

1953

The Follow-Up Study of Minnesota State Reformatory Inmates: A Preliminary Report

Stanley B. Zuckerman

Alfred J. Barron

Horace B. Whittier

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/jclc>

 Part of the [Criminal Law Commons](#), [Criminology Commons](#), and the [Criminology and Criminal Justice Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Stanley B. Zuckerman, Alfred J. Barron, Horace B. Whittier, The Follow-Up Study of Minnesota State Reformatory Inmates: A Preliminary Report, 43 J. Crim. L. Criminology & Police Sci. 622 (1952-1953)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology by an authorized editor of Northwestern University School of Law Scholarly Commons.

A FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF MINNESOTA STATE REFORMATORY INMATES

A Preliminary Report

Stanley B. Zuckerman, Alfred J. Barron and Horace B. Whittier

Stanley B. Zuckerman is Clinical Psychologist for the Minnesota Youth Conservation Commission. Trained in New York, he served as psychologist for Domestic Relations Court, Youth House and on the faculty of City College and Hunter College.

Alfred J. Barron is the psychologist of the Minnesota State Reformatory. Formerly on the staff of Willmar State Hospital, he received his training at the University of Minnesota.

Horace B. Whittier, a pioneer in correctional work in Minnesota, was, until his death, Warden of the State Reformatory at St. Cloud.— EDITOR.

References in the literature of criminology to the large proportion of recidivism among young men released from conventional correctional institutions prompted the investigators to undertake a follow-up study of a sample of former inmates who had been released and were out of the Minnesota State Reformatory for five years or more. Assertions that commitments to correctional institutions lead to recidivism to the extent of 60 to 80 percent,¹ and other reports² of similar, if slightly less dire results, prompted the investigators to ascertain, for the first time in Minnesota, the extent to which former inmates of the Reformatory were having further difficulties with the law following their release.

PROCEDURE

The Minnesota State Reformatory for Men at St. Cloud is a maximum security institution designed primarily for younger offenders. The inmates are predominantly 20 to 29 years of age, committed with indeterminate sentences by the district courts of the state. During the fiscal year 1944-45, during which men in this study were released, the total inmate body averaged 668. While a system of inmate grades was then in effect, releases did not depend on a point system, but were at the discretion of the Minnesota Board of Parole and of the Board of Pardons.

The base period selected was the fiscal year—July 1, 1944 through June 30, 1945. This was chosen as the last full year which would

1. J. R. ELLINGSTON, *Is the Youth Authority Idea Really Paying Off?*—PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN PRISON ASSOCIATION, New York: American Prison Association, 1950, p. 197.

P. V. Tappan, citing studies by the Gluecks, Healy and Bronner, and Bowler and Bloodgood, in *Juvenile Delinquency*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1949, p. 430.

2. S. GLUECK AND E. T. GLUECK, *UNRAVELING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY*, New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1950: "Even official studies which are far from complete or thorough, show that high percentages of prisoners (often from half to two-thirds) are recidivists," (p. 3).

permit a five year follow-up with the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint registration records available at the institution. Starting with a reasonably complete file for all former inmates of current F.B.I. registrations (through approximately June 30, 1950 when this service was discontinued), research was undertaken to ascertain the extent of later involvement in offenses (for which they might have been fingerprinted) of men who had been released from the Reformatory for a minimum period of five years. Actually, when the data were tabulated, some of the men had been out of the institution as long as seven years and two months.

To supplement fingerprint registration reports, the files of the state Board of Parole were scrutinized, and inquiries were sent to the police departments of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth, to the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, to the Division of Public Institutions and to the Central Index. Further, a questionnaire to provide information on the adjustment and current status of former inmates was mailed to each man in care of his last known address.³

The first phase of the investigation is, then, a study of whether former inmates of the Reformatory have been held and fingerprinted, otherwise reported for law infractions, or returned to the institution as parole violators in the five to seven year period following their release. The five year period was selected in part on the assumption that men would most likely get into trouble with the law again within such an interval, if at all. Even though the period beginning July 1944 and extending to September 1951 perhaps may not be characterized as entirely typical, because of special social and economic conditions, it was taken as the most recent period which permitted careful follow-up investigation of an interval of at least five years after institutional release.

