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## PROBLEMS OF PAROLE

Robert M. Allen

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Digits in parentheses refer to the bibliography at the end of the article.—EDITOR.

This study is an investigation of the relationship that exists between parole success or failure and certain selected factors which help shape the lives of men paroled from the reformatory. The study seeks to determine the degree to which these relationships may be used as bases for devising better methods of parole supervision.

An analysis of some life-factors may aid in making parole supervision more effective by adapting the supervisory program to the needs of the individual parolee. Knowing those elements which will help or hinder parole success may result in steps being taken to develop the former and modify the effects of the latter.

Allen (1) reviewed the pertinent literature in this field. Burgess (2) devised a scale purporting to predict parole outcome of inmates. Tibbitts (10) further developed this area by showing the need for a scientific classification system within the prison program. A monumental contribution has been made by the Gluecks (5, 6, 7, 8, 9). They emphasized the importance of the individual factors in the social and psychological environment of the parolee. Their goal was a scientific administration of criminal justice. Vold (11) contended that the cumulative effect of separate, insignificant factors usually made the difference between parole violators and non-violators.

In general, these investigations concluded that the parole problem is twofold: how long to keep a man in prison; and the conditions under which a man is to be kept on parole. Cantor (3, pp. 327-332) feels that the core of the parole problem is, "when an inmate should be released." He urges that the determination of parolability is the function of the case worker and therapist skilled in interpretive techniques.

The data for the present study were gathered from the case records of 200 parolees from a large eastern reformatory. One hundred had successfully completed the maximum sentence and

earned parole discharge (nonviolateur group); the other 100 had been returned to the institution for parole violation (violateur group). These 200 men had been either discharged or rearrested during 1935.

Information regarding the possession or nonpossession (or degree of possession for qualitative variables) of the traits comprising the 18 factors was recorded on a specially devised data schedule.

### *Results*

An examination of the factors studied suggested the following general categories in the classification that was used by Vold (11):

- I. Factors associated with trial and commitment
- II. Factors associated with traits and characteristics of the parolee
- III. Factors associated with their social background
- IV. Factors associated with the parole period

Frequency distributions for the factors under each category directly contrasted the nonviolators and violators. The coefficient of contingency measured the relationship between the individual factor and parole outcome. The critical ratio served as the index of reliability between the two groups.

The survey of factors associated with the trial and commitment phase revealed that the average successful parolee had 3.75 previous arrests and received a sentence of 40 months. Of this term he served 20 months and completed the remaining 20 months under constructive extra-mural supervision. The average parole failure had 3.81 prior arrests but was sentenced to 104 months of which he served 19 months in durance vile, leaving a rather lengthy parole period of 85 months. He violated his trust after 13 months of freedom and had to be recommitted.

The factors associated with the traits and characteristics of the individual included such diverse elements as: physical health at time of parole, intellectual level, psychiatric classification and age of first arrest. An analysis of these personal factors

TABLE I  
SUMMARY OF DISTRIBUTION OF I. Q.'s OF 200 PAROLEES

	60- 69	70- 79	80- 89	90- 99	100- 109	110- 119	120- 129	Average	Critical Ratio
No. N-V	1	12	35	29	13	8	2	91.7	4.21
No. V	3	24	46	17	8	2	0	85.1	

and their influence on parole outcome indicated that both violateur and nonviolateur had a mean first-arrest age of 16.3 years.

TABLE II  
INTELLIGENCE LEVEL CLASSIFICATION OF 200 PAROLEES

	Above Normal	Normal	Dull	Feebleminded
No. N-V .....	10	42	41	7
No. V .....	2	25	61	12

Table I summarizes the distribution of intelligence quotients of the 200 parolees. The average I. Q. for the nonviolatee was 91.7 as against 85.1 for the violator. The psychological classification of the individuals in both groups is shown in Table II.

The preparole psychiatric evaluation disclosed that 36 nonviolators and 20 violators showed no mental pathology. A diagnosis of psychopathic personality was made for 52 nonviolators and 63 violators. The remaining 12 and 17 respectively had psychotic personality structures.

Unfortunately information regarding the physical health at time of parole was not recorded in the majority of cases. What little data that was gleaned revealed that 58 of the nonviolators had no health problems. Twenty had various minor ailments except for four cases of venereal disease under active treatment. Only 21 health records could be found for the violators. All indicated venereal infection as the disease process.

Those factors associated with the social background of the parolee included his recreational interests, religious training and observance, and marital status. Data regarding the first two were generally inadequate and had to be discarded. No significance could be found in the parolee's marital status except to indicate that the overwhelming majority in both groups were unmarried.

In the fourth category, factors associated with the parole period, eight elements were studied: age at time of parole; people lived with while on parole, mobility; report status; occupational level, number of jobs held and number of months gainfully employed, and percentage of parole period spent in employed status.

The average nonviolatee was approximately 22 years of age when paroled. He was released in most instances to live with his parents with whom he remained until completion of his parole period. The family did not move from this residence. The type of neighborhood was not particularly significant. Furthermore the hypothetical average successful parolee was on a monthly report status when discharged. His parole employment offer materialized upon release from the reformatory and usually did not require knowledge of a skilled trade. He was employed for 12 months (60%) of the 20-month parole term.

The parole violator, on the average, was 21 years, 5 months of age when released to live with his parents. He left them to take up residence alone or with friends. He moved at least once more after leaving his parents' home. He had no employment skill and his preparole employment offer subsequently proved to be a coverup to help obtain his release from the reformatory. His average employment period was 3.5 months, or only 30% of his maximum parole time.

