

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN
THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AT M.C.I., NORFOLK

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November, 1968

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INTRODUCTION

The Fellowship organization at M.C.I., Norfolk is a program which developed under the guidance of the Rev. Robert Dutton, Protestant chaplain at the Institution. The program has evolved from a small gathering of inmates after Sunday services who discussed church-related matters to a relatively large group of inmates and churchmen from neighboring parishes (outmates) who join in formal and informal discussion on a wide variety of topics. The "Outmate Handbook" points out a dual function of the interchange between inmate and "outmate". The inmate benefits in that the outmate "lends support to the men who want to live a better life, provides a role model of solid moral character, demonstrates that someone on the outside cares and relieves some of the boredom associated with prison life. At the same time the outmate is provided a means of expressing a Christian concern for others, while learning of the men who are sent to our prisons and of the functioning of the prison system itself".

Since the program's inception in 1958 a number of related groups have sprung from the central Fellowship program. Among those presently operating are a Social Education group, an Afro-American Ethnic Committee, a Gavelmasters organization, and a group which aids in preparing inmates for release. On the outside ex-inmates and outmates maintain contact through regular meetings and periodic conferences. Financial assistance is available to inmates after their release, some job placement is attempted, and a program providing intense support for inmates after release is being considered.

The present study is an analysis of the men who join the Fellowship program while imprisoned at M.C.I., Norfolk. It is designed to be a descriptive review of the type of men who join Fellowship as contrasted with what might be called the "average" Norfolk population. In drawing this comparison a total of eleven variables were analyzed. The differences and similarities between Fellowship members and the general Norfolk population on these variables are presented in this report.

SAMPLE

The Fellowship membership group as it is discussed in this report is actually the combination of two groups. The first is a group of 74 men who joined Fellowship and remained as members until they were released from the institution. Their average length of time in Fellowship was 14 months with the shortest time being 3 months and the longest being 4 years. The second group is comprised of 67 men who joined Fellowship but dropped out of the organization prior to being released. Their average length of time in the organization was 3 months with a minimum involvement of 1 week and a maximum involvement of slightly more than a year. These two groups were combined into the so-called Fellowship group in order to provide a descriptive analysis of the men who become involved in the organization irrespective of whether or not they remained with the organization until release. The characteristics of these two groups are reviewed separately only where such data are of interest to the study. When these data are presented the first group is referred to as the Fellowship Releasees and the second as the Fellowship Dropouts.

The data on the overall Norfolk population was gathered by utilizing information available from the Norfolk Base Expectancy Study: a study which established predictive tables for inmate success after release¹. The Base Expectancy Study contained data on 363 men released from Norfolk during 1960 and also included information on a 4 year follow-up to determine what per cent of these men had been returned to prison.

The Fellowship sample contained data on 141 men who had been in Fellowship between 1961 and the end of 1965 and who had been released sometime during this period. The records of attendance available were complete only from June 1963 to the present, but several of the long term members were able to provide names of men who had been in the organization prior to that time. The available records indicated length of time involved in the organization and those who dropped out prior to release.

DATA PRESENTATION

In addition to comparing the Fellowship sample with the general Norfolk population on 11 variables, the tables at the end of the report include the proportion of men who dropped out of the Fellowship in each category. For example, of the 45 Blacks who joined the organization, 44.4% (20) of them eventually dropped out. If it is presumed that one person is just as likely to drop out as the next, that is that no selective factors are operating within the group, then it would be expected that the Black people

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Francis J. Carney, "Predicting Recidivism in a Medium Security Correctional Institution," Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science, (Sept., 1967) pp. 338-48

who joined the organization would drop out at a rate similar to the overall drop out rate of the total group. In the study, 67 of the 141 men in the Fellowship sample were Dropouts thus the drop-out rate is 47.5%. If no selective factor is operating in regard to race then 47.5% of the Whites and 47.5% of the Blacks who join would be expected to drop out. As can be readily observed, the dropout rate of the Blacks is slightly lower than would be expected.

The variables that were compared covered three general areas: Background Factors, Criminal History, and Present Incarceration. The initial method of comparison was to statistically analyze the numbers in the various categories of these areas by comparing the three basic groups: Norfolk to Releasees, Releasees to Dropouts, and Dropouts to Norfolk. Analysis of these data revealed that inclusion of the dropout data with the Releasee data produced only minor differences in the significance of these data as it compared to the Norfolk sample. Thus to simplify comparison the data for Releasees and Dropouts were combined. In all of the comparisons chi squares were performed to determine significance. Appendix A includes the probability scores where they are significant.

