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A FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATION OF RECIDIVISM

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Approximately half of all those who are once incarcerated in a penal institution will find themselves incarcerated at least once more during their lifetimes.¹ This fact would suggest that considerable research should have been done on the social-psychological processes leading to recidivism. However, the research on this topic is relatively scanty—especially when compared with the volume of research done on the factors leading to the initiation of criminal careers. Most of the research that has been done on recidivism has been directed toward the development of prediction tables for the identification of those who were most likely to succeed on parole. Those most likely to succeed were to be released before those less likely to succeed.² Use of these tables improves the chances of parolees' succeeding on parole by, on the average, only about twelve percent beyond selection by pure chance.³ Perhaps the crucial point to be made about the past research on recidivism is that it has been oriented toward identifying those indicators of parole success which could be determined *prior* to the parolees' release rather than those processes of association and identification which general role theory and the differential association theory suggest are crucial in bringing about criminal behavior.

This lack of research has permitted us to continue to hold one of two stereotypes about the adjustment parolees are expected to make on parole. One of these stereotypes pictures the ex-convict as a man who has been beaten by society,

has paid his debt, and seeks a new life. The reason this stereotyped ex-convict gets into trouble again is that he cannot find work to support himself or his family and turns to crime in desperation. The other stereotype pictures the ex-convict as more criminally-inclined than he was when he entered the penal institution since jails and "pens" are "schools of crime." The ex-convict in this stereotype returns to crime because of his increased expertise in crime, increased prestige among criminals, and increased antipathy to society. The research reported in the present paper suggests that neither of these stereotypes is an accurate description of parolees, at least not juvenile parolees. This paper presents evidence for the proposition that "A parolee who has experienced relatively ineffective teaching about acceptable social behavior, who continues to interact with groups which are presently shrinking and leaderless but have delinquent histories, and who has difficulty adjusting to his groups will commit new crimes in an attempt to integrate his groups and maintain his acceptability in them." This proposition suggest that the parolees' social relations on parole are more important than his personal characteristics in determining his success or failure on parole.

METHOD

This hypothesis was developed during a study of the adjustment of fifty-five 14 to 17 year old Cook County parolees from the Illinois State Training School for Boys at St. Charles, Illinois. The design of the study called for the selection of fifty parolees and two friends of each of these parolees, all of whom would serve as a panel to be interviewed at the time of the parolees' release and a second time approximately five months after the parolees' release. An interview with the parolee and an inter-

¹ SUTHERLAND & CRESSEY, *PRINCIPLES OF CRIMINOLOGY* 577-580 (6th ed. 1960).

² For a history of the development of parole prediction in three phases, see Schuessler, *Parole Prediction: Its History and Status*, 44 J. CRIM. L., C. & P.S. 73-91 (1954).

³ SUTHERLAND & CRESSEY, *op. cit. supra* note 1, 583.

view with at least one friend at each stage of the panel were actually obtained for forty-six parolees.

The lack of previous research on the adjustment of parolees (especially juvenile parolees for whom the adjustment to work is surely less important than it is for adult parolees) left the selection of types of data to be acquired somewhat open. The types of data sought were designed to describe the following six processes of adjustment:

1. Changes in parolees' anticipated actions (attitudes) toward five social objects.
2. Changes in the parolees' friends' expectations for the parolees' behavior toward these same five social objects.
3. Changes in the parolees' friendships on parole.
4. Changes in the parolees' participation in peer groups.
5. Changes in the parolees' groups, as groups.
6. The verbal efforts by adults to get parolees to conform to non-delinquent norms.

