

Probation

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This Issue in Brief

Probation Officer Burnout: An Organizational Disease/An Organizational Cure.—In recent years, considerable attention has been given to burnout of public service personnel; however, little has been published on burnout of probation officers. Author Paul W. Brown looks at organizationally caused burnout and some approaches to moderate it. According to the author, most correctional agencies are based on a military-like structure, and probation departments seem to be no exception. This traditional structure may be responsible for burnout, and there is little a probation officer can do about it. Changes will have to be made by managers who are willing to accept and implement more democratic management styles.

The Privatization of Treatment: Prison Reform in the 1980's.—According to author Francis T. Cullen, a contributing factor to the swing in criminal justice policy to the right has been the failure of progressives to provide plausible policy alternatives. He argues that a viable avenue of prison reform is the privatization of correctional treatment programs—a reform that is politically feasible because it capitalizes upon both the continuing legitimacy of the rehabilitative ideal and the emerging popularity of private sector involvement in corrections. While a number of concerns about profit-making in prisons must be addressed, the author contends, the major advantage of privatizing treatment is that it severs the potentially corrupting link between custody and treatment and thus helps to structure interests within the prison in favor of effective correctional rehabilitation.

A Theoretical Examination of Home Incarceration.—Developing a theoretical rationale for the use of home incarceration as an alternative sentence, authors Richard A. Ball and J. Robert Lilly argue, based on a previously developed theoretical position as to the goals of sentencing generally, that “punishment” is ultimately directed at the restricted reprobation of an act in such a way as to provide for the reparation of that particular conception of social reality agreed upon in a given society. According to the authors, home incarceration has advan-

tages in that it is of easy communicability in terms of present conceptions of social reality, of limited complexity and fairly obvious potential impact, and of reasonable cost. Since it is also characterized by reversibility, divisibility, compatibility, and perceived relevance to organizational goals, it is considered to possess the theoretical advantages necessary to adoption.

Probation Supervision: Mission Impossible.—According to author John Rosecrance, there is a consensus that probation has failed to reduce recidivism and has lost credibility with the public and other criminal justice

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ACQUISITIONS

agencies. Probation supervision has proven ineffective, he contends, because of bureaucratic dynamics and the conflicting nature of officer-client relationships. Although there are calls for drastically overhauling probation services and revitalizing its mission, the prevailing alternatives—(1) service orientation, (2) differential supervision, and (3) intensive supervision—are incremental and fail to address fundamental problems. The author advocates eliminating probation supervision and allowing other agencies to assume these responsibilities. Probation would be left with a feasible and unambiguous mission—providing objective investigation services to the court.

The Dimensions of Crime.—Author Manuel Lopez-Rey discusses a subject addressed at the seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime, Milan, 1985: What are the dimensions of crime? Contending that criminal justice policy is formulated without knowledge of the true scope of crime worldwide, the author holds that what is thought of as constituting crime is only common, conventional crime, and what is not taken into account is unconventional crime—such as terrorism, torture, and summary execution—prevalent in dictatorial regimes where crime often goes unreported. The author addresses how malfunctions in the criminal justice system affect the dimensions of crime, stressing the need to define what is crime by law and to broaden conceptions of crime to include less conventional crime. Influencing factors such as economic crime and criminal negligence are also discussed.

Security and Custody: Monitoring the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Classification System.—Authors Michael Janus, Jerome Mabli, and J. D. Williams report on the Federal Bureau of Prisons' system—implemented in 1979—for assigning inmates to institutions (Security Designation) and to various levels of supervision (Custody Classification) within institutions based on background and behavioral variables. This security and custody system replaced an informal one which relied heavily on individual discretion. The new method quantified the factors involved in decisionmaking and shifted the focus of classification procedures from the diagnostic-medical model to the humane control model. Since 1981, the Bureau of Prisons has monitored the system by recording monthly security and custody breakdowns as well as inmate misconduct and escape information for each of its approximately 50 institutions. This study will report analysis of these data both cross-sectionally and longitudinally at the institution level.

