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PREDICTION OF PAROLE SUCCESS: Inclusion of Psychiatric Criteria¹

R. L. Jenkins,² Henry Harper Hart, Philip I. Sperling and Sidney Axelrad

The various studies which have been undertaken to determine the predictability of parole success, and to guide in the selection of parole risks have to date been largely restricted to the use of objective data of the pre-commitment history, with perhaps the addition of such problems as offenses against institution discipline and the "psychiatric personality type." The inclusion in these studies of elements descriptive of characteristic personality patterns has been conspicuously rare,³ with the exception of the use by Burgess⁴ of the single personality type classification mentioned above. To anyone working clinically with offenders this is a conspicuous omission.

That is to say, there are obvious elements of decided prognostic significance which are not included, at least in any direct manner, in any of the present quantitative methods of predicting parole success. These factors would include the attitude of the offender toward his offense, whether he regrets this action and is anxious to avoid repeating it, or whether it is an action deliberately or casually undertaken by an offender who has no sense of guilt over it and whose only regret is that he was caught. It would include his attitude toward authority and his willingness to make use of help available to meet his essential problem of adjustment. Like any other human action, the offense can be understood only in relation to the psychological state in which it was committed. Prediction made without reference to this psychological state or to the general personality patterns, may have a degree of validity, statistically speaking, which is dependent upon the fact that certain actions *usually* have certain significance, but such relationship is a regrettable limited basis for predictions.

Certain personality or behavior characteristics such as assaultive tendencies, "shamelessness," emotional immaturity, or a defiant attitude toward authority may materially influence the prognosis, yet are not adequately represented in most of the systems of pre-

¹ Studies from the Medical and Research Department, New York State Training School for Boys, Warwick, New York.

² Michigan Child Guidance Institute, Ann Arbor, Mich. The co-authors are members of the Research Staff in the Training School at Warwick, N. Y.

³ Ferris F. Laune *Predicting Criminality* (Northwestern University Studies in Social Sciences, Evanston, 1936) has introduced material relating to the attitudes of offenders. The results obtained by the use of such material in prediction studies have not as yet been published.

⁴ Ernest W. Burgess. *Factors Determining Success or Failure on Parole.* (Part IV of the *Workings of the Indeterminate Sentence Law and the Parole System in Illinois.*) State of Illinois.

diction so far published. Also, the capacity to form strong personal attachments is doubtless of great importance.

The present study was undertaken in an effort to extend the range of material used in prediction and, if possible, to improve the prediction itself. The material it has been possible to include merely makes a beginning in the inclusion of more personal psychiatric and psychological factors.

The case records of 300 delinquent boys committed to the New York State Training School for Boys were reviewed and a large number of items of history, behavior, and examination findings were recorded. The method of sampling was to select the case records which had the more adequate information. This may have resulted in a tendency to select the more challenging (and more difficult) problems. The group studied were aged 10 years 9 months to 16 years 6 months at the time of admittance. 42% were white, 58% Negro.

These boys were admitted to the New York State Training School for Boys during 1933 and 1934 and follow-up of the group was possible. The subsequent courses make a contrasting tabulation possible.

Of these 300 boys, 18 (6.0%) were still on parole at the time of follow-up (July, 1941); 98 (32.7%) had been discharged for good adjustment in the community, ordinarily after at least two years of satisfactory community adjustment; 41 (13.7%) had been discharged because they reached their majority; 4 (1.3%) had been discharged when they joined the armed forces; 2 (0.7%) who were out of the state with permission were discharged; 3 (1.0%) had died of causes not associated with delinquency.

One hundred and nineteen (39.7%) boys had been committed to correctional institutions, including 2 (0.7%) committed to an institution for defective delinquents; 7 (2.3%) had been committed to institutions for non-delinquent mental defectives; 3 (1.0%) to state hospitals; 1 (0.3%) had been discharged because he was placed on probation by the court and supervision was thereby assumed by the court; 2 (0.7%) were absent without leave; 1 (0.3%) had died of heroin poisoning; and 1 (0.3%) was not identified. In total 43% were known to have been committed to some institution, penal or civil, after their parole.

