A STATISTICAL PROFILE OF THE M.C.I.-CONCORD FARM INMATE:

A STUDY OF EMPLOYMENT PATTERNS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this report is to present a descriptive analysis of the population at the farm at MCI-Concord. The men assigned to the farm—who constitute some 15% to 20% of the overall population at Concord—live in a dormitory outside the walls of the institution. They are engaged in "agricultural pursuits such as gardening, dairying, and animal husbandry."[1]

A major focus of this study will be on the employment history of these men—both before and after their commitment to Concord. The aim is to discover whether or not the experience at the farm tends to render the inmates better prepared for employment upon release than they were when they were committed. If it were found that this experience seemed to have no significant impact with respect to preparation for employment, then the study would provide some data as to possible directions for change. That is, the statistical profile of the kind of people who are at the farm will give some indication as to what type of vocational training programs might be feasible.

Method

The Sample. The sample consisted of all those who were released from MCI-Concord in 1964 and who had spent some time at the farm. There were 161 subjects who met these two criteria.

Data Collection. Data for this study were collected entirely from the records of the inmates.[2] The variables analyzed were classified

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[1] Edwin Powers, The Basic Structure of the Administration of Criminal Justice in Massachusetts, (4th ed.) The Commonwealth of Massachusetts; Department of Correction, (Jan. 1, 1964) p. 82

[2] The author is indebted to John Coughlan, Joseph Catalano, and David Mulcahy for their hard work in collecting data for this analysis.

under the following general headings: (1) background factors, (2) criminal history, (3) data on present commitment, (4) data on employment (before and after current commitment), (5) data on residences (before and after current commitment), and (6) recidivism data. Appendix A gives a breakdown of the factors that were included under each general heading. In Appendix B, specific definitions of those ambiguous items—i.e. family interest, early home life, and work record—are presented. These items were adapted from the work of Lloyd Ohlin.[3]

Recidivism Criteria. Those subjects who were returned to a Mass. Correctional Institution as of June 30, 1966 were defined as recidivists for the purposes of this study. Also, a few subjects whose parole was revoked within this period, but who could not be found to be re-committed, were considered recidivists. Therefore, the follow-up period for determining recidivism could have been as short as 1 1/2 years or as long as 2 1/2 years.

A Board of Probation check was not done so that those who might have been re-arrested for an overnight lockup or those who might have been re-incarcerated in a House of Correction were not counted as recidivists. Thus, the recidivism rate derived in this study tends to be a conservative measure in that it probably does not include all those who were in trouble with the law after their release from Concord.

Findings

Background Factors. The information on background factors is found in Appendix A, Table I. The mean age at commitment was 22.6 years old. As high as 77% of the sample was under 25 years of age. In terms of race, 84% were white; 16% were Negro.

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[3]Lloyd Ohlin, Selection for Parole: A Manual of Parole Prediction, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1951.

By recording the last grade completed for each subject, the mean educational level was found to be 8.4 grades. Only 9 (5.6%) subjects were high school graduates. This means that the overwhelming majority (94.4%) was some kind of school dropout. The average IQ score of the sample was 92.6. However, this is a very gross measure inasmuch as it represents the average of several different IQ tests, which were administered at different stages of the subjects' lives and under differing circumstances.

About 2 out of 3 of the subjects (67%) were single. Slightly more than this (70%) had seen no military service. It seems likely that both these findings are linked to the relative youth of the subjects. Further, the latter finding is probably also related to the early law-breaking patterns that many of the subjects in this sample have manifested.

In terms of home life, about 3 out of 5 came from broken or inferior homes. It is significant that only 7% came from superior homes as defined in Appendix B.

Criminal History. Table II of Appendix A presents the data on criminal history. With respect to previous arrests, this table shows that all but 6% of the sample had been arrested prior to their present offense. It is noteworthy that almost half of the sample (47%) had more than five prior arrests. The proportion of those who have had at least one drunkenness arrest (46.5%) seems ominously high inasmuch as the sample consists of such a young group. The number of arrests for narcotics offenses was very low for this sample. Only 2% had any narcotics arrests.