The data on the first of these processes consist of two scores made by each parolee on each of five attitude scales. The first of each of the two scores was made at the time of the parolee's release. The second of each of the two scores was made approximately five months after the parolee's release. The five attitude scales elicited attitudes toward, respectively, a) conflict within their peer groups, b) interacting with their peers as over other people such as their families, c) responsiveness to the requests of their parents, d) responsiveness to the requests of policemen, and e) conflict with groups other than their own. Each scale consisted initially of ten items calling for a response on a one-to-five scale rating the probability of a hypothetical "Joe's"⁴ taking a given action in the situation specified in the question.⁵ Items were selected for scaling by correlating the raw responses to each item with the sums of the raw responses for all items in each scale. From four to seven items were

⁴ Getzels and Walsh reported that when direct and projective attitude items were paired by object, less socially acceptable answers were consistently given to the projective items. Their findings suggest that asking my questions as for "Joe," who the boys are instructed is a close friend who "likes to do the same things you do and usually feels the same way you do about things," would reduce the tendency of my respondents to give socially acceptable answers. See Getzels & Walsh, *The Method of Paired Direct and Projective Questionnaires in the Study of Attitude Structure and Socialization*, 82 *Psy. Monos.* No. 1 (1958).

⁵ By adapting somewhat Green's classification of attitude measures, these measures might be called "elicited, verbal, action attitudes." Green, *Attitude Measurement*, HANDBOOK OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY 335 (1954).

selected for each of the five scales. This item selection procedure was checked by both Cornell technique scalogram analysis and the computation of point bi-serial coefficients for each item. These latter procedures would have resulted in quite similar item selections. Thus, the data on attitude changes consist of "before" and "after" parole experience scores for each parolee on each of the five scales.

The data on the process of change in parolees' friends' expectations consist of items constructed and scaled to correspond to the action attitude items, except that the friends were asked to rate the strength of their desire for the parolees to take or not to take the actions specified in the questions. These expectations were elicited from parolees' friends at both stages of the panel.

The data on the changes in parolees' friendships, changes in parolees' interaction with groups, and changes within parolees' groups were elicited by straightforward questions asked in the second interview with the parolees. The questions called for descriptions of relations the parolees had before and after their incarceration.

The data about the verbal teaching by adults were elicited in the second interview with the parolees (and with the first ten friends who said they had never been taken to the police station). I asked the parolees to identify an older person who had told them about how to act or about what the older person thought was right or wrong. I then asked how what this person had told them related to intragroup conflict, interacting with their friends, responsiveness to requests of policemen, responsiveness to requests of older persons, and fighting. With reference to each "teaching," I asked for the reasons the older person gave for acting as he said, what the parolee responded, what the older person said then, etc. I then asked how many times this older person and the parolee had talked about this subject and how long these talks had usually been. The amount of teaching done during the parole period seems to have been so small that no attempt was made to compare the teaching done before and after the parolees' incarceration.

The description of the method of research points to at least two limitations on the validity and reliability of the data thus acquired.

1. The data are only those which the boys were willing to give and able to relate to me. No doubt this willingness was limited by the fact that I was an "outsider." It is my impression, however, that I was accepted for what I claimed to be—a college

student doing research as part of my school work—and was classed with psychologists and counselors as relatively harmless. Even when the subjects were quite willing to talk with me, I am sure that their perceptions of the events described prevented my obtaining fully accurate data.

2. The available means of identifying parolees' friends was inadequate. I asked prospective parolees to give me the names and addresses of three fellows they expected to "run around with a lot" after they got out. I specified that, if they ran with more than one kind of group, one of their "nice" friends and one of their friends that got in trouble should be included. I also told them that I would contact only the first two fellows whose names they gave me if I could find them. This procedure probably resulted in my contacting an over-representation of "nice" friends. This procedure also resulted in my getting the names of a few boys with whom the parolees hoped to run on parole even though they had never really been close friends. These and other friends who were not seen on parole because of spatial moves or other factors were replaced by "substitutes" in the second stage of the panel. However, the differences between the expectations of a friend and his substitute represent a change in the expectations to which the parolee was subject as surely as if a single friend had changed his expectations. Therefore, I felt justified in equating the differences between a friend and his substitute with the changes by one friend.

FINDINGS

This paper focuses on the differences in the adjustment processes between those parolees who were reincarcerated during the first five months of their parole and those who were not. All of the eleven boys who were reincarcerated during this period committed new crimes rather than merely technical violations of parole rules. Some of the crimes on parole, however, such as riding in a stolen vehicle and running away, were also violations of parole rules and might not result in incarceration if they were first offenses. The data available suggest at least six conclusions about the similarities and differences between recidivists and non-recidivists.

