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WORK FURLOUGH AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION: AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS EFFECTS ON RECIDIVISM AND SOCIAL COST

ROBERT JEFFERY* AND STEPHEN WOOLPERT**

Sentencing of the criminal offender is the central activity of the criminal justice system. The majority of cases prosecuted in criminal courts result in a determination of the defendant's guilt. Whether prosecution leads to a formal trial or to a negotiated plea, the sentence is the culmination of the judicial process.

There are two basic problems in present sentencing practices. The first results from the contradictions inherent in a criminal system whose purposes include both punishment and rehabilitation. Punishment is believed to further the goals of deterrence, retribution and protection. It requires that an offender be denied access to opportunities and resources readily available to non-criminals. Rehabilitation, on the other hand, is intended to produce inmates who are ready to assume responsible roles in the community after release. It requires that an offender receive guidance, supervision and training in excess of that freely available to the average citizen. Thus, it is not surprising that judges often find it impossible to impose punishment and to prescribe rehabilitative measures at the same time. They must choose one at the expense of the other or strike a compromise which serves neither goal satisfactorily.

The second problem of sentencing lies in its future-oriented nature. A sentence "tries to predict how an offender will behave under certain circumstances and how other potential offenders will behave."¹ The task of predicting the outcome of judicial dispositions is complicated by several factors. For example, although judges have considerable latitude in deciding the fate of convicted offenders, few have sufficient knowledge of behavioral laws (which are frequently at odds with conventional wisdom) to make socially optimal choices. Also, the failure of correctional officials to systematically evaluate various correctional pro-

grams has resulted in a paucity of descriptive data regarding the manner in which different individuals will respond to different rehabilitation efforts.² Moreover, judges seldom observe and are not held accountable for the impact which a sentence has on the subsequent behavior of an offender. Consequently, they are not strongly motivated to improve their performance. The net effect of these influences is haphazard sentencing practices that are rarely standardized even within a single jurisdiction.³

There is growing concern over the need to upgrade society's sentencing and correctional practices. This concern stems from a humanitarian interest in the living conditions in correctional institutions, from a desire to reduce the incidence of violent uprisings in prisons, and perhaps most importantly from the alarming rate at which those released from custody are subsequently incarcerated for new crimes.

Many believe that traditional punitive practices are counter-productive to rational social planning. This view is well expressed in the 1969 San Francisco Crime Commission Report:

Imprisonment is a most ineffective tool for rehabilitation. . . . Imprisonment is detrimental to the future adjustment of some offenders, and it is likely to embitter the convicted persons and turn them loose, more skilled criminally, to prey on society again. . . . The system of criminal justice should so operate that dangerous criminals are not released into the community, that less hardened persons may not be unnecessarily brutalized by jailing, and that the taxpayer does not bear needless or wasted cost.⁴

Similar sentiments are also expressed by social scientists,⁵ whose empirical work suggests that

² CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY OFFICE OF RESEARCH, *CRIME AND PENALTIES IN CALIFORNIA* 25 (1968).

³ AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SENTENCING AND REVIEW, *AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION PROJECT ON MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE, STANDARDS RELATING TO SENTENCING ALTERNATIVES AND PROCEDURES* 49 (1967).

⁴ SAN FRANCISCO COMMITTEE ON CRIME, *A REPORT ON SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY JAILS AND CITY PRISONS* 7 (1969).

⁵ A. BANDURA, *AGGRESSION: A SOCIAL LEARNING*

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This work was conducted under the auspices of Stanford Workshops on Political and Social Issues.

¹ PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, *THE CHALLENGE OF CRIME IN A FREE SOCIETY* 348-49 (1968).

punishing criminal behavior without providing pro-social alternatives may well produce more ingenious criminal activities rather than the prosocial adjustment that is desired.

Increased awareness of the many failures of jail and prison systems has resulted in an upsurge of interest in alternatives to incarceration. Although specific recommendations differ, the main thrust of recent proposals is that it is less expensive, more productive, and ultimately for society's benefit to keep offenders out of prison. Such proposals would move the bulk of the correctional effort to the community level.

This study focused on the effectiveness of one community based program, the work release or work furlough program. The work furlough program permits selected inmates to work at-large in the community during the day and to return during their non-working hours to the institution. In theory, therefore, it represents a mid-point between incarceration and probation.