The data on age at first arrest provide some striking findings. The mean age at first arrest was 16.3 years old. Over half the subjects (56.5%) had been arrested by the time they were sixteen, and only 14% were known to have gone through their teenage years without an arrest.

In terms of prior commitments, the data reveal that about 2 out of 5 subjects had been previously incarcerated in a major adult penal institution. Almost half (48%) had served time in a house of correction, and over a third (35%) had been committed to a juvenile institution.

Present Commitment. The data on the present commitment are given in Table III. This table indicates that just about half of the subjects (51%) were committed for crimes against the person, while close to the other half (48%) were committed for crimes against property. (One person was committed for carrying a revolver which was classified as "other".) Almost 4 out of 5 commitments were for the crimes of burglary (37%), robbery (30%), or assault (11%). Parole violation constituted 36% of the sample.

The overall mean length of the present commitment was 1 year, 2 months, and 7 days. Of this period, the sample averaged 9 months, 23 days in the institution before being transferred to the farm, and 4 months, 14 days at the farm. 70% of the sample spent less than 6 months at the farm.

Most of the subjects (73%) were paroled from the farm. One quarter of the sample was discharged from there. It is interesting to note that of the 20 farm inmates who were sent back to the main institution— usually for disciplinary reasons—19 were returned to the farm to be released. Overall, the data on release indicate that 3 out of 4 inmates in the sample were paroled.

One of the more impressive findings related to the present commitment was the relatively high degree of family interest in these subjects while they were incarcerated. Over half of the sample (54%) received regular letters and/or visits from members of their family. Only 5% were social isolates—i.e. received no letters or visits during their stay at Concord.

Data on Employment. The data on employment are found in Table IV. These data indicate that only 10% of the subjects had a regular work record as defined in Appendix B. The great majority (85%) were found to be irregular (25%) or casual (60%) workers according to Ohlin's classification.

In terms of whether or not they were working at the time of the present offense, data were available for 146 of the 161 subjects. Of these 146 subjects, it was discovered that 75% were not working at their present offense.

The types of jobs which these men held—both before and after their present commitment—was a salient issue in this study. In order to throw some light on this issue, the five most recent jobs a man held prior to his commitment were recorded, where possible. Likewise, the first three jobs after release were also noted. Following this procedure, it was possible to list 441 jobs held prior to the commitment and 193 jobs held after release.

Of the 441 jobs prior to commitment, 335 could be classified according to the breakdown in Table IV, (2). It was found that 81% of these 335 jobs were unskilled in nature. The combination of the unskilled and the semi-skilled categories accounted for 93% of all the jobs.

As for the 193 jobs after release, 163 could be classified. Of these, 75% were unskilled. Again by merging the unskilled and semi-skilled jobs into one category, 91% of the jobs were included. The general point which tends to emerge from these findings is that the men return to the same kind of low-level jobs that they had held before their commitment. With respect to vocational considerations, the men seem to have undergone very little change in terms of preparation for better jobs as a result of their stay at Concord.

This contention is supported by the data on the amount of time

spent on jobs before and after commitment. The length of time on a job was available for 424 of the 441 jobs prior to commitment and for 183 of the 193 jobs after release. Table IV, (3), shows that over half the jobs before (55%) and after (53%) commitment lasted less than two months. Further, fewer than one out of ten jobs—both before commitment and after release—lasted for one year or longer. (8% of the jobs, both before and after commitment, were for a year or more.)