I. Recidivists Do Not Have Any More Anti-Social Attitudes Than Do Non-Recidivists. Recidivists' scores do not differ significantly from those of non-recidivists on the scales of responsiveness to requests of parents, responsiveness to the requests

of policemen, or the scale of attitudes toward conflict with groups other than their own. These equivalences of attitudes are maintained at both stage 1 and stage 2 of the panel. Similarly, recidivists do not differ significantly from non-recidivists in their desire to interact with their peers. The non-significant difference that does exist in this last regard suggests that recidivists may want to interact with their peers *more* than do the non-recidivists. Thus, it appears that recidivism is *not* a function of a generally anti-social attitude.

II. Recidivists' Friends' Expectations Are No More Anti-Social Than Are Those Of Non-Recidivists' Friends. The recidivists' friends hold expectations for the recidivists that do not differ significantly from the expectations non-recidivists' friends hold for them with regard to responsiveness to requests of parents, responsiveness to requests of policemen, or conflict with groups other than their own. In fact there is a non-significant tendency for recidivists' friends to want recidivists to take an even less positive attitude toward intergroup fighting than they do. Thus, it appears that recidivism is *not* a function of simple response to the expectations of parolees' peers.

III. Recidivists Experience Less Effective Anti-Delinquent Teaching Than Do Non-Recidivists. The teaching done by older persons (as the parolees reported it) was almost unanimously anti-delinquent (*against* fighting, stealing, hanging with friends instead of with the family, arguing with policemen, being disrespectful of elders, etc.). Studies focused on other problems suggest that persuasion is most effective when, among other things, a) the appeals made stimulate a mild degree of anxiety but not a strong fear,⁶ b) the persuasion technique is based on discussion rather than lecture,⁷ and c) the persons to be persuaded can identify with the persuader.⁸ We would expect, then, that the recidivists would not respond to this anti-delinquent teaching as well as would the non-recidivists if the teaching directed to them more often was reinforced with strong fear appeals, done by lecture, and done by women. The data permit a three-way comparison on these criteria of effectiveness of antidelinquent teaching. The data on "non-delinquents" in Table

⁶ HOVLAND, JANIS & KELLEY, COMMUNICATION AND PERSUASION Ch. III (1953).

⁷ MILLISON, *Audience Reaction to Symposium*, 21 Q. J. SPEECH 43-53 (1935); UTTERBACK, *The Influence of Conference on Opinion*, 36 *Ibid* 365-370 (1950); LEWIN, *RESOLVING SOCIAL CONFLICT* ch. 4 (1948).

⁸ NYE, *FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND DELINQUENT BEHAVIOR* 70-73 (1958).

TABLE I
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ORAL ANTI-DELINQUENT TEACHING

Criterion of Effectiveness	Non-Delinquents (N = 10)	Non-Recidivists (N = 35)	Recidivists (N = 11)
1. Percent of total reasons given by adults that use strong fear appeals. (Primarily threats of police action.)	45 (25 of 56 reasons)	51 (91 of 177 reasons)	61 (28 of 46 reasons)
2. Percent of times teaching was done by lecture (i.e., with no more than a single reply such as "Okay" by the boy).	33 (13 of 38 teachings)	62 (100 of 162 teachings)	45 (17 of 38 teachings)
3. Percent of total teaching done by women	56 (25 of 44 teachings)	62 (130 of 212 teachings)	72 (28 of 39 teachings)*

* The differences in the total numbers of "teachings" in rows two and three result from the fact that the parolees frequently are unable to recall sufficient details of interaction processes for me to count the number of interchanges that took place.

I are for the first ten friends of parolees who said they had never been taken to the "station."

While the statistical significance of the data in Table I does not attain respectable levels, the data do suggest that anti-delinquent teaching using appeals other than strong fear appeals, using methods other than lecture, and done by men is more effective than the types listed in the table. It appears, in turn, that the recidivists, by and large, received less effective anti-delinquent teaching than did the non-recidivists.