There are three fundamental features of the work furlough program. First, while it is logical extension of the philosophy of individualized treatment, it differs from most other such programs (e.g., psychological and vocational counseling, medication, behavior modification) in that it decreases rather than increases the amount of direct control which the correctional system exercises over the individual's life. Second, in line with experimental evidence indicating that post-institutional setting events are the primary source of variance in recidivism rates,⁶ the program does not focus on "rehabilitating" the offender while he is incarcerated, but rather on facilitating his reentry from a highly structured institution into society. Finally, work furlough, like many other community based programs, costs less to administer than total incarceration. Work furloughees assume a share of the administrative costs of the program, repay outstanding fines and debts, support their families and return to society in better financial shape than inmates released from total incarceration. Thus, work furlough is a method by which selected offenders may be better integrated into the community without increased risk to the community and at a measurable savings in cost to the community.

ANALYSIS (1973); McCorkle & Korn, *Resocialization Within Walls*, 293 ANNALS 88 (1954).

⁶ G. FAIRWEATHER, *SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY IN TREATING MENTAL ILLNESS: AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH* (1969).

In practice, however, there is little reliable evidence of the program's effectiveness. Research conducted on work furlough programs⁷ has generally concluded that work furloughees do as well or better than other groups of inmates after release. However, much of this work has been criticized on the grounds that adequate control groups were not used (i.e., regular inmates who shared the same social and criminal background). The criteria used to select work furloughees are not clearly defined or consistent, but correctional officials attempt to include those deemed most likely to benefit from the program and to exclude those who present the greatest risk. In evaluating such a program, it is essential to select control inmates using similar criteria.

This control problem is a persistent one in correctional systems research. While the soundest evaluation procedure would be to randomly assign inmates to different rehabilitation programs, judges and correctional officials are understandably reluctant to prevent an offender from participating in a progressive program when they think the program will benefit him. At the same time, they are reluctant to include an inmate in a program if they believe he will abuse the opportunity. Moreover, the punitive traditions of corrections work make it tempting to use programs like work furlough, which are highly valued by the inmates themselves, as rewards for inmates who "behave" in the regular institutional setting.

An alternative approach to the problem of selecting control groups for evaluation purposes is to find a group of inmates whose backgrounds are similar to the inmates in the program of interest. The problem with this procedure is that the two groups may still differ on some unmeasured factor (particularly when selection criteria are not clearly specified). Nevertheless, it is considerably better than comparing known dissimilar groups. In the present study, by comparing work furloughees with a carefully selected control group of inmates with similar social and criminal histories, the study hoped to avoid some of the criticisms of earlier

⁷ CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, *WORK AND TRAINING FURLOUGH PROGRAM* (1970); DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, *IN-PROGRAM AND POST-RELEASE PERFORMANCE OF WORK-RELEASE INMATES*, Research Report No. 13 (1969); HARRISON, *Two Year Follow-up Study of the First 100 Inmates Admitted to the San Mateo County Work Furlough Facility*, SAN MATEO COUNTY SERVICE LEAGUE (1970); NEWMAN & BIJEL, *Work-Release: An Alternative in Correctional Handling* (1967) (unpublished thesis in Pennsylvania State University).

work and thus determine more accurately the effect of work furlough on recidivism rates.

In addition, since there was no research providing any basis for evaluating the selection criteria used in assigning offenders to work release programs, the study also examined the recidivism rates of men with different social and criminal histories. The purpose was to determine whether present selection criteria screen out the least desirable inmates and include those most desirable for the program and if not, what factors might better determine acceptability.

The authors held only one clear expectation about the results of the research. It was predicted that work furlough inmates would fare better overall after release than the comparison group. This prediction was based on the assumption that a person leaving jail with a job and work experience would have less difficulty adjusting to society than a person with neither. The work furlough experience should provide an economic base for a pro-social adjustment.

Method

The present study examined the work furlough program in San Mateo County, California. The facility was established in 1966 pursuant to Section 1208 of the California Penal Code,⁸ which permits convicted misdemeanants to continue or secure employment while serving their sentence.

There are two methods of admission to the program. Those with jobs prior to the execution of their sentence (approximately 50 per cent of the program population) may apply directly to the program administrator. Those without jobs are reviewed by a classification committee, which assigns eligible cases to the program on a provisional basis while they seek employment. The average program population varies between eighty and ninety men.

Inmates are confined to the work furlough facility except during working hours or while seeking employment. The program administrator supervises all inmate travel, expenditures and visiting privileges. A per diem maintenance charge based on the inmate's gross income is deducted from his earnings. Net weekly income among work furlougees ranges from \$43 to \$285, with a mean income of \$114 and a median income of \$97.

A basic policy of the California work furlough program is that participants must work in fair and

competitive employment programs. Wages and working conditions must be on par with those prevailing in the area. Participants are not permitted to accept jobs which pay on a commission basis, which lack adequate job insurance programs, or where labor disputes are in progress. A minimum wage of two dollars per hour is required to enable the inmate to benefit financially from participation.