Repeating the Cycle of Hard Living and Crime: Wives' Accommodations to Husbands' Parole Performance.—Author Laura T. Fishman examines the social ac-

commodations made by prisoners' wives to their husbands' post-prison performance. To construct an ethnographic account of the social worlds of 30 women married to men incarcerated in two prisons, the author employed a combination of methods—indepth interviews with wives, examination of prison records, summaries of women's "rap sessions," and a variety of other sources of data. She found that of the 30 women, 15 welcomed their husbands home from prison, and the wives used a variety of accommodative strategies to support their husbands' settling down and to deter them from resuming hard living patterns and criminal activities. The author concluded that none of these strategies were as effective as wives anticipated; wives do not appear to have much influence on whether or not their paroled husbands resume criminal activities, get rearrested, and return to jail.

Community Service Sentencing in New Zealand: A Survey of Users.—Beginning in 1981, New Zealand law authorized sentencing offenders to perform from 8 to 200 hours of unpaid service to a charitable or governmental organization. Authors Julie Leibrich, Burt Galaway, and Yvonne Underhill conducted structured interviews with samples of probation officers, community service sponsors, offenders sentenced to community service, and judges to determine the extent of agreement on the purpose of the sentence, ways in which the sentence was being implemented, benefits thought to flow from the sentence, and the extent of satisfaction with the sentence. According to the authors, the New Zealand experience suggests that community service is a feasible and practical sentencing option. They caution, however, that consistency of administration requires reaching agreement as to the purpose of the sentence and its relationship with other sentences. A number of implementation decisions also need to be resolved, including the role of the offender in selecting a community service sponsor, the role of the judge and probation officer in determining a specific placement, development of working relationships between probation officer and community service sponsor, and the need for a backup sanction.

Assessment Centers as a Management Promotion Tool.—An assessment center or the multiple assessment approach is the careful analysis and programmed assessment of management ability using a variety of job-related criteria. This approach has been used for decades in companies such as IBM, General Electric, American Telephone and Telegraph, and numerous government agencies. The variables or dimensions used to test an applicant's attributes vary from organization to organization, as do the techniques used to test these dimensions. Author William V. Pelfrey reviews the typical techniques

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Security and Custody

Monitoring the Federal Bureau of Prisons' Classification System*

BY MICHAEL JANUS, JEROME MABLI, and J. D. WILLIAMS

Federal Bureau of Prisons

Introduction

CLASSIFICATION has typically been referred to as the assignment of entities to previously defined groupings or categories.¹ As Gottfredson points out, the purpose of classification systems is to group together individuals "...so that each group contains members which are as similar as possible to each other and as different as possible from all other groups..." (p.3).

Historically, correctional organizations have used classification schemes for diagnostic purposes—that is, the grouping together of inmates with perceived similarities for purposes of treatment or rehabilitation. However, the evolution of correctional goals from rehabilitation to "humane control"² has altered the focus of classification in corrections.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has developed a system to assign inmates to institutions (security designation) and to various levels of supervision within institutions (custody classification) based on scales of background variables.³ The purpose of this system is to assign an inmate to a level of security and custody most appropriate for him or her. The BOP is hoping to achieve the goals of security (for the protection of society) and humanity (for the benefit of the inmate) by maintaining control over inmates in the least restrictive possible environment.

Background

Federal inmates are assigned an individual security level (from 1 to 6) based on a total score accumulated from a number of social and criminal history variables, as well as characteristics of the current offense (see Appendix A). Once designated to an institution, the inmate begins at the highest level of supervision (custody) the institution has. There are currently four levels of custody available (community, out, in, and maximum) each requiring progressively more supervision. Custody levels inside the institution are reassigned on the basis of another

scale which is based primarily on the inmate's institutional behavior (see Appendix B).