The ineffectiveness of this teaching by adults was compounded for the recidivists by their general breaking off, during parole, of friendships with individuals. Friends the parolees knew as individuals were known largely at Boys' Clubs, church, school, etc., and were, therefore, relatively non-delinquent friends. Of the sixteen non-recidivists who had had such friends before incarceration, fifteen still had such friends after incarceration. Of the nine recidivists who had had such friends before incarceration, however, only one continued to have individual friends after incarceration. Thus, the recidivists received fewer effective definitions favorable to non-delinquent behavior from both adults and peers than did the non-recidivists.

IV. *Recidivists Are More Likely Than Non-Recidivists To Maintain Interaction With Groups With Delinquent Histories.* This conclusion clearly coincides with predictions that would be made about recidivism from the differential association viewpoint. It is clear from the data in Table II that recidivists continue to associate with delinquent groups more than the non-recidivists do.

TABLE II
THE GROUP ASSOCIATIONS OF PAROLEES ON PAROLE

Group Characteristic	Recidivists (N = 11)	Non-recidivists (N = 35)
1. Percent <i>reducing</i> interaction with those groups with whose members they had committed the crime for which they had previously been incarcerated. (Chi-square of the difference significant at .01 level).....	27	87
2. Percent <i>reducing</i> interaction with groups that have experienced two or more incidents of conflict with the police.....	36	48
3. Percent <i>reducing</i> interaction with groups that have experienced two or more fights with other groups.....	36	61

V. *Recidivists Have More Difficulty Adjusting To Their Peers Than Do Non-Recidivists.* This conclusion clearly does not coincide with expectations based on the differential association view. There are, however, several lines of evidence that lead to this conclusion. The first line of evidence utilizes the scores made by recidivists and non-recidivists on the scale of avoidance of intra-group conflict before and after parole experience. The recidivists' mean score on this scale was 2.0 and the non-recidivists' mean score on this scale was 1.18 before release from the state school. The recidivists were actually *more* inclined to avoid conflict within their

groups before their release than were the non-recidivists. If our null hypothesis is that the two groups should have the same mean score (the score that is the mean for all parolees), chi-square analysis would reject this hypothesis at the ten percent level of significance. After five months of parole experience, the recidivists' mean score on this scale had fallen to 1.37, while the mean score of the non-recidivists had risen to 1.8. Thus, on parole, the recidivists became *less* inclined to avoid conflict with their peers, while the non-recidivists became *more* inclined to avoid conflict with their peers. If our null hypothesis is that the changes in the mean scores for the two groups should be the same (the mean change for all parolees), chi-square analysis would reject this hypothesis at the ten percent level. This pattern of attitude changes suggests that recidivists had more difficulty adjusting to their peer groups than did the non-recidivists.

A second line of evidence for this conclusion deals with the relationships between the parolees and those friends of the parolees interviewed in the research project. The parolees were asked, at the end of five months of parole, whether they now liked the friends I had initially interviewed more, less or about the same as they had before the parolees had gone to St. Charles. Similarly, the friends were asked at the same time whether they now liked the parolees more, less, or about the same as they had before the parolees had gone to St. Charles. Table III presents the data on the changes in liking in these parolee-friend relationships. Since there were only eleven recidivists and thirty-five non-recidivists, it appears (though not quite at respectable levels of statistical significance) that the negative changes in liking in the recidivists' relations were somewhat more common than in the non-recidivists' relations.

We would expect that such changes in liking would be associated with the breaking off of relationships and the establishment of new friendships. Recidivists did, in fact, change friends more often than the non-recidivists. The recidivists maintained only nine friendships while breaking or making nineteen. The non-recidivists maintained thirty relationships while breaking or making only twenty-three. The chi-square of this difference is significant at the .01 level. The recidivists broke an average of 1.19 friendships and made an average of .45. The non-recidivists broke an average of .66 friendships and made an average of .34.