Data on Residences. The data on Residences are found in Table V. Information on residence at present offense was available for 149 of the total 161 subjects. Of these 149 subjects, 51% came from cities with a population of 100,000 or more. In terms of residence after release, data were found for 132 subjects. Of these, 55% were released to cities with a population of 100,000 or over. It is interesting to note that there are only four cities in Mass. with this large population. Thus, it was discovered that most of the subjects in this sample came from and were released to the four most highly urbanized cities in the state. It is not likely, therefore, that they would have a chance to utilize any agricultural skills which they might have developed while at the Concord farm.

Recidivism Data. The data on recidivism are presented in Table VI. The recidivism rate for this sample was 47%, with a follow-up period ranging from 1 1/2 to 2 1/2 years. Of the 76 recidivists, 50% were returned within five months. The data also show that those who were paroled were much more likely to become recidivists than those who were discharged. 58% of those who were paroled became recidivists, while only 17% of those who were discharged did so. This difference is so statistically significant that the probability of it occurring by chance is less than one in a thousand—i.e. $p < .001$. This finding suggests that the closer the surveillance, the greater the likelihood of recidivism.

Discussion

What conclusions do these findings suggest? First, it seems clear that the time spent at the farm does not make a significant impact in terms of preparation for employment. In general, when these men are released from the farm they return to highly urbanized areas where they pick up the same kinds of unskilled jobs that they had before their imprisonment. Further, they don't last any longer on these jobs than they had prior to their commitment. Therefore, the general conclusion seems to be that these men have spent over 14 months in prison with no meaningful changes in terms of employment patterns.

With respect to farm work itself, the data, again, are not very comforting. Only 1% of the jobs before commitment were agricultural in nature. The proportion remained the same after release. It is likely that farming jobs were just not available to the men because they tended to return to such highly urbanized areas.

What seems to be called for at the farm is the institutionalization of an employment training program that would be more conducive to urban living. The population is young, urban, and of about average intelligence. However, it is a population that has a considerable criminal history, especially in view of the relative youthfulness of the men. Their criminal patterns---which were developed early in life---seem to have interrupted and curtailed educational achievement and to have precluded the possibility of meaningful employment experience.

The work records of these men spotlight the fact that they have tended to be unsuccessful in their legitimate occupational pursuits. Further, their high number of prior arrests and incarcerations indicates that they have been equally unsuccessful in their criminal activities. They seem to be what

be what Cloward and Ohlin have called "double failures."[4] If this is the case, then it would seem sensible to provide for them some employment training which would prepare them to experience some success in the conventional occupational world. Such a training program would, of course, necessitate a complete overhaul of the farm in order to transform it into a facility which would be geared to train for urban rather than rural employment.

However, before plans for the reconstruction of the farm could even be considered, certain other crucial questions must be answered. Would the inmates be interested in participating in such a program? Would they be considered appropriate candidates for job training by experts in this field? Would they be at the farm long enough to learn a skill? Where would the money come from for such a project?

The present study obviously cannot answer all of the above questions. Therefore, in order to throw some light on these and other salient issues, Mr. Fred R. West* has just completed a study in which he interviewed a random sample of inmates at the farm. Preliminary analysis of his data indicates that not only did the men state that they would be willing to participate in such a program but also that they would continue in it after release if it were necessary. A complete report of his findings will soon be available.

In terms of the time spent on the farm, it will be remembered that the sample of the present study spent an average of 4 months, 14 days at the farm. However, the average total sentence was over 14 months . Since a classification unit will soon be built by the Department of Correction, it will

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[4]Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A
        Theory of Delinquent Gangs, Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960

*Mr. West is a vocational rehabilitation counselor, completing a six months
        Psychiatric Rehabilitation Internship Program at Harvard Medical
        School under a grant from the Department of Health, Education and
        Welfare.

be possible to send appropriate men directly to the farm--i.e. to the refurbished, urban oriented facility. With this arrangement, men would be at the facility for over a year on the average. This is felt to be adequate time to learn the rudiments of a skilled occupation.