The BOP has grouped institutions into six separate security levels based on a variety of physical criteria including perimeter security (e.g. walls, gun towers) and staff-inmate ratios. There is a seventh category of security level, "administrative," which is used for those inmates with peculiar needs and houses inmates with all security level designations. Thus, inmates are assigned individual security and custody levels and institutions are grouped by security level; ideally, inmates should match the institution's security level, although this ideal is not always achieved. Hence, there is some mixture (heterogeneity) of inmate security levels at BOP facilities.

A variety of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the Security Designation and Custody Classification System.⁴

Research concerning classification systems often becomes associated with the initial development, validation, and evaluation of those systems. Solomon and Baird and others (see *Classification as a Management Tool: Theories and Models for Decision-Makers*, published by the American Correctional Association, 1982) have emphasized the importance of continued monitoring of classifications systems as an essential component of working systems. With that in mind, we will present an overview of 4 years of data collected to monitor the Bureau of Prisons' classification system.

The Current Study

The Bureau has been collecting monthly data from each institution in the system since 1981. These data reflect the security and custody breakdown (a "snapshot" of the institution's population) as of the last day of each month, as well as aggregated misconduct information. Misconduct information reflects the number of great severity (100 level), high severity (200 level), moderate severity (300 level), and low-moderate severity (400 level)

¹Gottfredson, Don M., "Diagnosis, Classification and Prediction" in *Decision-Making in the Criminal Justice System: Reviews and Essays*. Rockville, Maryland: National Institute of Mental Health-Center for Studies of Crime and Delinquency, 1975.

²Carlson, N. A., "Corrections in the United States Today: A Balance Has Been Struck," *The American Criminal Law Review*, 1976, 13 (4), pp. 615-647.

³Levinson, Robert and J. D. Williams, "Inmate Classification: Security/Custody Considerations," *Federal Probation*, (March 1979), pp. 37-43.

⁴See: Levinson (1980); Mabli and Barber (1983); Moss and Hosford (1982); Johnston, et al. (1984); Kane and Saylor (1983).

*This article represents the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Justice or the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The article was based on a paper presented at the 1985 annual Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada.

incident reports adjudicated at that institution during the month.⁵ The purpose of this study is to use the data to describe security, custody, and misconduct trends in the BOP from 1981 to the present and also to explore possible relationships between security and custody mixtures and inmate misconduct at the institutional level. It is often useful to divide an institution's total incident report rate into that part which groups 100 and 200 level incident reports and that part which includes 300 and 400 level. This is because 100 and 200 level incidents are more important and serious than are 300 and 400 level. Additionally, 300 and 400 level reports could more easily reflect staff discretion.

Similarly, we will talk about an institution's average inmate security or custody level. When referring to an average custody level, "community custody" will equal 1, "out custody" will equal 2, "in custody" will equal 3, and "maximum custody" will equal 4. Security and Custody averages serve primarily as a research function: they are not referenced in the day-to-day running of the BOP.

Results

First, we will look at security level comparisons collapsed over all time periods. Table I illustrates misconduct and escape rates by security level. For the entire

Table 1. MISCONDUCT AND ESCAPE RATES BY SECURITY LEVEL
(1/81 - 9/84)

Institution Security Level	Average Incident Reports /100 Inmates	Average Escape/1,000 Inmates
I	6.38	2.96
II	6.75	1.90
III	8.25	0.22
IV	11.09	0.08
V	9.11	0.03
VI	25.34	0.00
Administrative	11.62	0.44
Total (All Levels)	9.00	1.35

⁵ Examples of behaviors falling into the various categories are as follows:
100 (greatest)—Killing, escape, taking hostages.
200 (high)—Fighting, bribery, engaging in a sexual act, destroying government property.
300 (moderate)—Refusing to work, insolence, indecent exposure.
400 (low moderate)—Malingering, possession of unauthorized property.

Bureau, there was an overall average of nine incident reports for every 100 inmates every month over the time period covered (January 1981 to October 1984). There was an average of 1.35 escapes for every 1,000 inmates in the same time period.

In general, the incident report rate increases with higher institution security level, lending support to the validity of the designations system. This is especially true of more severe (100 and 200 level incident) reports, as Figure 1 indicates. Administrative facilities fall in the middle to high end of the security level continuum in terms of misconduct rates, comparable to security level IV and V institutions. Escape rates are inversely related to institution security level (see Figure 2).