We would also expect this instability of the re-

TABLE III
CHANGES IN LIKING BETWEEN PAROLEES AND FRIENDS

Type of Change	Recidivists	Non-recidivists
1. Number of friends who liked a parolee <i>more</i> after incarceration than before.....	0	11
2. Number of parolees who liked a friend <i>more</i> after incarceration than before.....	1	5
3. Number of friends who liked a parolee <i>less</i> after incarceration than before.....	2	55
4. Number of parolees who liked a friend <i>less</i> after incarceration than before.....	4	5

cidivists' relationships to be reflected in the degree to which they would be responsive to their friends' expectations. The data indicate a slight tendency in this expected direction. Recidivists shifted 42% of their attitudes toward their friends' expectations while shifting 29% of their attitudes away from their friends' expectations. The non-recidivists shifted 46% of their attitudes toward their friends' expectations, while shifting only 20% of their attitudes away from their friends' expectations.

The third line of evidence that recidivists had more trouble adjusting to their peers than did the non-recidivists is somewhat indirect. We would assume that successful adjustment to a peer group would involve increasing interaction with the group if it was growing or becoming more integrated (developing a leadership or adopting a name) and conversely reducing interaction with a group if it was shrinking or disintegrating (breaking into cliques, not hanging together as much, etc.). The non-recidivists' changes in their interaction with their groups did, in fact, show such a correlation. The recidivists' changes in their interaction with their groups showed no correlation at all with the changes taking place in their groups. The data on these changes appear in Table IV.

While no one of these three lines of evidence that recidivists had more trouble adjusting to their peers than did the non-recidivists is thoroughly convincing in itself, their consistency gives considerable validity to the conclusion.

The data on the changes in parolees' relationships with the friends interviewed are not independent from the data about the difficulty experi-

enced in adjusting to peer groups. Well over half of all the friends I interviewed were in a group to which a parolee also belonged.

VI. Recidivists Are More Likely Than Non-Recidivists To Be In Groups On Parole To Which It Is Difficult To Adjust. The difficulty of adjustment described in conclusion V calls for some explanation. Conclusion I and the scores on the scale of attitudes toward intragroup conflict (before parole) suggest that this difficulty arose because the groups to which the recidivists happened to return were groups to which adjustment would be difficult. It would seem, at least on intuitive grounds, that larger groups might be easier for one who has been away for a number of months to return to, since the relationships to be re-established might be relatively shallow and secondary compared with the relationships in a smaller group. It would also seem that groups with recognized leaders would be easier to adjust to than groups in which the "pecking order" is not clearly established. It would also seem that a group which is

losing "members" would be more difficult to adjust to than one which still possesses the dynamic of growth. If these suppositions are valid, then the recidivists had, on the average, a slightly more difficult task of adjustment before them when they were paroled than did the non-recidivists. Table V gives the data to support this conclusion.

In addition, it should be noted that recidivists were more likely to be in groups without leaders after incarceration than they had been before their incarceration. Seventy-nine percent of their groups had leaders before their incarceration while only 68% of their groups had leaders after their incarceration. The non-recidivists, on the other hand, were more likely to be in groups with leaders after their incarceration than they had been before. Seventy-three percent of their groups had leaders before their incarceration while 80% of their groups had leaders after their incarceration.

We might characterize the recidivists' groups, then, as groups which are tending to shrink and disintegrate. This, in itself, may account for some

TABLE IV
RELATION BETWEEN INTERACTION AND GROUP CHANGES

Changes in Group Size	Changes in Interaction			Changes in Group Integration	Changes in Interaction		
	Rise	Constant	Fall		Rise	Constant	Fall
<i>Recidivists:</i>							
Rise.....	0	3	1	Rise	0	1	0
Constant.....	0	2	4	Constant	0	6	10
Fall.....	0	5	4	Fall	0	2	0
	(no correlation whatever)				(no correlation whatever)		
<i>Non-recidivists:</i>							
Rise.....	3	3	0	Rise	0	1	0
Constant.....	4	12	16	Constant	7	18	23
Fall.....	0	3	18	Fall	0	1	9
	(relation significant at 10 percent level)				(relation significant at 15 percent level)		

