46)	45%
	TOTAL	**923**	**(100)**	**39%**

1 Though the original study contained 966 individuals, the present effort determined that six of those individuals were released to custody (another criminal justice jurisdiction) and thus were mistakenly included in the sample. Additionally, nine individuals died before the 5 year follow-up period was completed and these individuals were also dropped from the sample. The remaining sample thus included 951 individuals.

2 Though the original study contained 925 individuals, the present effort determined that two of those individuals were released to custody (another criminal justice jurisdiction) and thus were mistakenly included in the sample. Therefore, those two individuals were deleted, and the present study focused on a population of 923 individuals released directly to the community.

Table 13

Recidivism Rates Broken Down by Prerelease Participation: Five Year Follow-Ups for Releases in Years 1973 and 1976

	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
Releases in 1973			
Released Via Prerelease Centers	105	(11)	35%
Released by Other Institutions	846	(89)	45%
TOTAL	**951**	**(100)**	**44%**
Releases in 1976			
Released Via Prerelease Centers	365	(40)	30%
Released by Other Institutions	558	(60)	44%
TOTAL	**923**	**(100)**	**39%**

Table 14

Recidivism Rates Broken Down by Security Level
of Releasing Institutions: Five Year Follow-Ups for Releases in years 1973 and 1976

Security Level of Releasing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
Releases in 1973			
Maximum	464	(49)	54%
Medium	205	(22)	35%
Minimum	177	(19)	33%
Prerelease	105	(11)	35%
TOTAL	**951**	**(100)**	**44%**
Releases in 1976			
Maximum	307	(33)	54%
Medium	110	(12)	38%
Minimum	141	(15)	28%
Prerelease	365	(40)	30%
TOTAL	**923**	**(100)**	**39%**

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The principal data referred to in the paper were drawn from a series of research publications of the Massachusetts Department of Correction. A listing of these studies is contained below. Individual copies of any of the listed studies can be obtained by written request to the following address:

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Massachusetts Department of Correction
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Boston, MA 02202

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