Security and custody patterns are illustrated in Table 2. The average inmate security level for the entire Bureau is 2.18. The average custody level is 2.31 (slightly up from "out" custody). Naturally, the average security and custody level of the population increases with the security level of the institution. This fact is further illustrated in Figure 3. At security level IV, V, and VI institutions, the average security level of the inmate population begins to differ substantially from that of the institution's (especially at levels V and VI). In fact, the inmates in security level V institutions have an average *individual* security level of 4.

Trends

Figure 4 illustrates trends in misconduct for the whole Bureau. Serious (100-200 level) misconduct rates have remained stable over the time period, while less severe

Table 2. SECURITY AND CUSTODY AVERAGES BY SECURITY LEVEL
(1/81 - 9/84)

Institution Security Level	Average Inmate Security	Average Inmate Custody
I	1.22	1.57
II	1.71	2.38
III	2.90	2.76
IV	3.53	2.91
V	4.31	3.13
VI	4.89	3.71
Administrative	2.17	2.55
Total (All Levels)	2.18	2.31

FIGURE 1. INCIDENT REPORT RATES BY SECURITY LEVEL

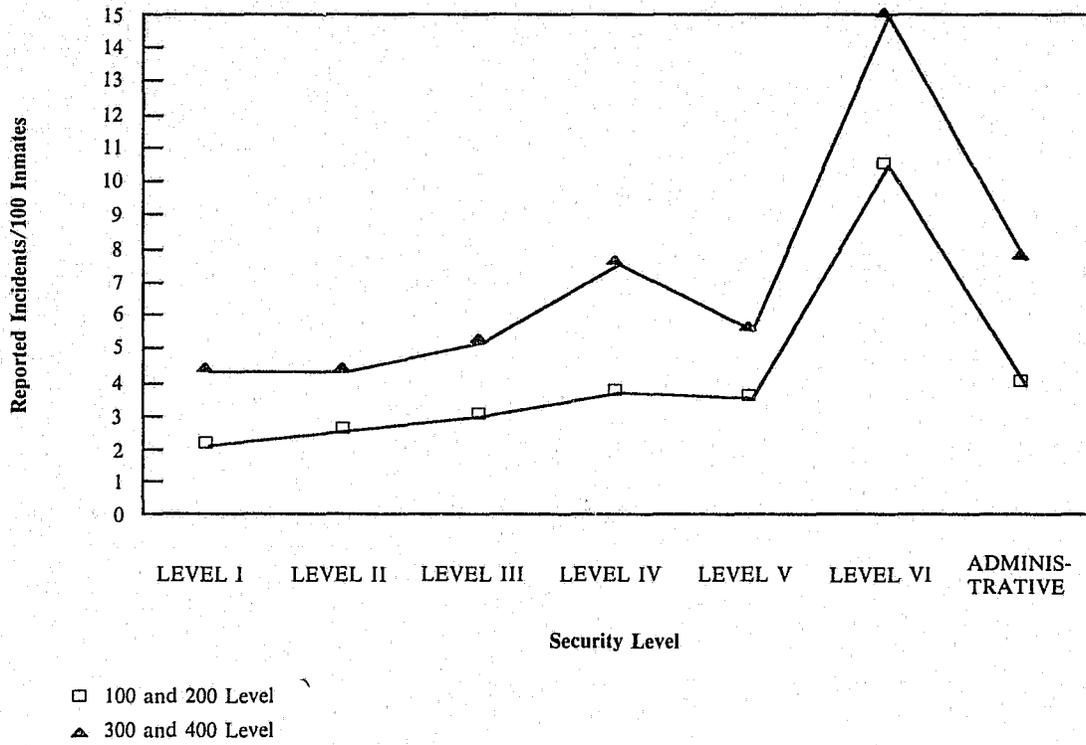
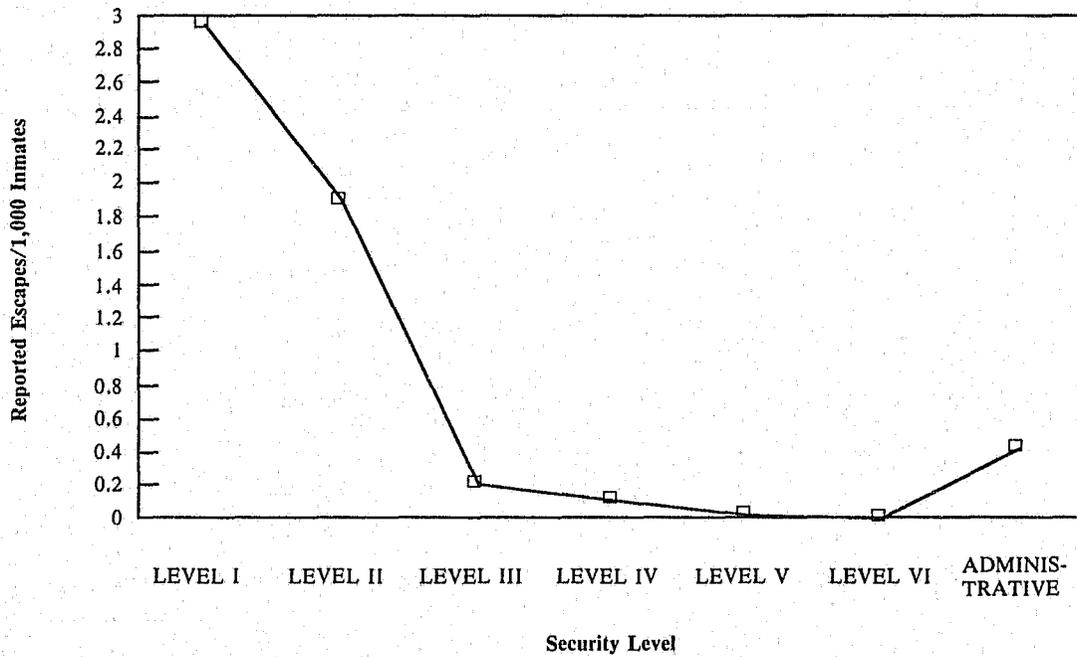
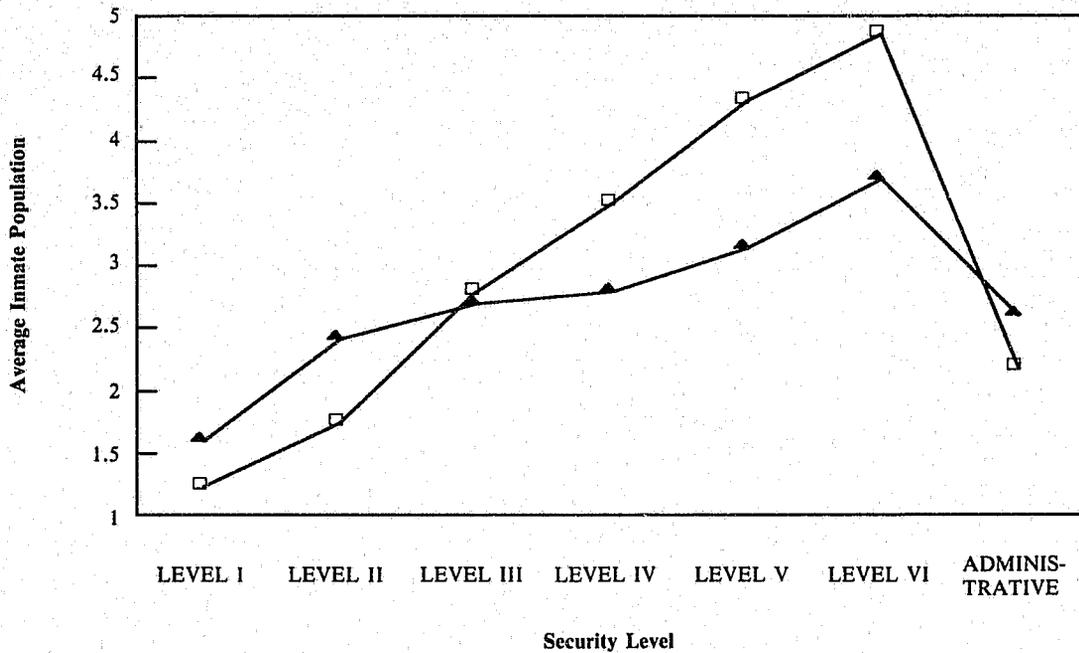