With respect to the money that would be needed for this enterprise, it should be emphasized that a considerable amount of federal funds are available for projects of this nature. Specifically, a cooperative endeavor on the part of the Department of Correction and the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission would make the project eligible for substantial federal support.

Summary

A statistical profile focusing on the employment histories of 161 inmates at the M.C.I.-Concord farm has been presented. It was found that the poor employment patterns of these men remained substantially unchanged as a result of their stay at the farm. Also, any agricultural skills which an inmate may have developed at the farm go largely untapped inasmuch as the majority of inmates are released to highly urbanized areas. It was suggested that training programs geared to urban occupations would be much more appropriate than the present program at the farm. Finally, it was pointed out that a considerable amount of federal funds could be captured for revamping the farm into an urban oriented job training facility, if this enterprise were undertaken as a cooperative effort of the Department of Correction and the Mass. Rehabilitation Commission.

STATISTICAL DATA

Table I

Background Factors

(1) Age

Mean = 22.6
Median = 21
Mode = 21
Range = 46 (17-63)

Age	F	%	Cum.%
17-18	44	27.3%	27.3%
19-24	80	49.7%	77.0%
25-29	28	16.4%	93.4%
30-34	7	4.3%	97.8%
35 and older	1	2.3%	99.9%

Total 161 99.9%

(2) Race

White	134	83.9%
Negro	27	16.3%

Total 161 100.0%

(3) Education

Mean = 8.3
Median = 8
Mode = 9
Range = 10 (2-12)

Last Grade Completed	N	%
5-7		
8		
9-11		
12		
Special Classes 18		11.2%
Unknown	6	3.7%

Total 161 100.0%

(4) IQ

Mean = 93.6
Median =
Mode =
Range = (41-129)

Class	F	%
40-69	10	
70-79	13	
80-89		
90-99		
100-109		
Unknown	60	37.3%

(5) Marital Status

Single	123	67.7%
Married	21	10.2%
Divorced	11	6.2%
Separated	5	3.5%
Widowed	1	0.5%
Unknown	1	0.5%

Total 161 100.0%

(6) Military Service

None		
Honorable Disch.		
Undesirable Disch.		
Other than Hon.Dis.		
Bad Conduct Disch.		
General Disch.		
Dishonorable Disch.	1	
Medical Disch.	1	
Unknown	1	

Total 161

(7) Early Home Life

Superior Home		6.8%
Average Home		
Inferior Home		
Broken Home		
Left Home		
Institution		
Unknown		

Table II

Criminal History

(1) Prior Arrests

	Total Prior Arrests		Arrests for Drunkenness		Unspecified Arrests	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None			98		158	
1-5					0	
6-10	12				0	
11-15					0	
16-20					0	
21 or More	8		3	0.6	0	0.0
Total	161	100.0	161	99.9	161	100.0

(2) Prior Commitments

	Prior Prison Comm.		Prior H. of C. Comm.		Tot. Comm.	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	96	59.6	84	52.2		64.0
1	46		40	24.8		16.0
2	15		20	12.4		9.3
3 or More	4		17	10.6		7.3
Total	161	100.0	161	100.0	161	100.0

(3) Age At First Arrest

Mean = 16.3
Median = 16
Mode = 16
Range = 32 (8-40)

Age	N	%	Cum. %
8-10		3.1	3.1
11-13		17.4	20.5
14-16		36.0	56.5
17-19		27.3	83.8
20-22		9.3	93.1
23 or older		5.0	98.1
Unknown	3	1.9	100.0
Total	161	100.0	

Table III

DATA OF PRESENT COMMITMENT

(1) __Offense__

__Against Person__   N   %

		N	%
(a)	Robbery	49	29.4%
(b)	Assault	18	11.2%
(c)	Rape	6	3.7%
(d)	Carnal Abuse	4	2.5%
(e)	Manslaughter	3	1.9%
(f)	Incest	2	1.2%
	TOTAL	82	50.9%