### *Discussion*

In all, 18 factors were statistically treated and their relationship to parole outcome analyzed. Those factors closely related to parole outcome have coefficient of contingency values (C. C. V.) ranging from .333 to .620. These are:

Order	Factor	C. C. V.
1	Recreation activities .....	.620
2	Length of sentence .....	.588
3	Physical health at release.....	.555
4	Number of months employed.....	.450
5	Number of jobs.....	.358
6	Age at time of parole.....	.352
7	Intelligence level .....	.333

Of these seven factors five (1, 3, 4, 5 and 6) are associated with the parole period. They may be used by the case worker as indices of the probability of continued good parole risk during the active supervision process. The parole case worker should be sensitive to the parolee's recreational activities, physical health and employment status. Changes should be evaluated as they occur within the framework of the parole situation. The manner in which the parolee spends his leisure time is of utmost importance and merits careful discussion and planning with him and his family. The preparole survey of intrafamilial relationships and the prospective employment offer should be interpreted in the light of their proven influence on parole adjustment. Certainly the process of planning with the parolee should consider his age and intellectual capacity for absorbing concrete and abstract concepts. There is little that can be done about the releasee's age except to understand the problems concomitant with growing older.

The following factors are (statistically) fairly closely related to parole outcome:

Order	Factor	C. C. V.
8	Time served in reformatory.....	.277
9	Religious observance .....	.270
10	Number of previous arrests.....	.260
11	Report status .....	.223
12	Mobility during parole.....	.211

Three elements in this group are associated with the parole period (9, 11 and 12). Of the remaining six elements:

Order	Factor	C. C. V.
13	People lived with.....	.189
14	Psychiatric diagnosis .....	.175
15	Marital status .....	.109
16	Neighborhood of residence.....	.076
17	Type of crime conviction.....	.058
18	Age at first arrest.....	.048

three are operative during the parole term. None of these bear any significant statistical relationship to success or failure on parole.<sup>1</sup> These six factors could assume importance, taken together, if Vold's (11) thinking in the matter is accepted.

### *Conclusions*

1. This study has indicated that success or failure on parole is not dependent on any one dominant factor.
2. Eleven of the 18 factors analyzed are associated with the actual parole period. Of these, eight are closely related to successful parole outcome and merit the close attention of the parole case worker.
3. Data regarding parolee's recreational activities tends to be inadequate and unreliable.
4. Nonviolators are intellectually superior to violators.
5. Psychiatric evaluation indicates the presence of personality aberrations in the majority of parolees in both groups.
6. Parolees who retain familial affiliations and move about infrequently are more likely to succeed on parole than those who change their family connections and do not settle in one home.
7. The types of neighborhoods in which the parolees reside after their release has little significance for parole outcome.
8. The employment factors are among the more important elements contributing to parole success or failure. The successful parolees have more positions and longer working periods than the violators.
9. The relationship between parole outcome and marital status is not adequately established by this study.
10. The available data reveals that venereal diseases are responsible for the majority of health problems.

<sup>1</sup> Scientific practice necessitates an explanation: Mathematical techniques have progressed far ahead of psychological entities. Expressions of quantitative data leave little room for qualitative interpretations beyond the limits of exact statistical values. In order to apply the knowledge gained in this study to the field of parole supervision the author feels constrained to temper the objective, statistical results with experience gained as a parole case worker.

11. There is no significant difference in the report status of parolees in both groups at the termination of supervision. However, the reduction in report frequency is an indication of overt adjustment.

### *Recommendations and Implications*

1. There is little to be said for the severity of sentences meted out by sentencing judges (4). The penal code specifically limits judges. However, indefinite sentences with only a fixed maximum should be continued.

2. It is essential for the parole supervisor to plan for medical and psychiatric treatment of his charges. Removing physical disabilities or alleviating mental stress will help the parolees meet other problems with confidence.

3. The importance of employment during parole patently justifies the emphasis upon the need for an employment department in the parole agency. Through such departments the aid of sympathetic employers could be made more readily available to ex-inmates. This removes the fear of exposure by unfriendly sources, and the parolees can sell their services for a fair wage.

4. The more youthful, suggestible parolees should be introduced to a social environment planned to correct faulty impressions or attitudes carried over from prison to community life.

The inverse relationship between time served in the institution and parole outcome calls attention to the need for a more adequate inmate-classification system. Poor probable parole risks, under a more adequate classification, could be selected from the prison population for individual guidance and training.

The data supplied by the Psycho-psychiatric Clinic are vital elements in proper parole planning. The approach, on a case-work basis, is contingent upon the parolee's mental capacity and personality. The parole program must be attuned to the reactions the parolee is capable of making in his social environment.

5. The criminal records of the parolees should be especially useful for parole officers. First offenders need as much supervision as repeaters. The officer should particularly observe those parolees with previous arrests for vagrancy, intoxication, and use or sale of narcotics. These latter revert to type when faced with momentary obstacles.

6. The fact that very few parolees made use of the trade taught to them in the reformatory calls attention to the need for a closer correlation between institutional trade training and

industrial opportunities in the communities to which inmates are to be paroled.

7. The value of parolees' reporting in person to their parole officers is to be seen in the opportunities afforded for discussion of problems that arise.

8. The homes to which inmates are paroled should be used as the core of the parole program. Results indicate that three times as many violators as nonviolators lived away from their parents' homes. There is the element of added supervision exercised over the parolees by the family which is not present when they are living alone or with friends of dubious loyalty and limited sense of responsibility. The parole officer must enlist familial cooperation and take advantage of the ties which are keeping his charges in the home.

9. Much of the planning for the parolees' rehabilitation depends upon developments in the extramural environment. The parole program should be sufficiently flexible to allow for modification as situations arise. The problem of parole as indicated in this study is one of facilitating social adjustment of ex-inmates to community demands. While the parolees bear the brunt of the burden, the community must be educated, as well, to see its share in the entire process.

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