The sharpest contrast was found between the group discharged to correctional institutions and the group discharged on good adjustment without having reached their majority. The contrasts between these two groups was therefore used as the basic criterion for determining which factors were favorable and which were unfavorable.

Unfortunately 40 of the original statistical charts were lost. This reduced the number available for comparison to 85 cases of

good adjustment and 107 commitments to correctional institutions.

Because the number of cases was small, the possible influence of random factors had to be taken into account. For this reason various members of the psychiatric and case work staff experienced in clinical work with delinquents were asked to check which items of the list tabulated they would regard as favorable and which as unfavorable factors. Judgments were checked against the actual results and their inclusion served to eliminate certain factors in which the difference between the good adjustment and poor adjustment groups was probably on an accidental or random basis. There remained 95 items used in predictions. These items were weighted from -4 to +4. The positive weights indicate the favorable factors, and the negative weights the unfavorable ones. The weights were as follows:

SYMPTOMATOLOGY	Minus	Plus
Apathy	1	
Assaultive tendencies	1	
Awkwardness	1	
Bullying	1	
Carelessness	1	
Cruelty	1	
Daydreaming	1	
Defiance of authority	3	
Disobedience	1	
Drug addiction	2	
Emotional immaturity	1	
Enuresis	1	
Homicidal tendencies	2	
Impudence	2	
Jealousy (as a trait)	1	
Lying (more than average)	1	
Obscenity	2	
Overactivity	1	
Overaggressiveness (including overassertiveness)	1	
Quarrelsomeness	1	
Revengefulness	1	
Repeated running away from home (overnight or longer)	4	
Active homosexuality	1	
Shamelessness	1	
Stealing	1	
If aggressive add	1	
If cooperative add	2	2
If furtive add	1	
If compulsive add	2	

Submissiveness	1
Suspiciousness	1
Truancy	1

LEGAL CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Age at 1st court appearance for delinquency.....	(7) 4	
	(8) 3	
	(9) 2	
	(10) 1	
	(11) 0	
	(12)	1
	(13)	2
	(14)	3
	(15)	4
Age on admission.....	(10) 3	
	(11) 2	
	(12) 1	
	(13) 0	
	(14)	1
	(15)	2
	(16)	3
Past experience in institution for delinquents	1	
Past experience in institution for dependents	1	
Past experience in institution for defectives	1	
Previously in New York House of Refuge.....	1	

OFFENSE FOR WHICH COMMITTED (in most instances as it would be classified in an adult)

	Minus	Plus
Carrying weapons	2	
Malicious mischief		3
Larceny		2
Sex delinquency		
Heterosexual		1
Homosexual	1	
Truancy		3
Violation of parole.....	4	
Offense committed in company of associates.....		3
Offense committed as part of a gang.....	4	

HOME

A. Whereabouts of child	
With both own parents.....	2
With mother and stepfather.....	1
With mother only	2
In adoptive home	2
In institution	2

B. Condition of home		
Chaotic	1	
Overcrowded	1	
Satisfactory		1
C. Economic status		
Dependent	2	
Moderate		1
Unemployment	1	
D. Parents or substitutes		
Alcoholism	2	
Brutality of	1	
Conflict of	1	
Death or deprivation of.....	1	
Desertion by	2	
Discipline, excessive	3	
Early marriage (before 23 yrs.).....	1	
Forced marriage	1	
Illiteracy	1	
Neglect by	1	
Rejection by	3	
Sex immorality	2	
Shielding by	1	
Syphilis	1	
E. Child in family		
Illegitimate	3	
Unwanted	1	
Step child	1	
Foster child	1	
Less favored child.....	1	
F. Siblings		
Conflict with	1	
Illegitimacy	1	
Jealousy towards	1	
NEIGHBORHOOD		
Rural		2
Congested	3	
Excess change	1	
Rural-urban shift	1	
Immigration to America.....	1	
SCHOOL		
Past attendance of truant school.....	2	
Past attendance of probationary school.....	2	
Ungraded class	1	
Retardation	1	
Frequent change of school.....	2	

Attitude toward school		
Truant	1	
Disturbing or antagonistic.....	2	
Adjusted or enthusiastic.....		2
Educational quotient	(60-69)	2
	(70-79)	1
	(80-89)	0
	(90-99)	1
	(100-109)	2

These items are used in their commonly accepted meanings.