Compiling a list of all men who left the institution other than on temporary transfer during the fiscal year, it was found that 53 percent of the 345 men in the study left the institution on parole (referred to as Category 1). An additional 32 percent were released at the expiration of their sentences (called Category 3). The remaining 15 percent included men discharged before the expiration of their sentences, released on temporary but renewable "work reprieves," pardoned, and specially discharged. Actually, the study deals with three major groups: parolees, men released after serving until sentence-expiration, and a

3. The Central Index failed to supply social service registrations, and evidence of later arrests from but a small proportion of questionnaires mailed was available for inclusion in the present paper.

composite group of the 345 men released under all the conditions mentioned.

FINDINGS

Of the 183 men who were paroled (Category 1), 33 were convicted, sentenced or returned to custody for felonies (18.0 percent).⁴ Another six were involved in offenses constituting felonies and had their paroles revoked (3.3 percent). Four others were fingerprinted for felonies but no record of conviction is available (2.2 percent). Nine men were convicted and sentenced for misdemeanors (4.9 percent), another had his parole revoked following a misdemeanor, while four other men were charged with similar offenses but whether they were convicted is not known. One man was reported as wanted on felony charges, and two others committed fairly serious traffic violations. 46 (25.1 percent) were subsequently returned to the Reformatory as parole violators—some with offenses otherwise unspecified, and others with arrests for minor offenses besides their parole violations. Thus, in all, 106 parolees (57.9 percent) were involved in further difficulties with the law, while 77 (42.1 percent) were neither recorded as fingerprinted, wanted by officials, nor returned as parole violators.

The next major group (Category 3)⁴ comprised the 110 men who served until the expiration of their sentences. Of these, 33 were convicted and sentenced for felonies (30.0 percent). Another eight (7.3 percent) were fingerprinted on felony charges but data on disposition are lacking. Seven were convicted of misdemeanors (6.4 percent), and another was found guilty of a minor federal offense. Three men were held for misdemeanors but there is no record of conviction. One individual who was being held for investigation committed suicide in an out-of-state jail. In addition, two men committed other than minor traffic infractions. Three other former inmates were reported on occasion as fugitives by the F.B.I. There remain 52 of the group who were not recorded as having been fingerprinted, wanted by enforcement agencies, nor returned to custody (47.3 percent).⁵