__Against Property__

		N	%
(a)	Burglary	59	36.6%
(b)	Use of Auto w/o Auth.	5	3.1%
(c)	Forgery	4	2.5%
(d)	Larceny	3	1.9%
(e)	Breson & Ent. Thief	2	1.2%
(f)	Poss. of Burg. Tools	2	1.2%
(g)	Willful & Mal. Damage	1	0.6%
(h)	Rec. Stolen Property	1	0.6%
(i)	Arson	1	0.6%
	TOTAL	78	48.4%

__Other__

		N	%
(a)	Carrying a Revolver	1	0.6%
	TOTAL	161	99.9%

(2) __Parole Violations (Present Offense)__

	N	%
Parole Violators	58	36.0%
Not Parole Violators	103	64.0%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

(3) __Family Interest While in Institution__

	N	%
Very Active	55	34.4%
Active	48	29.8%
Sustained	33	20.5%
Passive	25	15.5%
None	8	5.0%
Unknown	8	5.0%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

(4) Length of Commitment

Time in Institution Before Being Transferred to Farm				Time at Farm			
Mean - 9 Mos., 23 Da.				Mean - 4 Mos., 14 Da.			
N	%	Cum.%			N	%	Cum.%
35	21.7%	21.7%	Less than 3 mos.		64	39.8%	39.8%
27	16.8%	38.5%	3 up to 6 mos.		48	29.8%	69.6%
28	17.4%	55.9%	6 up to 9 mos.		34	21.1%	90.7%
35	21.7%	77.6%	9 mos. up to 1 yr.		5	3.1%	93.8%
31	13.0%	90.6%	1 yr. up to 2 yrs.		6	3.7%	97.5%
11	4.8%	97.4%	2 yrs. or more		0	0.0%	97.5%
4	2.5%	99.9%	Unknown		4	2.5%	100.0%
161	99.9%		TOTAL		161	100.0%	

(5) Reason for Leaving Farm

Paroled from Farm	N	%
(a) Not Returned to Instit. Before Parole	102	63.4%
(b) Ret. to Instit. & Sent Back to Farm for Parole	15	9.3%
TOTAL	117	72.7%

Discharged from Farm	N	%
(a) Not Returned to Instit. Before Discharge	36	22.4%
(b) Ret. to Instit. & Sent Back to Farm for Disch.	4	2.5%
TOTAL	40	24.9%

	N	%
Transferred to Forestry	1	0.6%
Returned to Instit. & Released from there	1	0.6%
Unknown	2	1.2%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

(6) Overall Failure Record

	N	%
Paroled	120	74.5%
Discharged	41	25.5%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

Table IV

Data on Employment

(1) Work Record
(prior to present comm.)

	N	%
Regular	16	9.9%
Irregular	40	24.8%
Casual	97	60.2%
None	1	0.6%
Student	4	2.5%
Armed Service	3	1.9%
TOTAL	161	99.9%

	N	%
Not Working at Present Offense	110	68.3%
Working at Present Offense	36	22.1%
Unknown	15	9.3%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

(2) Classification of Jobs

Jobs Prior to Present Commitment
(335 of 341 jobs could be classified)

N	%	
271	80.9%	} 93.0%
44	13.1%	
3	0.9%	
9	2.7%	
0	0.0%	
4	1.2%	
4	1.2%	
335	100.0%	

Jobs After Release
(163 of 193 jobs could be classified)

	N	%	
Unskilled	122	74.8%	} 91.1%
Semi-skilled	27	16.0%	
Skilled	3	1.8%	
Sales or Clerical	3	1.8%	
Professional or Managerial	1	0.6%	
Farming	2	1.2%	
Student	5	3.0%	
TOTAL	163	99.9%	