FIGURE 2. ESCAPE RATES BY SECURITY LEVEL



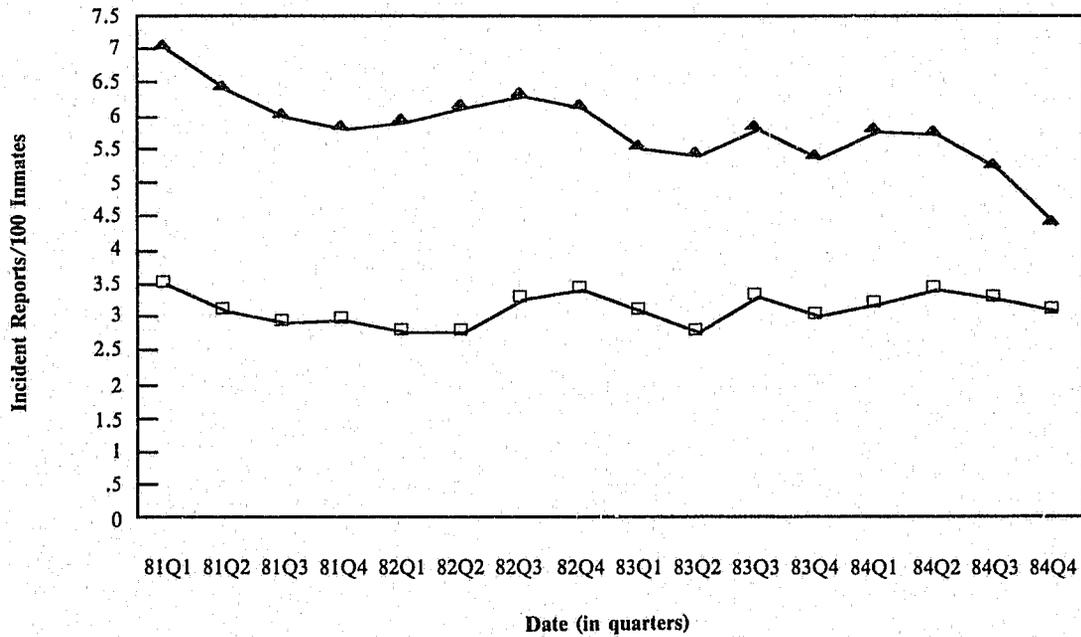
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FIGURE 3. SECURITY AND CUSTODY BY SECURITY LEVEL