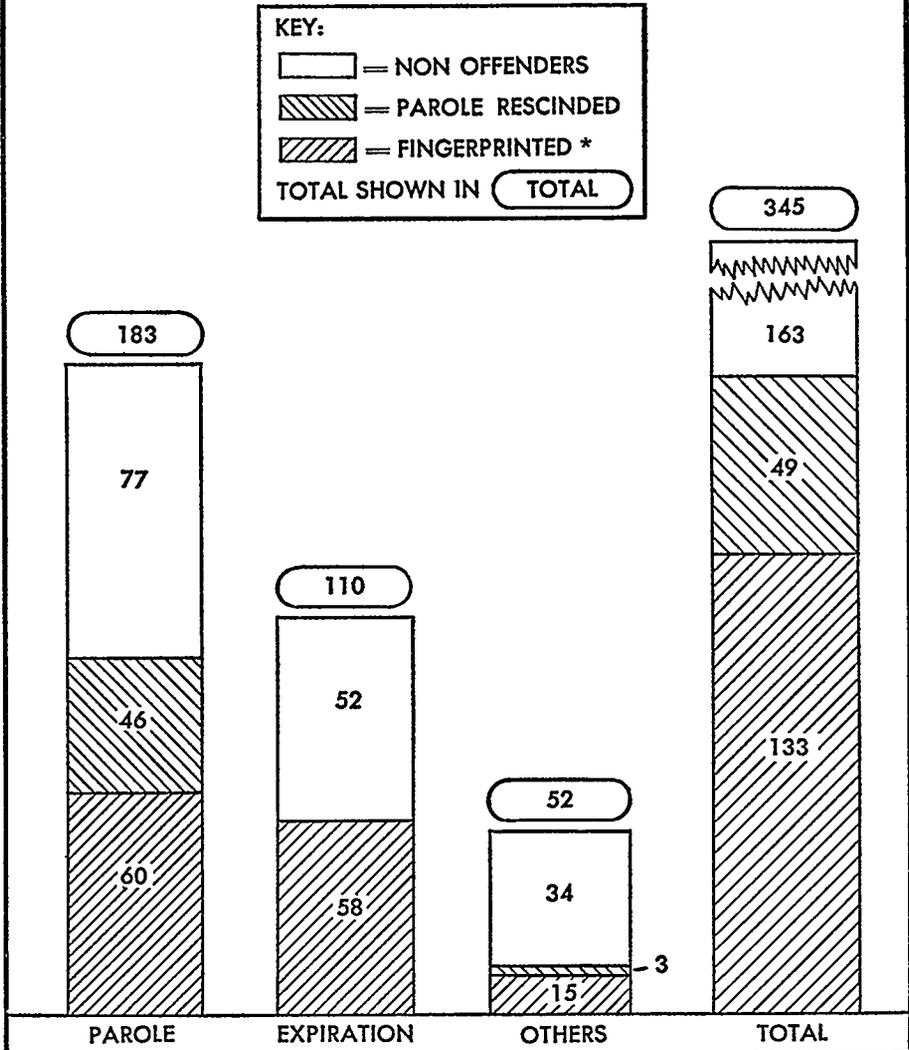
Taking the above-mentioned groups as a whole, 345 men left the Minnesota State Reformatory during the fiscal year 1944 to 1945. Of these, 73 were convicted and sentenced for felonies during the follow-up period (21.2 percent). An additional six (1.7 percent) held on felonies

4. Four other categories (2, 4, 5, 6) comprising 52 men have been analyzed as above. Although these cases have been used in preparation of composite results, detailed findings have been omitted to conserve space.

5. Classifying offenses committed following release proved to be quite difficult to do accurately. In general, where several were committed, men who violated laws were tabulated under the most serious offense in which they were involved.

FIGURE I

SUBSEQUENT FINGERPRINT REGISTRATIONS, PAROLE VIOLATIONS AND OTHER INFRACTIONS OF INMATES RELEASED FROM MINNESOTA STATE REFORMATORY FOR MEN DURING FISCAL YEAR 1944-1945.



*THE FIGURES GIVEN FOR MEN FINGERPRINTED INCLUDE CONVICTIONS ON FELONIES, MISDEMEANORS AS WELL AS THOSE HELD ON CHARGES BUT ON WHOM DISPOSITIONS ARE LACKING.

had their paroles revoked, while another was committed to the Annex for Defective Delinquents. Conviction and disposition data on 12 others who were charged with felonious offenses are lacking (3.5 percent). Twenty of the men released were convicted of misdemeanors (5.8 percent), another man had his parole revoked following one such offense, and five others were involved in fairly serious traffic violations and a federal offense (1.5 percent). An additional eight (2.3 percent) were charged with misdemeanors, but it is uncertain whether they were convicted. Five others, were, on occasion, listed as wanted by law enforcement officials, and one former inmate committed suicide while being held for investigation. Following an escape from a state hospital, one man was committed to a unit for "dangerous insane." Forty-nine other individuals had their permits to be at liberty revoked and were returned to custody (14.3 percent). Of the total group, 163 (47.2 percent) were clear of offenses and revocations during the follow-up period according to records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and the police departments of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth. Follow-up results for the main categories and the composite group are shown graphically in Figure I.