Although there is no formal job placement service, inmates are encouraged to find employment consistent with their skills, training, and post-release expectations. The majority of the inmates continue in their jobs after release from the program.

The work furlough sample consisted of all those admitted to the San Mateo County work furlough program during the first four months of 1967 ($n = 110$). Of this group twelve were returned to jail for disciplinary problems, loss of job or other reasons. Since no information on incorrigibility was available for the comparison group, these twelve were retained in the sample.

The control group was selected from inmates in the San Mateo County jail system during the year 1965—the year prior to the establishment of the work furlough program. The group was drawn from the records of the Southern Municipal Court Clerk ($n = 94$). These men served their sentences in either the Sheriff's Honor Camp or the main jail.

Current selection policy excludes sex offenders, narcotics offenders and violent criminals from the work furlough program. Therefore, in the initial selection of the control group, the same general criteria were applied: minimum 30 day sentences, no narcotics, sex, or violent offenders.

Additional, less formal criteria which also determine eligibility for work furlough include employability, prior criminal record, and family ties in the community. In order to control the influence of these variables, two types of information were obtained for both groups: social background and criminal history. Social background data included age, race, marital status, and type of occupation. Criminal background data included number of prior convictions, nature of the current offense, length of sentence and time actually served for the current offense. This information was obtained from arrest records in the County Hall of Justice.

A series of statistical comparisons were made between the two samples on all of these variables (see Table 1). The groups were not perfectly matched. However, they did not differ substan-

⁸ CAL. PENAL CODE § 1208 (West 1966).

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF SOCIAL AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUNDS OF EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUPS

Background Variable	Work Furlough (n = 110)	Control Group (n = 94)	Statistical Comparison
Social Background			
Mean Age	31.83 yrs.	30.12 yrs.	t = 1.20 (.20 < p < .50)
% Married	49.1	38.3	X ² = 2.42 (.10 < p < .25)
% Skilled	29	23	X ² = 1.68 (.10 < p < .25)
% Caucasian	62	51	X ² = 3.49
% Minority	38	49	(.05 < p < .10)
Criminal Background			
Mean Prior Convictions	6.36	5.96	t = .50 (.20 < p < .50)
Vehicle Code Violations*	42%	37%	X ² = 1.11
Non-support	17%	22%	(.50 < p < .75)
Other Violations**	41%	41%	
Mean Sentence	154.5 days	124.1 days	t = 1.93 (.05 < p < .10)
Mean Time Served	57.2 days	79.2 days	t = 2.87 (P < .01)

* Most common vehicle code violations are driving without a license (work furlough, n = 29; control, n = 18); Drunk Driving (work furlough, n = 12; control, n = 9); Others (work furlough, n = 10; control, n = 9).

** Most common others are disturbing the peace (work furlough, n = 6; control, n = 10); Assault (work furlough, n = 6; control, n = 10); Petty Theft (work furlough, n = 5; control, n = 5).

tially in any respect except length of time served. Furthermore, since work furlougees regularly serve a portion of their sentences in the main jail prior to their admittance to the program and also because approximately 10 per cent of the work furlough sample stayed for only a few days in the program before being returned to jail for rule infractions, it was decided to consider the two groups as adequately matched on this factor as well.

The fact that there was a two year time difference between the two samples introduced the possibility of additional uncontrolled factors. Unemployment rates were undoubtedly different in 1967 than they were in 1965, sentencing practices may have changed with the advent of the work furlough program, crime rates may have been different, and changes in law enforcement techniques could conceivably have contributed to changes in inmate populations. However, because the work furlough and control samples were similar in terms of the demographic variables measured, and also because no a priori reason could be found for predicting differential effects on the basis of year alone, it is a reasonable assumption that these factors would not bias the results. Undoubtedly, the majority of the

men in the control group would have been eligible for work furlough if the program had existed in 1965. Had a control group been selected from inmates in 1967 this conclusion would have been unwarranted, since they would have already been excluded from the program, presumably for cause.

Having drawn the two groups, forms were sent to the California Bureau of Criminal Investigation and Information (C.I.I.) requesting criminal records for each individual. The C.I.I. records were examined and the number of arrests and convictions in each of the four years following release was recorded for each inmate. These figures served as the dependent variables in the study. Half of the records were scored independently by the two investigators. Agreement exceeded 90 per cent on the year-by-year arrest and conviction figures and on four year totals taken for each man.

One inmate was dropped from the work furlough sample because he died before the end of the four year period. Two control subjects were also dropped: in one case because C.I.I. records could not be located and in the other because the inmate had inadvertently been recorded twice under different names.