TABLE V
TYPES OF GROUPS TO ADJUST TO ON PAROLE

Characteristic of Groups	Recidivists (11 recidivists interacted with 19 groups)	Non-recidivists (35 non-recidivists interacted with 59 groups)
1. Percent of parolees' groups that were small (10 or fewer) after incarceration.....	53	45
2. Percent of parolees' groups that were without leaders after incarceration.....	32	20
3. Percent of parolees' groups that became smaller between the parolees' incarceration and second interview with parolees.....	47	30

of the difficulty recidivists had in adjusting to their peers. It should be noted in addition, however, that lower class teen-age groups which are shrinking and disintegrating are also often characterized by "slowing down" and "not doing much any more." These phrases are used by the boys to describe groups which are not as delinquent in their behavior as they once were. In other words, it appears that recidivists are a bit more likely than non-recidivists to return to groups whose culture no longer prescribes as much delinquent behavior as it once did. The parolees, of course, were not present during the change in the group culture.

It might seem that certain of these variables which differentiate recidivists and non-recidivists would be related to the ages of the boys involved. Such a relationship does not, however, appear to exist. The mean age of the recidivists was 15.4 years at their birthday last preceding their release while the mean age of the non-recidivists was 15.2 years. Taking the data on all the parolees together, there is no correlation whatever between age and reported decreases in size of peer groups or reduction of parolees' interaction with peer groups. Most surprising of all the ages of those parolees who reported that their peer groups were disintegrating (not hanging together as much, getting interested in other things, etc.) are distributed almost exactly like those of all the parolees.⁹

DISCUSSION

The two main conclusions just presented—(IV) that recidivists are more likely than non-recidivists to maintain interaction with groups with delinquent histories and (V) that recidivists have more difficulty adjusting to their peers—seem to pose a paradox for the differential association theory of criminality. It would appear that if parolees were not well adjusted to their groups, even extensive association with these groups would not result in the parolees' adopting the groups' definitions for behavior. It may be, however, that recidivists' groups serve as reference groups with which they identify even though they do not adjust well to

⁹ Dimock similarly reported that he found no correlation between the ages of boys 10-17 and the cohesiveness of their groups. DIMOCK, *REDISCOVERING THE ADOLESCENT* (1932), quoted in HORROCKS, *THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ADOLESCENCE: BEHAVIOR AND DEVELOPMENT* 235 (1962). It appears that the general disintegration of peer groups which we expect in late adolescence does not occur in measurable ways until after the boys are over 17 and, therefore, were not subjects for the present research.

them. The following resolution of the paradox also provides a highly suggestive explanation for recidivism.

Recidivists became more dependent on groups for their peer contacts during the parole period, groups which were commonly small and becoming smaller and often without leaders. In the past, however, these groups had experienced considerable conflict with the police and other groups and had supported the recidivating parolees in the crimes for which they had been incarcerated at St. Charles. It seems reasonable that the conflicts experienced in the past by the recidivists' groups tended to integrate those groups.¹⁰ It also seems reasonable that the leaders of these conflict activities gained in acceptability in their groups by this leadership. Thus, a parolee who perceives his group as shrinking and without leadership and, more important, perceives that he is having difficulty readjusting to his group might well conclude (perhaps unconsciously and/or erroneously) that engaging in conflict activity would integrate his group (since conflict integrated it in the past) and increase his own acceptability to the group (since leadership in conflict activities had been conducive to acceptability in the past). For parolees in this kind of group situation, then, recidivism may serve two functions—(1) creating conflict designed to reintegrate the group and (2) especially, adding to the parolees' otherwise diminishing acceptability to their peers.

The tentative explanation I propose for recidivism, then, may be phrased as follows: A parolee who has experienced relatively ineffective teaching about acceptable social behavior, who continues to interact with groups which are presently shrinking and leaderless but have delinquent histories, and who has difficulty adjusting to his groups will commit new crimes in an attempt to integrate his groups and maintain his acceptability in them. Certainly this explanation would not cover all cases of recidivism, but it seems plausible that such explanatory factors may be involved in the majority of cases of recidivism by juveniles.