After recognizing the limitations of this study, the findings for recidivism are offered with considerable confidence since they are based on nationwide F. B. I. fingerprint records, supplemented by information from Minnesota law enforcement agencies and the Board of Parole under whose supervision a majority of the men were released. Moreover, support for the relative adequacy of the five year follow-up period for this type of longitudinal research appeared to be reflected in the fact that of the entire group, only eight individuals (2.3 percent) who committed an offense following their release did so for the first time more than five years after leaving the institution. Viewing the data as a whole, then, and granted that results leave a good deal to be desired, recidivism not exceeding 52.8 percent including men held on minor offenses, returned as parole violators, and some apprehended, but possibly not convicted, is slightly less foreboding than the researchers might have been led to expect.

COMPARISONS WITH RESULTS ELSEWHERE

To evaluate these findings, comparisons were made with studies conducted elsewhere and with data available in published annual reports. Investigations most closely parallel to the present research may be found to a large extent in the literature of parole studies. Among recent

projects along these lines are the continuing five year follow-up investigations conducted by the state of New York Division of Parole. In 1948, the Division gave figures for recidivism occurring among men who had been released from the unit in New York to which St. Cloud most closely corresponds—the Elmira Reformatory—during the calendar year 1944, and who might have been free to spend an average of four and a half years out of the institution.

The Division reported that of 346 men released to original supervision, 191 were subsequently declared delinquent.⁶ Thus 55.2 percent were found to be recidivists within somewhat less than five years. How New York and Minnesota parolees compare in later criminal behavior is shown in Table I.

TABLE I
POST-RELEASE OFFENSES OF NEW YORK AND MINNESOTA
REFORMATORY PAROLEES

	Elmira ⁷ Parolees	St. Cloud Parolees
Total Paroled	346	183
Later Criminal Behavior		
Convicted of felonies	69	39*
Convicted of misdemeanors	41	10*
Arrested, no convictions recorded	23	8
Absconded	28	1
Parole revoked for violations	30	46
Other infractions	—	2
Total Offenders	191	106
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PAROLED.....	55.2%	57.9%

* Includes men not convicted of new offenses but whose paroles were revoked following alleged offenses.

Despite differences in the size and composition (age, background, rural-urban status) of the samples, a close correspondence between results in both states may be observed. The small difference in the percentage of offenses committed during the follow-up period between the two groups has been tested statistically and is not significant.⁸ A number of factors including a discrepancy of six months in the start of the release year, and contrasts in the New York and the Minnesota economy and social organization are among the many elements that appear to contribute to the difference obtained. Moreover, on closer

6. State of New York Division of Parole of the Executive Department, NINETEENTH ANNUAL REPORT, Albany, 1949, p. 141.

7. State of New York Division of Parole of the Executive Department, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

8. To check whether this and other differences cited in this paper were significant or more probably attributable to chance factors, a familiar formula for the significance of the difference between percentages was employed. See F. E. CROXTON and D. J. COWDEN, APPLIED GENERAL STATISTICS, New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1942, p. 337 ff.

scrutiny of the New York investigation, it became apparent that the effective period of follow-up was in reality shorter than four and a half years since the study "does not include records of those individuals who are arrested subsequent to their discharge from parole, if they were discharged prior to the expiration of the five year period."⁹ In effect, the project carefully covered the criminal careers of men only under the actual supervision of parole personnel.

For examining correctional programs from another angle, a cross-sectional rather than a longitudinal approach can be employed. Using such a method, rough comparison may be made of the number of men returned as violators to the total number released on parole during the same period. Though a crude "yardstick," figures from annual reports permit some inferences to be made about institutional and parole services at Elmira and St. Cloud as well as the Massachusetts Reformatory at Concord—locus of the Glueck investigations of youthful male offenders. While the institutions involved differ somewhat in policies, procedures, populations, and size, they have enough in common to warrant comparison. Table II presents certain basic facts about population "turn-over" at the three institutions.