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF INMATES NOT ARRESTED OR CONVICTED OF A CRIME IN EACH OF THE YEARS FOLLOWING RELEASE FROM JAIL

Time Period	% Not Arrested		Significance Value*	% Not Convicted		Significance Value*
	Work Furlough	Control		Work Furlough	Control	
Year 1	51 n = 109	25 n = 91	z = 2.43 p < .01	61 n = 109	35 n = 91	z = 2.52 p < .01
Year 2	68 n = 106	51 n = 87	z = 2.40 p < .01	77 n = 106	61 n = 87	z = 2.50 p < .01
Year 3	65 n = 105	59 n = 83	z = 1.44 NS	79 n = 105	72 n = 83	z = 1.76 p < .05
Year 4	70 n = 105	60 n = 89	z = 1.44 NS	90 n = 106	67 n = 89	z = 2.85 p < .01
Four Year Total	23 n = 109	13 n = 92	z = 3.51 p < .001	43 n = 109	23 n = 92	z = 3.57 p < .001

* Since a directional prediction was made regarding overall effects, the p values reported in this table are one-tailed.

The post-release arrest and conviction data were highly skewed toward zero. There was also considerably more variance in the control group data than in the work furlough data. Therefore, non-parametric statistical tests were used throughout the analyses.

A. Overall Comparisons

Table 2 gives year-by-year and overall success rates for the two groups. Mann-Whitney U tests performed on these data revealed that in general, work furlough inmates fared substantially better after release from jail than the control group inmates. They were convicted of significantly fewer crimes in each of the four years following release and had significantly better arrest records in the first two years and for the four years as a whole. The overall differences between the two groups were substantial since there was less than one chance in a thousand of the result being due to chance alone. Thus, the data strongly supported the contention that work furlough softens the impact of reentering society after a period of incarceration. The fact that arrest rates were reliably different only in the first two years, however, suggests that the benefits diminish over time. Many variables might contribute to this effect: family stability, job satisfaction and participation in other rehabilitation programs.⁹ Apparently, variables other than initial program placement become more important over time.

⁹ It should be noted that many control group failures were later involved in work furlough programs.

Unfortunately, work furlough does not completely eliminate reentry problems. A Friedman two-way analysis of variance showed significant differences between years for both groups (Arrests: Work Furlough, $X_r^2 = 13.05$, $p < .01$; Control, $X_r^2 = 26.69$, $p < .01$; Convictions: Work Furlough, $X_r^2 = 10.02$, $p < .02$; Control, $X_r^2 = 17.60$, $p < .01$). Whether inmates served time in the work furlough program or in other county facilities, they were arrested and convicted more frequently in the first year after release. Comparisons with the Wilcoxon test indicated that work furlough inmates had significantly poorer records in the first year after release than in any other year. They also had significantly more convictions in the third year after release than in the fourth. The control group inmates did significantly worse in the first year following release than in any of the subsequent three years. They also had more arrests in the second year than in the fourth. (See Table 5 for test values.) It appears that although the transition from incarceration to freedom is easier for work furloughees than it is for other inmates, the first year after release is still particularly difficult.

B. Criminal History

To determine whether work furlough has a differential impact on men with different criminal histories, the two samples were subdivided in terms of the offense for which the inmates served time, prior criminal record, and length of time served. Table 3 shows the four year success rates of inmates in these various categories.

TABLE 3

PERCENT OF INMATES NOT ARRESTED OR CONVICTED OF A CRIME IN THE FOUR YEARS FOLLOWING RELEASE AS A FUNCTION OF PRESENT OFFENSE, PRIOR CRIMINAL RECORD, AND LENGTH OF TIME SERVED

Subgroup	% Not Arrested		% Not Convicted	
	Work Furlough	Control	Work Furlough	Control
<i>Present Offense</i>				
Non-Support	26 n = 19	27 n = 22	37 n = 19	36 n = 22
Vehicle Code Violations	24 n = 45	10 n = 31	44 n = 45	19 n = 31
Miscellaneous	20 n = 46	10 n = 39	40 n = 45	18 n = 39
<i>Prior Convictions</i>				
0 to 1 prior	39 n = 18	31 n = 16	61 n = 18	44 n = 16
2 to 5 priors	33 n = 39	18 n = 40	54 n = 39	25 n = 40
6 or more priors	12 n = 52	3 n = 36	29 n = 52	11 n = 36
<i>Time Served</i>				
0 to 30 days	30 n = 46	5 n = 22	54 n = 46	14 n = 22
31 to 90 days	14 n = 42	11 n = 37	26 n = 42	24 n = 37
91+ days	29 n = 21	27 n = 30	52 n = 21	33 n = 30