With this method of scoring the scores of successfully and unsuccessfully adjusted boys were compared. Those discharged on good adjustment or at 21 were considered successfully adjusted. Those discharged to correctional institutions (including institutions for defective delinquents) were considered unsuccessful. All other cases were excluded.

There were 226 cases available for comparison, 119 successful and 107 unsuccessful. The distribution of scores of these two groups is indicated in Figure I, and the relation between score and success rate in Table I.

This scale was prepared primarily in an effort to explore possibilities, rather than primarily in an effort to prepare a useful prediction scale. It is as a result extensive rather than compact, and it contains elements which, while not identical, involve some degree of duplication.

In *symptomatology*, especially unfavorable factors are a history of repeated running away from home, defiance of authority, homicidal tendencies, obscenity, impudence, compulsive stealing and drug addiction, the last two both rare in this material. Running away from home indicates a lack of home ties which is unfavorable, whether because of personality defect in the child or vicious or especially objectionable conditions in the home. Two of these unfavorable items (defiance and impudence) indicate an antagonistic attitude toward authority, and it is of interest that the only positive or favorable item of the symptomatology included is submissiveness. The positive weighting of 2 for cooperative stealing merely cancels the negatives for stealing itself and for the aggressive or furtive classifications. The element of socialization in its being cooperative appears to cancel out the stealing till it is no longer a relatively unfavorable sign in this group. Obscenity is probably important as an index of low social standards and lack of social sensitivity.

Under *legal corrective measures*, we note that the younger the age at which the problem appeared (as indicated by the first court appearance for delinquency) the more unfavorable the prognosis,

and the longer the period of childhood adjustment before the problem appeared the more favorable the prognosis. Similarly, the older the child was before commitment became necessary, the more favorable the prognosis. Previous institutional experience is an unfavorable factor. The N. Y. House of Refuge was a security type of institution for young offenders from which the first large group of Warwick boys was transferred. Experience in this institution appears to have been an unfavorable factor as compared with commitment directly to Warwick.

Under *offense for which committed*, the milder offenses such as truancy, malicious mischief, and larceny (as contrasted with burglary or robbery) have positive loadings. If the offense is a violation of parole, this fact is unfavorable. It is of interest that if the offense was committed with associates this is a favorable sign, unless the associates form a definite gang, in which case it is unfavorable. While in some instances it may be difficult to ascertain just when a gang begins to exist, the distinction is in practice a useful one.

Under *home*, we note as favorable a satisfactory home with both parents (or an adoptive home), with moderate economic status. Rejection by parents, excessive (too much and too severe) discipline, alcoholism of a parent or desertion by a parent, sex immorality of a parent or living with the mother only are particularly unfavorable factors. Illegitimacy appears especially unfavorable.

Under *neighborhood*, we note a rural neighborhood as favorable and a congested neighborhood as unfavorable.

Under *school*, we note the unfavorable effect of frequent change of school, and of a negative attitude toward school. The favorable effect of a positive attitude is equally clear. Experience in a truant school or probationary school appear as unfavorable factors, doubtless because of the fact that the boys so assigned have usually been difficult school problems. It is of interest that although intelligence quotient is without significant influence on the outcome, the educational quotient is distinctly important. That is to say, how intelligent a child is does not influence the outcome, but how well he has done in school is important.