TABLE II¹⁰
POPULATION MOVEMENT AT MEN'S REFORMATORIES OF
NEW YORK, MASSACHUSETTS AND MINNESOTA FOR 1944

	Elmira	Concord	St. Cloud
Average daily population	1140	878	668
Paroled and reparaed	522	443	184
Released at expiration	40	21	110
Returned from parole	246	166	52

Cursory examination of the above figures immediately suggests that the criteria for granting parole differed considerably because a much larger proportion of the population at the eastern institutions was released during the year. Considering this, it is not surprising to find a substantially higher ratio of men returned to men released in contrast to the figures for Minnesota where a more restrictive parole policy seems to have been in effect. The figures for St. Cloud are notable, too, for the relatively high proportion of inmates released at the expiration of their sentences. While these data cannot be considered to indi-

9. L. S. CLEVENGER—Administrative Assistant of the State of New York Division of Parole—personal communication of September 19, 1951.

10. Sources for these figures are the State of New York, 18th ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTION, Albany, 1945, p. 360; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, STATISTICAL REPORTS OF THE COMMISSION OF CORRECTION FOR 1944, Boston, 1945, p. 108; and the Minnesota State Reformatory Annual Report for 1944-45.

cate more than a general trend since the men reported as "returned from parole" were not necessarily the same people who were released during that year, the general direction of the figures reflects more favorably on the efficacy of the combined institutional and parole programs in Minnesota than did the results presented in Table I.

To permit comparisons between states that are geographically and economically more similar to Minnesota, information was obtained on population movement at the reformatories in Iowa and Wisconsin during the same year. Although the number of men at the Reformatory at Green Bay was much smaller than at Anamosa or St. Cloud, the institutions are probably operationally sufficiently similar to justify comparison. Figures on population movement for 1944 are shown in Table III.

TABLE III
POPULATION MOVEMENT AT MEN'S REFORMATORIES OF
WISCONSIN, IOWA, AND MINNESOTA FOR 1944

	Green Bay ¹¹	Anamosa ¹²	St. Cloud
Average population	295	622	668
Number released on parole.....	133	134	184
Number received as parole violators...	14	51	52

Again, since the "parole violator" category includes men returned from paroles previously granted regardless of the year of actual release, such data should not be construed as being comparable to a follow-up study of individual inmates. Yet as a general trend, the figures reflect a moderately lower proportion of men returned as violators despite a more liberal parole policy at St. Cloud than at the corresponding institution in adjacent Iowa. The figures supplied for the Wisconsin Reformatory depart substantially from what appears to be the trend in the states mentioned heretofore. Although the statistics imply that even with a fairly liberal release policy, returns for parole violations are relatively few in number reflecting high level institutional and parole programs, the investigators felt that they lacked sufficient information for a definitive evaluation of the data.

Especially pertinent comparison may be made also with the pioneering studies of inmates on parole from the Massachusetts State Reformatory by Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. By no means as broad in scope nor as intensive, with its concern for post-release criminality, the present project is no replica of the penetrating investigations of the Gluecks.

11. J. W. MANNERING, Chief Statistician, State of Wisconsin Department of Public Welfare, personal communication of September 27, 1951.

12. F. DAVIS, Warden, Anamosa Reformatory, personal communication of October 10, 1951.

While focusing on men who left the institution by way of parole, the Gluecks stressed that they were concerned less with the period of parole than with the years following completion of parole, since, during the latter period, the presumably "steadying" influence of supervision was removed. The present project includes parolees with and, later, without supervision, as well as men who were released from the Reformatory for whom no supervision was provided.

Looking at the two studies from a research point of view, the Gluecks had the advantage of funds and a staff which made possible careful analysis and follow-up including personal contacts with former inmates. Although the current investigation has been limited largely to scrutiny of records, these are in some respects more adequate than records available during the early Glueck research because of the comprehensive nationwide fingerprint files that were an outgrowth of the development of the F.B.I. coupled with increased activity in the exchange of criminal information of the last twenty years.