The crimes for which inmates in the two groups were incarcerated were divided into three categories: non-support, vehicle code violations, and miscellaneous offenses. Comparisons between the work furlough and control groups for the different crime categories revealed that there was no difference between the two groups of inmates convicted of non-support. Work furlough inmates who were sentenced for vehicle code violations had significantly fewer convictions than the comparison control inmates ($z = 2.23, p < .05$), but did not differ from their control counterparts in arrests. Work furlough inmates in the miscellaneous category were dramatically superior to their control group matches, both in arrests ($z = 2.70, p < .01$) and convictions ($z = 3.22, p < .01$). Thus, work furlough clearly reduced recidivism for offenders convicted of disturbing the peace, assault, and petty theft. The program appeared to have little effect on non-support violators.

To determine whether work furlough has a

differential impact on individuals with different histories of criminal activity, the two samples were subdivided into three groups: individuals with less than two convictions prior to the present offense, those with two to five prior convictions, and those with six or more prior convictions. Comparisons between work furlough and control group inmates with similar records revealed that there were no differences between the two groups with zero or one prior conviction and that work furlough inmates with two to five prior convictions did better after release than their control counterparts (Arrests, $z = 2.06, p < .05$; Convictions, $z = 3.44, p < .001$). Similarly, work furlough inmates with six or more prior convictions fared better than control inmates with six or more prior convictions (Arrests, $z = 3.25, p < .01$; Convictions, $z = 2.98, p < .01$). Again, work furlough had differential effects. It reduced recidivism rates among men with moderate or extensive criminal records, but had no reliable effect on those sentenced for a first or second offense.

The following categories were used in analyzing whether length of incarceration was related to recidivism: zero to 30 days, 31 to 90 days, and 91 or more days in jail. Comparisons between work furlough and control inmates in the respective time-served categories showed that work furlough inmates serving less than 30 days did significantly better after release than their control counterparts (Arrests, $z = 3.23, p < .01$; Convictions, $z = 3.36, p < .001$). Those serving thirty to ninety days in work furlough did not differ from the comparable control inmates. Long term work furlough inmates did better than long term controls in convictions ($z = 2.56, p < .05$), but not in arrests.

C. Social Background

Table 4 shows the success rates of inmates in the two samples who differ in age, race, marital status, and job skills.

Three groups were selected in order to analyze the effects of work furlough on individuals of different ages: nineteen to twenty-five years, twenty-six to thirty-five years, and thirty-six years or older. Comparisons between work furlough and control individuals in the same age categories again revealed differential effects. Work furlough inmates between nineteen and twenty-five years of age did better than control inmates in the same age range (Arrests: $z = 2.45, p < .05$; Convictions: $z = 2.89, p < .01$). The differences between work

furlough and control inmates in the older age groups were not statistically significant. Work furlough was thus more effective with younger inmates than it was with older ones.

One argument in support of work release programs is that they provide financial support for the family of the inmate. Recidivism rates were analyzed as a function of marital status to determine if this factor influenced the likelihood of police contacts after release from jail. Between-group comparisons showed that married work furlough inmates fared no better than their control group counterparts, while unmarried work furlough inmates did considerably better after release than unmarried control inmates (Arrests, $z = 3.66$, $p < .001$; Convictions, $z = 3.78$, $p < .0001$). In fact, unmarried work furlough inmates did better than married control inmates (Arrests, $z = 2.11$, $p < .05$; Convictions, $z = 2.08$, $p < .05$). Thus, work furlough was clearly more effective with unmarried than with married inmates.

TABLE 4

PERCENT OF INMATES NOT ARRESTED OR CONVICTED OF A CRIME IN THE FOUR YEARS FOLLOWING RELEASE AS A FUNCTION OF AGE, MARITAL STATUS, JOB SKILLS, AND RACE

Subgroup	% Not Arrested		% Not Convicted	
	Work Furlough	Control	Work Furlough	Control
<i>Age</i>				
19 to 25 yrs.	33 n = 39	18 n = 39	56 n = 39	26 n = 39
26 to 35 yrs.	21 n = 33	5 n = 22	42 n = 33	18 n = 22
36+ yrs.	16 n = 37	16 n = 31	29 n = 37	23 n = 31
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Unmarried	34 n = 56	12 n = 58	52 n = 56	22 n = 58
Married	13 n = 53	18 n = 34	34 n = 53	24 n = 34
<i>Job Skills</i>				
Unskilled	22 n = 78	12 n = 69	42 n = 78	19 n = 69
Skilled	29 n = 31	19 n = 21	45 n = 31	38 n = 22
<i>Race</i>				
Caucasian	26 n = 68	23 n = 47	49 n = 68	34 n = 47
Minority	20 n = 41	7 n = 45	34 n = 41	11 n = 45