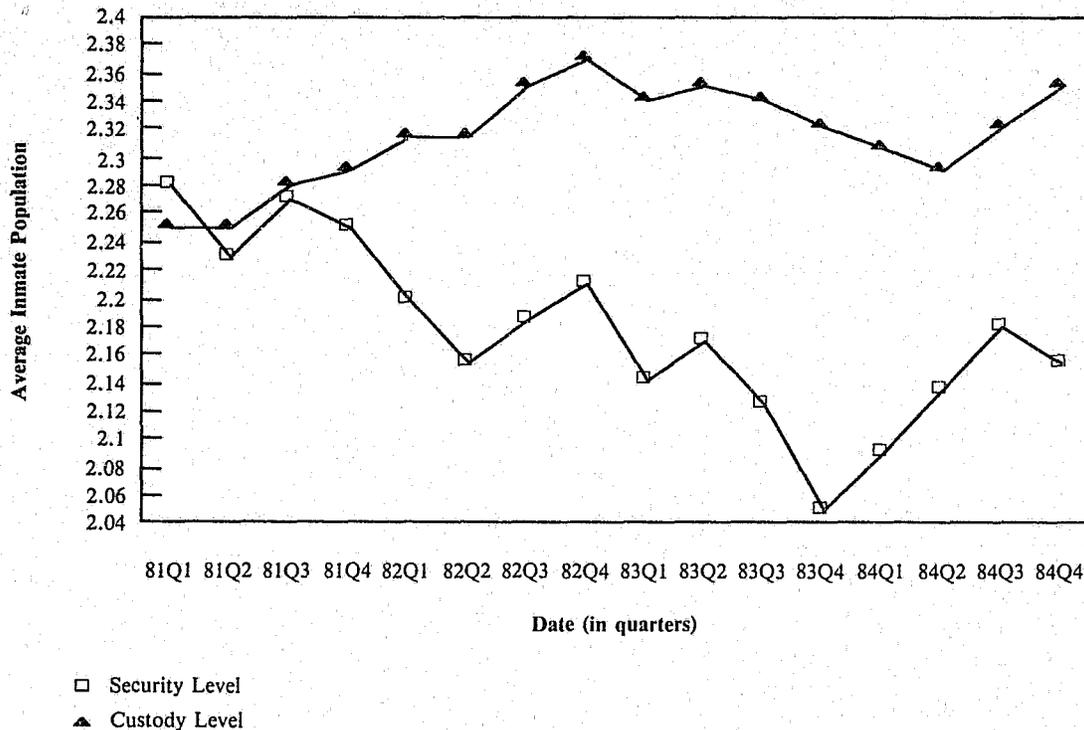
□ Average Security
 ▲ Average Custody

FIGURE 4. MISCONDUCT TRENDS



□ 100 and 200 Level
 ▲ 300 and 400 Level

FIGURE 5. SECURITY AND CUSTODY TRENDS



(300-400 level) rates have decreased slowly but steadily. While there are many possible explanations for these trends, two immediate possibilities present themselves:

1. The Bureau's increasing emphasis on informal resolution of misconduct is resulting in less formalized response to lower level incident reports.

and/or

2. Increasing overcrowding in Bureau facilities is shifting correctional worker's time away from the paperwork necessary to formalize an incident report to other concerns.

Alternative explanations for misconduct rate change will be explored later in this article and in future research.

Security and custody trends are illustrated in Figure 5. Average inmate security level decreased steadily until the third quarter of 1983, rising consistently since then. Average inmate custody has increased but has been sporadic through the time period, reaching a peak in the second quarter of 1982. This means that, on the average, Federal inmates coming into the Bureau have had less serious violent/criminal histories (as measured by the Security Score), at least until recently. However, average custody levels which reflect institutional adjustment have increased slightly. It is difficult to explain why custody levels did not decrease at the same time as or shortly

following average security levels. One possible explanation is that inmates enter an institution at relatively high custody levels and are not considered for a custody change for 3 to 6 months. Thus, high turnover or decreasing average time served would keep custody levels artificially high compared to security levels.

Security and Custody Homogeneity

Mabli and Barber⁶ found that inmates whose security level differed from the institution's were more likely to become involved in frequent misconduct. One might speculate that inmates whose security level is different from institutions' average are either more likely to be preyed upon or more likely to prey upon others. Or perhaps the security characteristics of the institution are not appropriate for the type of inmate, thus generating disruptive behavior since the inmates do not "fit in" to the routine and security of the particular institution.

We explored the following questions at the institution aggregate level: 1) Does the average inmate security and/or custody level of the *institution population* predict misconduct rates at that institution? And 2) Does the amount of *variance* in the institutions inmate security and/or custody level makeup predict the amount of misconduct at the institution?