COMPARISON OF NORFOLK TO FELLOWSHIP GROUP

BACKGROUND FACTORS

The first area reviewed was background factors gathered on the men in the sample. These included race and type of military discharge. The only factor which proved to be significantly different between the two groups was race. The Fellowship program attracts a significantly higher proportion of Blacks than would be expected

from their representation in the average Norfolk population and a slightly higher proportion of them stay in than would be expected (Table 1). There was no significant difference on type of military discharge (Table 2) in comparing the two groups, that is the Fellowship group was typical of the average Norfolk population on this factor.

Information on marital status (Table 3) and education (Table 4) was available for the Releasee and Dropout samples, but not for the Norfolk group. A comparison of the two Fellowship groups indicated there was no significant difference between them on either variable. In both groups the average grade level attained was 8th grade and in each the proportion of single, married, separated, divorced, and widowed men was similar.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

In the area of criminal history the factors considered were age at first arrest (Table 5), number of prior arrests (Table 6), and number of prior commitments (including state, federal, and House of Correction commitments) (Table 7). Analysis of these factors revealed that the Fellowship group did not differ significantly from the average Norfolk population on any of these parameters. This means that the Fellowship members have a criminal history similar to the average Norfolk population. The average age at first arrest was 18.5 years old, the average number of prior arrests was 8.8, and the average number of previous commitments was 2.2. If the Release and Dropout groups are considered separately the Dropouts are found to have been first arrested at a slightly younger age, they have a higher average

number of arrests and their commitment rate is higher than their release counterparts. Although these differences do exist none of them are great enough to show a significant difference between dropout and release.

PRESENT INCARCERATION

The third major category to be considered were factors concerning the inmate's present incarceration. These included information on age at present commitment, type of offense, good time withheld, length of present incarceration, type of release, and whether the present incarceration was the consequence of parole violation. It was found that there was no significant difference between the two groups on age at commitment. (Table 8), amount of good time lost because of disciplinary action (Table 12), or the present incarceration being the result of parole violation (Table 10). Significance was found on the remaining 3 factors. There were proportionately more sex offenders in the Fellowship group than are found in the average Norfolk population (Table 9). The length of present incarceration for the Fellowship group was significantly longer than the Norfolk sample (Table 11) and a significantly higher proportion of Fellowship members were released from the institution on parole (Table 13).

In considering the non-significant factors, it was found that the average age at commitment for the Fellowship group was 31.0 years, 80% of the sample had no good time withheld and only 11.3% of them served their present incarceration for violation of parole.

Analysis of the factors that were significant indicated that the median length of present commitment for Norfolk group was 1 year, 8 months as opposed to 1 year, 11 months for the Fellowship group. In the Fellowship sample 88% of the men were released from the institution on parole as compared to 76% of the Norfolk sample receiving parole.

The third significant variable indicated that sex offenders constituted 22.7% of the Fellowship sample whereas the proportion of such offenders in the Norfolk population is 15.7%. Thus sex offenders are more likely to join Fellowship than men sentenced for other types of criminal activity and their dropout rate is slightly lower than would be expected.

In a comparison of the Dropout data to the Releasee group, it was found that there was a significant difference between the two groups on the rate at which they received parole. Although there is this substantial difference between the two groups on the rate at which they receive parole, when these two groups are combined as the "Fellowship" group a significant difference still exists between this group and the Norfolk sample. On a hierarchy, the Norfolk group has the lowest rate of parole, the dropout group is somewhat higher and the releasee group is the highest. The rate at which the men receive parole proved to be the only significant difference between the releasee and the dropout group.

SUMMARY

A summary of the data presented in the study indicates that there were no significant differences between the Norfolk and Fellowship groups on seven of the eleven variables that were examined. These variables included type of military discharge, age at first arrest, number of prior arrests, number of prior commitments, present incarceration for parole violation, amount of good time withheld, and age at present commitment. The study does indicate that there are significantly more Blacks in the Fellowship organization than would be expected, the typical member spends more time imprisoned than the average inmate at Norfolk, there are more sex offenders in Fellowship than would be expected and finally, the chances for Fellowship members getting parole are significantly better than the Norfolk population in general.

