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Decision Making in the Classification of Juvenile Delinquents in
Juvenile Detention and Classification Homes — Third Interim
Report: An Analytical Study of Factors Contributing
to Recidivism Revealed by the Treatment Process
Following Decision Making in Classification —

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I. Purpose

In a study of factors to be taken into consideration in the classification of juvenile delinquents before the disposition of the case by the court, it is essential to analyze the factors contributing to recidivism which are important for proper decision making. In the first interim report a normative or standard method of classification was demonstrated on the basis of multivariate and predictive attribute analyses of the present practices in juvenile classification homes. In the second interim report the factors relating to recidivism and the record of the treatment chosen after classification were studied and an attempt was made to develop a method to predict recidivism and the result of the treatment by analyzing the data utilized in the process of classification.

The basic aims of this research project are to find the factors useful for predicting recidivism or the factors contributing to recidivism, and to provide necessary data for an appropriate disposition of juvenile delinquents. The specialist in the classification of juvenile delinquents should be equipped with sufficient knowledge of the effectiveness of a particular treatment, like commitment to a juvenile training school or placement on probation when applied to a given juvenile, to enable him to recommend such treatment to the family court judge. He must also understand the relationship between the treatment process and recidivism when he is called upon by such treatment agencies or institutions as a probation office or a juvenile training school to re-classify the juvenile before granting parole or making other changes in the treatment. The classification is carried out not only for the purpose of recommending a disposition to the family court, as it required, but also for recommending a treatment to a treatment agency or institution. In the latter the clas-

sification will fail to achieve its purpose if the data gained from the treatment process are not utilized in making the classification decision.

In this third interim report, the main purpose is to study the relationship of recidivism to factors operating in the probationary supervision or the treatment in the juvenile training school.

II. Methods

1. Methodology

The prediction methods employed in this study are:

- 1) multiple regression analysis (a quantified system by regression obtained from varimax criterion),
- 2) predictive attribute analysis.

2. Subjects

The subjects are the juveniles released from the juvenile classification homes throughout the country in February and March, 1969 and placed under probationary supervision or sent to a juvenile training school. Traffic offenders and juveniles whose fingerprints were not found in the Fingerprint Identification Center of the National Police Agency were excluded. A total of 254 juveniles were placed under probationary supervision and 181 were sent to juvenile training schools during the period.

3. Data

The data used in the present research come from two sources: one is the probation office or the juvenile training school, the other is the Fingerprint Identification Center.

1) Data on the treatment

The staffs of the probation office and the juvenile training school were requested to respond to a questionnaire containing the following items;

- a. evaluation of the behaviour and the attitudes of juveniles during treatment with respect to i) attitude toward authority, ii) human relationship, iii) attitude toward his life-style, iv) attitude toward himself, and v) overall evaluation
- b. goals, techniques and results of each individual's treatment,
- c. evaluation of the effectiveness of the treatment by type of treatment employed.
- d. misbehaviour,
- e. evaluation of working (only for probationers),
- f. evaluation of relationship with family members, and
- g. certificates or licences obtained.

2) Data on recidivism

Any offences resulting in apprehension by the police was defined as recidivism.

It was determined through fingerprints kept at the National Police Agency. The survey was done in March, 1973 and 1974.

III. Research findings and discussion

The data were analyzed separately for probationers and juveniles in juvenile training schools, with the aim to discover the factors contributing to recidivism. Reference was made not only to the data obtained from the treatment process but also to the data used in the initial classification at the juvenile detention and classification home.

1. Probationers

Among the data obtained from the treatment process, the results of the evaluation by the probation officer of behaviour and attitudes during the supervision period showed the highest correlation with recidivism. The attitude toward authority rated at the middle period of supervision, attitude toward his own life-style at the late period of supervision, and attitude toward himself at the middle period of supervision were most closely related to recidivism. The major factors observed in the data used in the initial classification and relating to the attitudes mentioned above were; a) number of commitments to the juvenile classification home, b) period between the first act of delinquency and the present case, c) delinquency history, including the history of dispositions by the family court, and d) relations with and condition of parents. The attitude toward authority and the attitude toward himself were affected by interpersonal maladjustment and character disorders.

In the analysis of the changes of attitudes in the course of treatment it was revealed that the attitude toward authority and the attitude toward himself after the middle period of supervision were pretty good indicators of recidivism. Since these two factors are related to persistent delinquency history and character disorders, it seems to be difficult to help the juveniles, who do not show improvements during the early period of supervision, to change their attitudes in the middle or latter stages of supervision. On the contrary, the attitude toward his own life-style tends to be more easily affected by environmental factors; during the latter period it is more closely related to recidivism than is the attitude at the initial and middle stages of supervision.