TABLE 5
WILCOXEN TEST VALUES FOR BETWEEN YEAR
COMPARISONS OF ARREST AND
CONVICTION RATES

Com- parison	Work Furlough		Control	
	Arrests	Convictions	Arrests	Convictions
Year 1 vs Year 2	$z = 3.36$ $p < .001$	$z = 2.98$ $p < .01$	$z = 3.02$ $p < .01$	$z = 2.35$ $p < .05$
Year 1 vs Year 3	$z = 3.32$ $p < .001$	$z = 2.52$ $p < .05$	$z = 4.63$ $p < .001$	$z = 4.25$ $p < .001$
Year 1 vs Year 4	$z = 3.31$ $p < .001$	$z = 4.11$ $p < .001$	$z = 5.25$ $p < .001$	$z = 4.01$ $p < .001$
Year 2 vs Year 3	$z = -.37$ NS	$z = -.23$ NS	$z = 1.63$ NS	$z = 1.44$ NS
Year 2 vs Year 4	$z = .93$ NS	$z = 1.95$ NS	$z = 2.26$ $p < .05$	$z = 1.48$ NS
Year 3 vs Year 4	$z = .65$ NS	$z = 2.11$ $p < .05$	$z = .96$ NS	$z = -.27$ NS

Because work furlough involves inmates working regularly while serving their sentence, it is relevant to analyze the success of men with different job skills. Professionals were combined with skilled workers and were compared with unskilled and manual laborers. Analysis revealed that work furlough was superior to previous rehabilitation methods for unskilled individuals (Arrests, $z = 2.92$, $p < .01$; Convictions, $z = 3.33$, $p < .001$), but not for skilled individuals. Thus, work furlough seemed to benefit unskilled inmates more than it did skilled workers.

The last social background factor investigated was race. Those inmates with Spanish surnames and those listed as "negro" by C.I.I. were combined as minority group members. The remainder of the inmates were considered Caucasian. There were no Orientals in either sample. Between sample comparisons showed that minority group inmates did substantially better in the work furlough program than they did in the control group (Arrests, $z = 2.16$, $p < .05$; Convictions, $z =$

2.78, $p < .01$). Caucasian inmates in the work furlough sample had significantly fewer convictions than their control counterparts ($z = 2.16$, $p < .05$), but the two groups did not differ in arrests. These results suggest that work furlough benefited both Caucasian and minority group inmates, the effects being slightly more convincing for the latter group.¹⁰

To determine whether any single variable was responsible for the differential effects of work furlough on those with different backgrounds, Pearson's X^2 s were computed separately for the work furlough and control groups on all pairwise combinations of age, marital status, job skills, race, prior convictions, current offense, and time served. Of the fifty-six contingency tables analyzed, eleven produced X^2 values reaching the .05 level of statistical significance. This was approximately the number that would be expected by chance.

In both samples age was related to the length of time served and the type of crime (Work Furlough, $X^2 = 7.90$, $p < .10$; Control, $X^2 = 9.81$, $p < .05$; Work Furlough, $X^2 = 10.46$, $p < .05$; Control, $X^2 = 10.65$, $p < .05$). Younger inmates served shorter sentences and were less likely to be incarcerated for non-support than older men. Younger inmates were also more likely to be sentenced for miscellaneous offenses than older inmates. Moreover, inmates tended to serve more time for non-support than for miscellaneous violations (Work Furlough, $X^2 = 13.69$, $p < .02$; Control, $X^2 = 20.45$, $p < .01$). Although no causality is indicated by these relationships, it appears that the beneficial effects of work furlough on inmates serving short sentences and those incarcerated for miscellaneous crimes may be due to its differential effectiveness with younger inmates.

Five relationships were evident in one sample but not in the other. Three of these were covariations involving race. Minority group members in the work furlough sample were usually older ($X^2 = 9.22$, $p < .01$) and had more prior convictions ($X^2 = 6.68$, $p < .05$) than Caucasians in this group. In addition, Caucasians in the control group were more likely to have job skills ($X^2 = 10.93$, $p < .001$) than were minority group members.