This study was intended as a descriptive analysis of the men who join the Fellowship organization. The only conclusion that is warranted is that with the exception of those factors mentioned above, the Fellowship membership is typical of the general Norfolk population. An analysis of the organizations effectiveness will be presented in a forthcoming study of recidivism.

BACKGROUND FACTORSTable 1

<u>Race</u>	<u>Norfolk</u>		<u>Fellowship</u>		<u>Dropout Rate</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
White	299	(82.4)	96	(68.1)	47	(49.0)
Black	64	(17.6)	45	(31.9)	20	(44.4)

$$\chi^2 = 12.22, df = 1, p < .001$$

Table 2Military Discharge

No Service	198	(54.5)	78	(55.3)	40	(51.3)
Honorable Discharge	103	(28.4)	31	(22.0)	11	(35.5)
Other	62	(17.1)	32	(22.7)	16	(50.0)

Table 3Marital Data

Single	Not Available	47	(33.3)	25	(53.2)
Married		44	(31.2)	23	(52.3)
Widowed		7	(5.0)	1	(16.7)
Divorced		28	(19.8)	12	(42.8)
Separated		15	(10.6)	6	(40.0)

Table 4Education

1 - 6	Not Available	25	(17.7)	12	(48.0)
7 - 8		42	(29.8)	18	(42.9)
9 - 11		48	(34.0)	25	(52.1)
12 and Above		16	(11.3)	7	(43.7)
Special Class		9	(6.4)	5	(55.5)
Unknown		1	(.7)	0	(0.0)

CRIMINAL HISTORYTable 5Age at First Arrest

0 - 14	112	(30.8)	43	(30.5)	19	(44.2)
15 - 19	132	(36.4)	53	(37.6)	27	(50.9)
20 - 24	64	(17.6)	28	(19.8)	16	(57.1)
25+	55	(15.2)	17	(12.1)	5	(29.4)

Table 6

Number of Prior Arrests

	<u>Norfolk</u>		<u>Fellowship</u>		<u>Dropout Rate</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
0 - 5	127	(35.0)	58	(41.1)	27	(46.6)
6 - 10	105	(28.9)	41	(29.1)	18	(43.9)
11 or More	131	(36.1)	42	(29.8)	22	(52.4)

Table 7

Prior Penal Commitments

None	117	(32.2)	41	(31.1)	18	(43.9)
One or More	246	(67.8)	100	(68.9)	49	(49.0)

PRESENT INCARCERATION

Table 8

Age at Present Commitment

25 or Less	156	(43.0)	54	(38.3)	29	(53.7)
26 - 35	112	(30.8)	43	(30.5)	19	(44.2)
36 or Above	95	(26.2)	44	(31.2)	19	(43.1)

Table 9

Type of Offense

Person	135	(37.2)	54	(38.3)	31	(57.4)
Property	165	(45.5)	49	(34.7)	21	(42.9)
Sex	57	(15.7)	32	(22.7)	13	(40.6)
Other	6	(1.7)	6	(4.3)	2	(33.3)

$$\chi^2 = 8.46, df = 3, .02 < p < .05$$

Table 10

Present Commitment For Parole Violation

Yes	56	(15.4)	16	(11.3)	11	(68.8)
No	307	(84.6)	125	(88.7)	56	(44.8)

Table 11

Length of Present Incarceration

	<u>Norfolk</u>		<u>Fellowship</u>		<u>Dropout Rate</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Less than 1 year	70	(19.3)	14	(9.9)	9	(64.3)
1 - 2 years	164	(45.2)	63	(44.7)	28	(44.4)
More than 2 years	129	(35.5)	64	(45.4)	30	(46.9)

$\chi^2 = 7.91, df = 2, .01 < p < .02$

Table 12

Good Time Withheld

None withheld	300	(82.6)	113	(80.1)	56	(49.6)
Some withheld	63	(17.4)	28	(19.9)	11	(39.3)

Table 13

Type of Release

Parole	276	(76.0)	125	(88.7)	55	(44.0)
Discharge	87	(24.0)	16	(11.3)	12	(75.0)

$\chi^2 = 9.95, df = 1, .001 < p < .01*$

*If the Fellowship group is broken down into its Dropout and Releasee Components a significant difference exists between them i.e. Releasees have a significantly higher rate of Parole .01 < p < .02