This conclusion suggests that parolees' social relations rather than their personal characteristics are decisive in determining their success or failure

¹⁰ Highly integrated groups have a meeting place, a leader, and a name. Only six of the forty-three highly integrated groups about which I have information attained their integration without experiencing at least two incidents of conflict. Integration ratings and amount of conflict experienced relate beyond the .01 level for the total 113 groups about which parolees could give information.

on parole. This emphasis is in general agreement with Sutherland's differential association theory of crime causation. However, the conclusion goes beyond the theory to specify one particular type of group relations conducive to the development of an "excess of definitions favorable to violation of the law."¹¹ It appears that relations with an historically delinquent group which does not presently accord the actor high status are especially likely to be criminogenic. This statement of the conclusion suggests a relation between the conclusion and the explanation of criminality as a function of status deprivation.¹² Parolees seem to respond to status threats within their groups by channelling their activities according to the norms of the delinquent subculture. It would not be surprising that parolees would attempt to gain status by these activities even in groups which no longer prescribe delinquent behavior, since the parolees' incarceration prevented their participation in the development of new group norms.

Since this conclusion was drawn, Short and Strodtbeck have published a paper¹³ showing that a threat to the status of gang leaders often results in carrying out aggressive activities to regain their status. The conclusions of this paper and the Short and Strodtbeck paper, though developed independently, are strikingly similar.

This conclusion raises the possibility that parolees' adjustments during the first few months of parole might serve as a basis for prediction of success or failure later in the parole period or after release from parole. In an attempt to test this possibility, the records of the forty-six parolees studied were checked for further recidivism two years after the completion of the original project. The records indicated that, in addition to the eleven who had recidivated in the first five months of parole, seven of these parolees had acquired a further criminal record. The records of yet another seven of these parolees had been called for by another agency of the Illinois Youth Commission. Such a call for a boy's records normally indicates that he is in trouble again. What will be compared here, then, is the incidence of recidivism-producing factors (as identified in this paper) for these four-

¹¹ SUTHERLAND & CRESSEY, *op. cit. supra* note 1, at p. 78.

¹² COHEN, *DELINQUENT BOYS: THE CULTURE OF THE GANG* (1955), and succeeding papers.

¹³ Short & Strodtbeck, *The Response of Gang Leaders to Status Threats: An Observation on Group Process and Delinquent Behavior*, 68 A. J. Soc. 571-579 (1963).

TABLE VI
PREDICTION OF RECIDIVISM

Actual Result	Prediction of Recidivism	Prediction of Success
Those who were actually recidivists.....	7	7
Those who were actually successful.....	2	17

teen boys and for the nineteen parolees who had not recidivated within two years of their release.

The following factors are considered to be recidivism-producing:

1. A lowering of the parolee's score on the intra-group conflict avoidance scale.
2. The parolee's maintaining the same level of interaction with the group with whose members he committed the crime for which he was incarcerated.
3. The parolee's having fewer individual friends after than before his incarceration.
4. Over half of the teaching by adults having been done by women.
5. Over half of the reasons given by adults for acting as directed having been strong fear arousing appeals.
6. Over half of the incidents of teaching by adults having included no more than one interaction (interchange) with the parolee.
7. One or more of the parolee's groups being smaller after than before incarceration or being leaderless after incarceration.

If we set five of these factors as the number that will produce recidivism within two years of parole, we get the results that appear in Table VI. The upper left and lower right cells represent correct predictions and include 74% of the total for whom predictions were made. Pure chance selection of 40% of the thirty-five parolees as failures would result in correct selections in 52% of the cases. While an improvement in prediction of only 22% beyond chance selection is not impressive, it is better than the average of 12% improvement achieved by predictive devices presently used before release. These data suggest that it might be desirable for parole officers or others to evaluate parolees' adjustments to their peers some time after release on parole. These evaluations might be used as a means of determining which parolees most needed continued parole supervision. Such a deter-

mination would certainly be in line with the philosophy of the indeterminate sentence.

Further research should be undertaken to determine whether or not the factor of parolees' adjustment to their groups (in addition to their simple associations with the groups) is significantly related to recidivism when other types of criminals are involved and when actual field observation of ad-

justment might be made. Taken all together, the data presented above suggest that the basic conclusion of this paper—that recidivism is engaged in because it functions to integrate a group with a delinquent history and raise the acceptability of the recidivist—is, to say the least, an acceptable working hypothesis for further research on recidivism.