(3) Length of Time on Jobs

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Jobs Prior to Present Commitment
(447 of 517 jobs could be classified)</td><td></td><td colspan="3">Jobs After Release
(183 of 193 jobs could be classified)</td></tr>
<tr><td>N</td><td>%</td><td>Cum. %</td><td></td><td>N</td><td>%</td><td>Cum. %</td></tr>
<tr><td>69</td><td>23.3%</td><td>23.3%</td><td>2 wks. or less</td><td>36</td><td>17.5%</td><td>37.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>69</td><td>16.5%</td><td>39.6%</td><td>more than 2 wks. up to 1 mo.</td><td>36</td><td>19.7%</td><td>37.2%</td></tr>
<tr><td>65</td><td>15.3%</td><td>54.9%</td><td>" " 1 mo. " " 2 mos.</td><td>29</td><td>15.0%</td><td>53.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>74</td><td>17.5%</td><td>72.4%</td><td>" " 2 mos. " " 4 "</td><td>27</td><td>11.0%</td><td>67.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>41</td><td>9.7%</td><td>82.1%</td><td>" " 4 " " " 6 "</td><td>14</td><td>7.7%</td><td>72.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>31</td><td>5.0%</td><td>87.1%</td><td>" " 6 " " " 9 "</td><td>15</td><td>8.2%</td><td>82.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>22</td><td>5.2%</td><td>92.3%</td><td>" " 9 " " " 1 yr.</td><td>13</td><td>7.0%</td><td>90.3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>20</td><td>4.7%</td><td>97.0%</td><td>" " 1 yr. " " 2 yrs.</td><td>16</td><td>8.7%</td><td>99.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>12</td><td>3.1%</td><td>100.0%</td><td>2 yrs. or more</td><td>1</td><td>0.5%</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>447</td><td>100.1%</td><td></td><td>TOTAL</td><td>183</td><td>100.0%</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Table V

Data on Residences

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2">Residence at Present Commitment</td><td></td><td colspan="3">Residence to Which Released</td></tr>
<tr><td>N</td><td>%</td><td>Population in Thousands</td><td>N</td><td>%</td></tr>
<tr><td>76</td><td>17.5%</td><td>100 or more</td><td>73</td><td>45.3%</td></tr>
<tr><td>81</td><td>19.2%</td><td>50-99</td><td>24</td><td>14.9%</td></tr>
<tr><td>50</td><td>12.1%</td><td>20-49</td><td>17</td><td>10.6%</td></tr>
<tr><td>15</td><td>9.3%</td><td>5-19</td><td>12</td><td>7.5%</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>4.5%</td><td>less than 5</td><td>6</td><td>3.7%</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>1.5%</td><td>Armed Service</td><td>0</td><td>0.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>29</td><td>6.2%</td><td>Unknown</td><td>29</td><td>18.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>161</td><td>99.9%</td><td>TOTAL</td><td>161</td><td>100.0%</td></tr>
</table>

Table VI

Recidivism Data

	N	%
Recidivists	76	47.2%
Non-recidivists	85	52.8%
TOTAL	161	100.0%

Length of Time Before Return

	N	%	Cum. %
Within 1 mo.	10	13.2%	13.2%
1 up to 3 mos.	11	14.5%	27.7%
3 up to 5 mos.	17	22.4%	50.1%
5 up to 7 mos.	10	13.2%	63.3%
7 up to 9 mos.	4	5.3%	68.6%
9 mos. up to 1 yr.	3	3.9%	72.5%
1 yr. up to 1 yr., 3 mos.	6	7.9%	80.4%
1 yr., 3 mos. up to 1 yr., 6 mos.	7	9.2%	89.6%
1 yr. 6 mos. or more	8	10.5%	100.1%
TOTAL	76	100.1%	

	N	%
Parole Revokes	69	90.8%
New Offense	7	9.2%
Total	76	100.0%

	Paroled N=120	Discharged N=41
Recidivists	69 (57.5%)	7 (17.1%)
Non-Recids	51 (42.5%)	34 (82.9%)

$X^2 = 20.04$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$