As for results, the Gluecks found that during the period when the men released from the Massachusetts Reformatory were on parole, 203 out of 474 individuals had their permits "revoked or were sentenced while on parole for a new offense" (43 percent).¹³ An additional 59 men did not have their permits revoked but were known by parole officials to have grossly misbehaved (12.3 percent), "making a grand total of 262 (55.3 percent) of the 474 parolees who were officially known to have committed serious breaches of parole conditions including the commission of new crimes."¹⁴ A tabulation comparing the post-institutional behavior of the men in both researches is shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
POST-RELEASE CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR OF MASSACHUSETTS
AND MINNESOTA PAROLEES

	Concord Parolees	St. Cloud Parolees
Released on Parole.....	474	183
Criminal Behavior After Leaving Reformatory		
Revoked or sentenced for new offenses.....	203	95
Other gross misbehavior	59	3
Total Offenders	262	98
PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PAROLES.....	55.3%	53.5%

Beyond crimes which were a matter of record, the Gluecks learned that 25 parolees committed offenses which might have resulted in revo-

13. S. GLUECK and E. T. GLUECK, 500 CRIMINAL CAREERS, New York: Knopf & Co., 1930, p. 167.

14. *Ibid.*

cations had the parole officers known of the misconduct. Correspondingly, eight individuals in the Minnesota group were held on felony and misdemeanor charges, but there is no indication that these men were convicted. Comparing the two percentages of the above tabulations with or without these suspected offenses added, it cannot be said that the slightly more favorable results among Minnesota parolees are not due to chance factors.¹⁵

Carrying their research further, the Gluecks found that at the end of five years following discharge from parole, almost 80 percent of the 422 men on whom information was available committed recorded or unreported offenses during that five year period. Reporting finally after fifteen years of follow-up study, however, the Gluecks found an increase of non-delinquency from 19.9 percent in the first five-year post-parole period to 30.1 percent in the second and 30.8 percent in the third. This was accompanied by an increase of roughly 10 percent in the proportion of minor as opposed to more serious offenses.¹⁶ Such results—reflecting, presumably, a trend toward less criminality with aging (if not maturation)—may serve, in part, to explain why the percentage for recidivism at St. Cloud is somewhat below figures cited as current in the literature, as the institutional population in the present study may have been slightly older at the time of release than youths in other samples.

It is likely, too, that social advances which have occurred have contributed to differences in the personalities of the men who make up reformatory populations of today as compared with their earlier counterparts. Along with improvements and extensions in juvenile and young adult court practice, with greater use of informal disposition, of probation and parole, and of community guidance facilities and social services, it is probable that present-day reformatory populations are more selected—having a core of individuals more consistently non-adjustive and repeated offenders—by comparison with inmates of two decades ago. If current reformatory populations are more “case hardened,” the degree of improvement reflected in the difference between the Massachusetts and Minnesota results may be greater than the small percentage implies.

RECIDIVISM AND MAIN RELEASE CATEGORIES

A somewhat unexpected finding for the investigators was the dis-

15. The obtained difference is well below the 5% level of confidence.

16. S. GLUECK and E. T. GLUECK, *CRIMINAL CAREERS IN RETROSPECT*, New York: The Commonwealth Fund, 1943, p. 123 ff.

crepancy in the "success" of men on parole from St. Cloud compared with the men who served until expiration. Although groups of 183 paroles and 110 expiration cases may not be considered statistically matched, some comparisons may be made.

Later convictions or revocations for felonies were noted for 21.3 percent of the parolees but for 30.0 percent of the expiration group. Involvement, actual or suspected, in felonious offenses was reported for an additional 2.2 percent of the parolees and 7.3 percent of the "expirations." Convictions and presumed involvement in minor offenses did not differ materially for both groups. However, since an additional 46 parolees (25.1 percent) were returned to custody as parole violators, the percentage of men of that category neither fingerprinted nor reconfined (42.1 percent) fell below that of the expiration group (47.3 percent). The two groups are compared in greater detail in Table V which follows:

TABLE V
LATER ADJUSTMENT OF ST. CLOUD INMATES RELEASED
ON PAROLE OR AT EXPIRATION

Later Adjustment	183 Parolees	110 Expirations
Convictions or revocations for felonies.....	21.3%	30.0%
Fingerprinted for felonies.....	2.2%	7.3%
Convictions or revocations for misdemeanors.....	5.4%	6.4%
Fingerprinted for misdemeanors.....	2.2%	2.7%
Returned as parole violators.....	25.1%	—
Wanted by law enforcement officials.....	.6%	2.7%
Other infractions	1.1%	3.6%
Subtotal: involved in later offenses.....	57.9%	52.7%
At large, no offenses reported.....	42.1%	47.3%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%