2. Juveniles committed to juvenile training schools

As for the factors contributing to recidivism of juveniles released from juvenile training schools, the evaluation by the staff of their behaviour and attitudes during their stay at the school was most significantly related to recidivism but in a different way from that of the probationers. An undesirable attitude toward himself at the later period of their stay and a desirable attitude toward authority at the middle

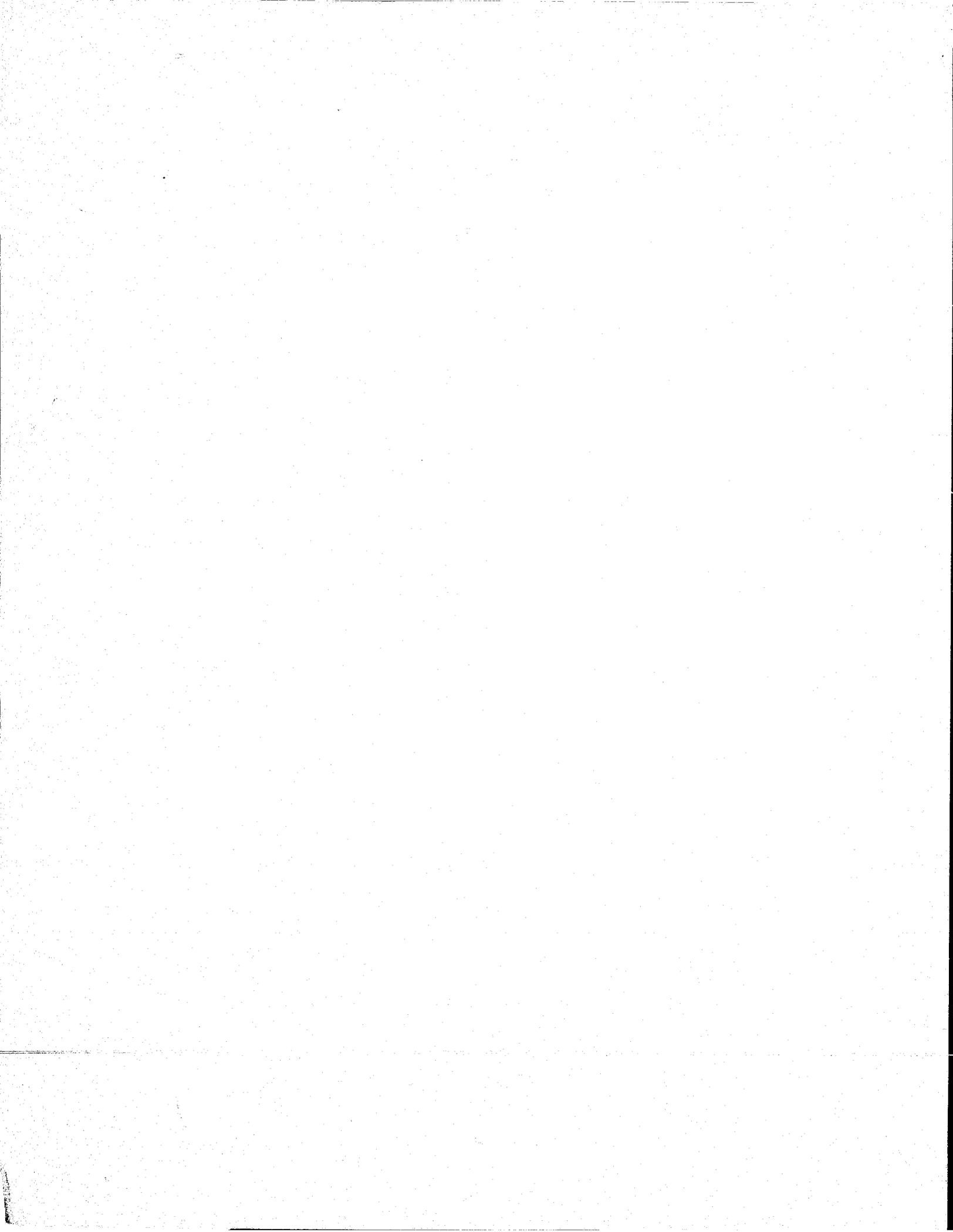
period were found to be factors contributing to recidivism. These two factors are rooted in their personality, displaying a lack of self-critical judgement disclosed by the Sentence Completion Test administered at the time of the initial classification at the juvenile detention and classification home, and in the problems arising from their family backgrounds, while for probationers the factors contributing to recidivism are rooted mainly in their delinquency history. The juveniles who have a cheerful view of life but lack adequate parental protection may gradually succeed to adjust themselves to their training school life at the middle and latter periods of their stay, without self-examination. Due to this process of so-called institutionalization, they may become obedient and be rated high by the staff. They have self-confidence in spite of the distorted understanding they have of themselves, which makes it difficult for them to develop insight and leads to recidivism. It can be said that superficial adjustment to an institution, which has been pointed out as a problem of institutional treatment, is a factor contributing to recidivism.

3. Treatment and Its Effectiveness

It is widely accepted that for probationers a delinquency history is closely related to recidivism. Probationary supervision is not effective for juveniles who have a long history of delinquency. While probationary supervision can more easily bring a successful result on juveniles who can be helped to rehabilitate themselves by such environmental adjustments as keeping from bad companions, placing in employment, etc., it is not rewarding to and other appropriate measures should be provided for juveniles whose problems are deeply rooted in their personality.

It can safely be said that to make probation effective probationers should not have a long history of delinquency nor an advanced criminal tendency. Their behaviour and attitudes should be evaluated at each stage of the supervision with respect to the probability of recidivism. We can predict a better result for juveniles when an primary emphasis in the treatment is placed on their adjustment at their homes and at their places of work.

Judging from the fact that juveniles committed to juvenile training schools generally have an advanced criminal tendency and a grossly deviated personality, it is natural that their recidivism is related to their own personality problems rather than to environmental problems. The juvenile would fail in rehabilitation with a fairly high probability when their personality can not be successfully corrected during their stay at the school. To be effective in the prevention of subsequent crimes, the primary goal of treatment should be placed on the education which aims to correct their personality.



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