These relationships introduce some uncertainty about the analyses by race presented above. For

¹⁰ Within group analyses of recidivism as a function of criminal and social background were performed and are available on request from the authors.

example, substantial differences in the job skills of the different racial groups may explain why Caucasians in the control group had better post-release records than minority group members. Similarly, differences in age and job skills may partly explain why work furlough was more effective with minority group inmates than with Caucasians. In pursuing these possibilities, additional X^2 s were performed comparing work furlough and control inmates in the same racial groups as a function of age, prior convictions and job skills. Since none of these covariations were statistically significant, however, it was impossible to verify these speculations. The differential covariations observed may have been due to chance.

Two other covariations were found only in the work furlough sample. First, a larger proportion of work furlougees incarcerated for non-support were unskilled than were work furlougees imprisoned for vehicle code violations and miscellaneous offenses. The second relationship noted was that younger work furlough inmates had fewer prior convictions than older ones ($X^2 = 12.90$, $p < .05$). To determine whether the marked effectiveness of work furlough on younger inmates held when prior convictions were controlled for, a comparison was made between work furlough and control inmates who were 19-25 years old and had two or fewer prior convictions.¹¹ It should be remembered that the work furlough and control inmates with small numbers of prior convictions did not differ overall. Forty-seven per cent of the work furlough inmates in the newly constructed category were not arrested in the four years following release as compared to 33 per cent of the controls. This difference approached, but did not reach the .05 level of significance ($z = 1.70$, $p < .10$). Seventy-nine per cent of the work furlough inmates in this group were not convicted of a crime in the four years following release. Only 39 per cent of the controls achieved this level of performance through all four years. This difference was significant ($z = 2.29$, $p < .05$). Apparently, the differential effects of work furlough on inmates who differ in age, marital status, job skills, and prior criminal record are not attributable to any one of these variables. The lack of a strong relationship between these measures would suggest that the effects are fairly independent. Unfor-

¹¹ Inmates with two prior convictions were included in this comparison because the number of inmates with zero or one prior convictions was too small for meaningful analysis.

tunately, the samples were not large enough to permit a meaningful multivariate analysis.¹²

Discussion

Overall, the four year post-release arrest and conviction records of county jail inmates are discouraging. The 201 men in this study accumulated more than thirty-two years in jail sentences and twenty-seven years in prison terms. Only thirty-eight men (19 per cent) avoided arrest and only sixty-eight (34 per cent) were not convicted of a new offense in the four years following their release.

A comparison of the two groups, however, is more encouraging. The four year totals show the percentages of work furlougees with no arrests and no convictions (23 per cent and 43 per cent) to be nearly double those of the control group (13 per cent and 23 per cent). More notable perhaps is the decline in these differences over time. Between group comparisons for the third and fourth years reveal smaller differences in overall success rates than during the first two years. Thus, not only is work furlough effective in overall terms, but the positive effects of the program are felt most strongly during the immediate post-release period when recidivism rates are the highest.

Perhaps the major finding of the study is that work furlough is most beneficial to those having the highest risk of failure after release. None of the inmates in this study fared better in pre-work furlough facilities than in the work furlough program, but those who fared worst under standard institutionalization showed the most dramatic improvement in the newer program. The highest risk inmates were the unskilled, unmarried men under thirty-five years of age who had three or more prior convictions. Thirty-six per cent of work furlougees with these traits had no arrests in the four years following release, compared to 5 per cent of equivalent members of the control group. Fifty per cent of these work furlougees had no convictions compared to 10 per cent of their control counterparts.

With the evidence presently available, it is difficult to explain why work furlough was most effective with those who were least likely to succeed with regular treatment. The answer may be the fact that this program's main therapeutic function is to return people to work. In doing so it is probably most effective with people who would

otherwise be unemployed and who might engage in illegal behavior. People who are already working would benefit less because their criminal activities are related to other factors.

There are other possible contributing factors. Work furlough is a special program so that inmates prefer it to total incarceration. Admission to such a program may therefore have psychological benefits in and of itself. If so, it is possible that high risk inmates benefit most from this positive "labelling effect," since they presumably have fewer other sources of positive self-esteem. Moreover, information is unavailable on the types of jobs which the men on work furlough are able to obtain. It may be that skilled workers are unable to obtain work commensurate with their ability, thereby weakening the beneficial effect of employment on their post-release adjustment.

Although there were differential effects of work furlough on inmates imprisoned for different offenses, the effects were not obvious. The fact that there were no differences between the two groups of non-support offenders suggests that economic factors may not be primarily responsible for these men's unwillingness to provide for their families. Many of these men (42 per cent) were again charged with non-support after they were released, despite the fact that work furlough provided them with jobs. This is about the same percentage as for the control group (36 per cent).