The fact that a larger proportion of the expiration group remained at large with no offenses reported does not indict parole policies and procedures. On examination of the proportion of actual offenses reported for the two categories, the "expirations" have a higher percentage both of convictions for and suspicion of felonies, and to a slight extent in presumed involvement in minor offenses.¹⁷ Yet, despite obtained differences, parolees cannot be said to commit fewer felonies than expiration cases since parolees may commit felonious offenses, but instead of being prosecuted on a new charge may, for administrative reasons, be returned to custody as "parole violators."

To account for the discrepancy of 5.2 percent in favor of the expiration group for men at large on whom no later correctional contacts

17. If convictions, revocations and arrests (dispositions lacking) for the more serious infractions were grouped together, the 37.3 percent incidence for the expiration group would be significantly higher than the 23.5 percent for the parolees.

are reported, many elements should be considered. As yet, information on the age and background factors of the men composing the two groups has not been analyzed; for instance, it may be found that the average age of the expiration group exceeds that of the parolees. Moreover the men in custody until expiration were discharged from the institution and were not under supervision. Unlike parolees, their adjustment following release was not under scrutiny, and they could not be returned to the Reformatory for less serious infractions or for general maladaptiveness during extra-mural supervision. Also, in compiling follow-up information, the researchers had access to an additional source of information on parolees since the same resources plus records of the Parole Board were consulted. Final information may permit more precise appraisal of the relative post-release adjustment of these two main groups. . . .

Somewhat in contrast to the findings for the two major groups, the degree of recidivism for men in the four other categories of releases (2, 4, 5, 6) taken as a whole (34.6 percent) was even less. However, because these groups do not make a homogeneous composite and because they are quantitatively too small individually for significant comparisons, findings for recidivism of the men involved were included in arriving at a total picture but for the present will not be discussed otherwise.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Returning again to a comparison of recidivism of 52.8 percent among former Minnesota Reformatory inmates with observations of 60 to 80 percent elsewhere, the investigators could not avoid the impression that figures for recidivism used in texts and reference works seem to derive largely from the follow-up studies of the Gluecks—particularly for material about former reformatory inmates. Of course, systematic follow-up studies have been made by parole boards, but seemingly less detailed, longitudinal recent research is available for this group than, for instance, for youths served by juvenile courts and correctional schools. Another source contributing to the difference appears to stem from the method of arriving at the percentage of recidivism. The fact that a uniform standard for applying the label, "recidivist," does not prevail creates more than just a semantic problem. In some instances¹⁸ the term "recidivist" has been used when a prior offense or commitment was noted on admission to a correctional institution. The results presented here deal exclusively with the period following

18. E. H. SUTHERLAND, *PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY*, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1939, p. 585 ff.

rather than preceding reformatory commitment. Thus a new variable is introduced in the form of a time-age factor, and the aging that takes place if recidivism is delimited as a post-reformatory offense may tend to reduce slightly the percentage of incidence of criminal behavior.

Actually, if the concept of recidivism had been applied in the former rather than in the latter manner, it could have been asserted by the Gluecks that the tendency to repeat offenses was almost universal among the young men of their sample. In contrast to the figure of 60.5 percent recidivism during the first five years following release from the Reformatory, the Gluecks found that "85 percent of the young-adult criminals had been arrested one or more times preceding the arrest that resulted in their sentence and commitment to the Massachusetts Reformatory. In fact, only four out of 480 of those young-adult offenders about whom reliable data on this point could be obtained had committed no known delinquencies or crime prior to the offense for which they were sent to the Reformatory."¹⁹ This difference, too, underscores the desirability of the avoidance of "blanket estimates" and the value of careful delimitation when estimates of recidivism are given. Whether the repetition of asocial behavior follows police or court contacts, or juvenile training school, or adult correctional institution experiences should be specified along with the criteria for applying the term "recidivist." Also, the status (e.g. juvenile court probation, parole or discharge from reformatory) of the people to whom the term is applied should be stipulated, thus clarifying further whether later offenses occurred while supervision was being provided.