It is worthy of note that we have been successful in expanding the base for prediction by including certain distinctly psychiatric factors such as daydreaming, emotional immaturity, jealousy (as a trait), shamelessness, compulsive stealing and suspiciousness. The boy's attitude toward school is of importance. Moreover, a large number of behavior traits having distinct psychological meaning have been included, such as bullying, cruelty, defiance of authority, disobedience, enuresis, impudence, obscenity, overactivity, overaggressiveness, quarrelsomeness, and revengefulness. How-

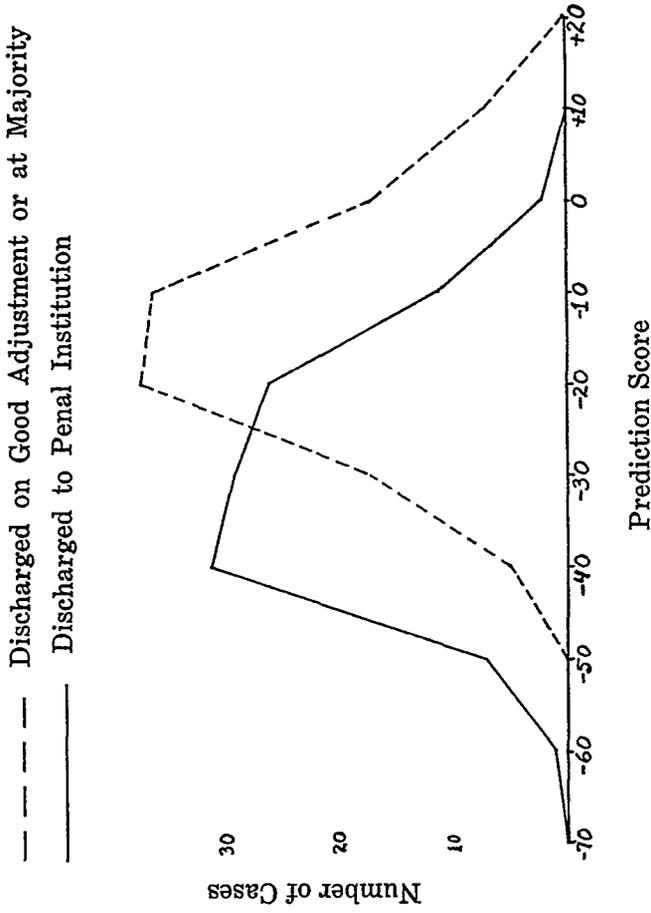


Figure 1
Prediction Scores Related to Success on Parole.

ever, the possibilities of including psychiatric criteria are only suggested by this article as the material was originally collected for another purpose.

The factor of race is worthy of comment. The good adjustment group is 48% Negro, but the group committed to correctional institutions is 84% Negro. However, this scale was prepared without regard to race, and in using it actuarial discloses that it is not advantageous to weight the factor or race per se, since better results are obtained by not doing so. The poor success of the Negro group would appear related to the higher incidence of unfavorable social, economic and other factors in this group, and does not justify an unfavorable weighting of the factor of race per se.

TABLE I

Score	Number of cases	Percent good adjstmt.
+5 to +14	7	100
-5 to +4	19	89
-15 to -6	47	77
-25 to -16	63	59
-35 to -26	46	37
-45 to -36	36	14
-55 to -46	7	0
-65 to -56	1	0

Total 226

Number of Cases

JUDICIAL CRIMINAL STATISTICS, 1940

The U. S. Census Bureau's report on Judicial Criminal Statistics for 1940 has just been received (May 22, 1942). It was prepared by C. C. Van Vechten Jr. under the supervision of Dr. Halbert L. Dunn, Chief Statistician for Vital Statistics. The following is taken from the report:

"Again in 1940, as in the past years, these statistics indicate that from 70 to 80 per cent of all defendants prosecuted for major offenses in the courts of general jurisdiction were convicted. About seven-tenths of those eliminated without conviction were eliminated by dismissal of the charges against them. Pleas of guilty accounted for between 80 and 90 per cent of all convictions. Slightly over one-sixth of the defendants prosecuted in the trial courts were disposed of by means of trial. Of the defendants convicted and sentenced, slightly more than one-third received sentences to State prisons or reformatories, and about one-third were given probation or a suspended sentence."