Vehicle code violations (primarily driving without a license and drunk driving) seemed to be more directly affected by the work furlough program, possibly because furlougees are required to get a valid license and insurance before using an automobile to go to work. Twenty-four per cent of the work furlough inmates serving time for traffic violations were arrested on the same charge after release, about half the percentage for the control group (45 per cent).

The marked effectiveness of work furlough with inmates in the miscellaneous category does not appear to be related to its effect on the crime *per se*. About the same percentage of inmates in both samples were arrested for the same offense after release (Work Furlough, 27 per cent; Control, 31 per cent).

The most perplexing result of this study is the finding that work furlough was of greater benefit to those serving less than thirty days and more than ninety days than to those serving intermediate-length sentences. This effect may be merely the result of chance. The beneficial effects on

¹² Background variables were also combined into a composite "favorability rating." This analysis is available on request from the authors.

those serving thirty days or less may result from the high proportion of young offenders receiving short sentences. Those serving more than ninety days, on the other hand, might benefit by establishing stable work habits and saving considerable amounts of money. It is also possible that the impact of incarceration on inmates' self-esteem and motivation varies in a U-shaped fashion with length of sentence, thus affecting the kinds of post-release adjustments which need to be made.

The impact of the work furlough program is not limited to those involved in it. The entire community benefits from the reduction in the social cost of crime and its punishment. The total cost of operating the San Mateo County work furlough program is \$12.16 per man-day. The equivalent figure for the main jail is difficult to determine, since jails incur the added costs of handling "one-nighters" and those unable to post bail while awaiting trial. It is estimated, however, that the base cost of maintaining a man in jail is about \$2500 a year, or \$6.85 per man-day.¹³ But while the cost of operating the jail is borne entirely by public funds, work furlough receives a major share of its maintenance funds from the inmates themselves. In 1970, the mean per capita charge in San Mateo County was \$5.50 per man-day. This reduces the public cost of the program to \$6.66 per man day, 3 per cent less than the estimated main jail figure.

Perhaps the greatest savings to the community is derived from the decline in recidivism rates. Although the work furlough group was 18 per cent larger than the control group, the former totalled 29 per cent fewer arrests and 44 per cent fewer convictions during the four-year post-release period. This represents an enormous savings to the community in terms of police man-hours, pre-trial detention and court costs. The work furlough group received 2472 fewer days in jail sentences than the controls—a reduction of 35 per cent. At \$6.85 per man-day, this is almost \$17,000 in savings to the community. This figure does not include the considerable savings to state and federal authorities resulting from the fact that the work furlough group received lesser sentences than the control group.

There are two specific ways in which selection criteria for work furlough might be improved. The first would be to relax the general eligibility

requirements for the program in order to make its benefits available to a larger proportion of jailed offenders. Persons convicted of narcotics, sex, or violent crimes are currently ineligible for the San Mateo work furlough program. While the risks involved in allowing such offenders to enter this program are obvious, the present data raise some interesting questions. Since inmates with the highest risk of future incarceration benefit most from the program, would not many of those currently ineligible respond similarly? If so, does this not warrant re-evaluation of the policy which excludes them?

Essentially, the issue is whether those currently ineligible for work furlough face the same kind of transition problems which other newly released offenders face, and whether work furlough provides them with adequate solutions to those problems. Without reliable evidence, the question remains an open one.

The second modification of selection criteria would be to revise the post-release prognosis for various types of offenders. For example, work furlough was considered especially beneficial in non-support cases, since the need to maintain an adequate income is related to the offense. Nevertheless, non-support offenders do not benefit as much from work furlough as do vehicle code violators. Moreover, neither of these groups show as much improvement as do those convicted of penal code violations such as disturbing the peace, petty theft and assault. It also appears that inmates with the worst social and economic backgrounds are most likely to respond to work furlough. The present data indicate that the young, single, unskilled offender with several prior convictions should be given special consideration for this program.

In sum, more research is needed in this area. First, there must be an effort to isolate the variables involved. In particular, more information is needed on the relationship between employment and the decision to commit different crimes. In addition, information is needed on how work furlougees obtain jobs, and on the possibility of mismatches between individuals' job skills and job opportunities.

An effort should also be made to determine whether the beneficial effects of work furlough are partially attributable to a positive labelling effect or whether recidivism could be reduced by simply giving offenders jobs and money without imposing any form of incarceration on them. Answers to

¹³ NATIONAL COUNCIL ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY, REPORT OF ADULT CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES CONSULTATION: SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA (1970).

such problems should rest in part upon evidence obtained directly from inmates regarding program improvements and post release problems in em-

ployment. The aim of such research should be to clarify the relationship between the penal system's conflicting goals of punishment and rehabilitation.