CONCLUSIONS

A follow-up investigation of the criminal behavior of men during the five years after release from the Minnesota State Reformatory (granted in fiscal 1944-45) showed that recidivism for the 345 men on all types of release was considerably lower than the 60 to 80 percent figure often cited. While the overall figure of 52.8 percent includes suspected criminality, the study makes no inferences about the extent of undetected offenses among the men released although it is conceded that, as is true for the nation in general, undetected crimes may assume large proportions in relation to infractions resulting in arrests and convictions.

A comparison of figures showing recidivism for Minnesota Reformatory parolees and for men released on parole from a similar institu-

19. S. GLUECK and E. T. GLUECK, *AFTER-CONDUCT OF DISCHARGED OFFENDERS*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 17.

tion in New York state at about the same time revealed relatively little difference in the incidence of later offenses during a follow-up period approximating five years.

Comparing population movement at the Elmira, Concord and St. Cloud Reformatories for 1944, a lower proportion of parole violators to the total number of men paroled at the Minnesota Reformatory was noted than at the other institutions where more liberal release policies appear to have been in effect. Similar analysis of figures showed more favorable results in Minnesota than in the neighboring state of Iowa, but a less satisfactory ratio than that reported for Wisconsin during the same year.

Comparison with the study of the Gluecks showed figures for offenses by former Minnesota Reformatory inmates during the parole period to be slightly lower, percentagewise, than for parolees from the Massachusetts Reformatory. Despite a general amelioration of living conditions and advances in social services in the country as a whole, no dramatic advances have occurred in the outcomes of combined institutional and parole treatment in the interval between the two investigations. The results raise the question as to how much more effectively the correctional approach represented by the Minnesota Reformatory, staffed and equipped as it was during the mid-1940's—and comparable institutions—is succeeding in attacking the complex interacting causal factors underlying delinquent behavior than were the methods studied two decades earlier by the Gluecks.

The results suggest, moreover, that to the extent that the Minnesota sample is applicable, it should not casually be assumed that men selected for release on parole from conventional reformatories, and provided with supervision, are likely to commit fewer recognized offenses after leaving the institution than fellow inmates who are confined until the expiration of their sentences. While data on new convictions pointed to the possibility that parolees may be involved in later felonious offenses to a lesser extent than men discharged after serving until expiration, such an assertion could not be made with assurance.

Even these preliminary findings underscore the need for further longitudinal research—especially of a more intensive nature which would permit more direct observation and presumably would yield more fruitful explanations.

Among the areas indicated for more thorough exploration is the need for follow-up investigations of men released for reasons other than parole. Thus, greater attention might be paid to the relationship

between later adjustment and the confinement and reconfinement of men until the expiration of their sentences. While a fair proportion of the former inmates in the present "expiration" sample were serving short sentences for less serious felonies, the remainder were those who were relatively unadjustive. Some were repeated offenders, some did not get along well in custody, others were given trials on parole but had to be returned to serve further time on their sentences for lack of social adaptability. Compared with such men, the parolees who figured in the current study and who were the core of the Massachusetts and New York investigations represented fairly select groups of "better risks" for adjustment in the community. Yet if such a trend as has been observed here is confirmed, these other men who have not been the subject of as much investigation—the "poorer risks"—may be found to commit fewer or at least not many more offenses after release from custody than do parolees under supervision. If such findings are verified in larger scale projects elsewhere, it will then be extremely important to establish the key contributing factors and any practical applications for the treatment of delinquency. Perhaps closer examination of the individuals involved may point up the need for some changes in present thinking on "good" and "poor" risks for post-institutional adjustment in the community, and also may uncover basic strengths which, detected early, may be used to make correctional experiences more effective.