There are some important features of this analysis worth discussing at this point. One is that this research is essentially exploratory in nature; while we might predict

⁶ Mabli, Jerome and Scott Barber, "The Effect of Inmate Security Level on Incident Report Rates at a Medium Security Federal Correctional Institution," *Journal of Offender Counseling, Services and Rehabilitation*, Vol. 8 (1/2), 1983, pp. 37-45.

that higher inmate security and custody levels would be associated with increased misconduct overall, we would have no such initial expectations with regard to this effect within security levels. Secondly, we are looking at population figures. There is no need to pursue the issue of statistical significance. Finally, the data are aggregated at the institution level. Care should be taken to not generalize results to individuals or individual-level relationships. Security level 6 and administrative facilities were removed from the analyses. Both types of institutions are not typical of the daily working of the security and custody system.

Using a variety of multivariate statistical procedures, we found that institution security level is by far the most potent predictor of misconduct. Security and custody averages are, somewhat surprisingly, negatively related to misconduct. That is, once institution security level is controlled for, lower average inmate security and custody levels are associated with higher rates of misconduct of all severities. Security variance is slightly, but positively, related to misconduct rates, especially high severity misconduct; custody variance has a negligible relationship with misconduct.

We also looked at each security level separately and used only correlation coefficients between the independent and dependent measures. There are some consistent patterns in these analyses. The negative relationship between average security and custody levels and misconduct holds true at the middle security levels (especially at levels two and four), while the opposite is true at security level five, where higher average inmate security levels are associated with higher overall misconduct rates. Except at security level 2, there are moderately strong positive bivariate relationships between security and/or custody variance and overall misconduct.

Discussion

Before reviewing the results, it is important to review the security and custody scores and their implications. The individual's *security score* is composed of variables which reflect inmates' social and criminal history, as well as characteristics of the present offense. It is not unlike many scores currently being used or considered by many jurisdictions for inclusion in sentencing or parole guidelines. The *custody score* is a systematic reflection of an inmate's institutional behavior. Both scores reflect a trend in criminal justice administration which uses actuarial-type scoring procedures as guidelines to decisionmaking. Thus, research in the area of the effects of these scores on inmate management will become increasingly important.

Overall, these data have revealed a strong relationship between both inmate and institution security level and institutional misconduct. This finding reflects favorably on the validity of the Bureau of Prisons' security and custody designations system. Higher security level inmates in higher security level facilities are more likely to be involved in misconduct of all types.

However, these relationships are less clear within institutional security levels. The trends in the data suggest that at middle security levels, lower average inmate security and/or custody levels are related to higher misconduct levels. One might speculate that inmates with security and custody levels which are low relative to the institution's, are allowed more freedoms and are therefore more "at risk" to become involved in misconduct. It is possible that many of these lower security level inmates may have been transferred for disciplinary reasons from lower security levels and are contributing significantly to higher rates of misconduct.

At high security level institutions, however, higher average inmate security levels are associated with higher misconduct levels. This finding is more consistent with the notion that dangerous inmates are more likely to become involved in misconduct.

Security and custody variance, or heterogeneity, seems to be associated with higher levels of misconduct, at least at the bivariate level. This reinforces the notion that mixing inmates with diverse criminal histories, and/or records of institutional behavior, leads to more volatile environments.

The relationships outlined above did not result in a proportionally large share of the explanation of inmate misconduct rates; there is much more to the interpretation of aggregate misconduct than security and custody scores. Further research in this area should use variables which reflect age, crowding, inmate transience, and other management variables. Clearly, this research merely touches the surface of a very important topic—that is, the effects of actuarial scales and their use on the management of offenders in criminal justice agencies.

This type of research also reinforces the importance of taking a system-wide perspective on areas of interest to corrections. If the designations system described here is as effective as it seems to be, then it would be unwise to address inmate misconduct at higher security level facilities unless one took into account the designations process. Inmates were selected for those facilities specifically because they posed a higher threat of all kinds of misconduct. Inmates are transferred to those facilities because they have proven unable to adjust satisfactorily at lower security levels. In corrections, as with other organizations, as methods become more system-oriented, so too must the perspectives that managers and researchers take in evaluating those methods.

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APPENDIX A

SECURITY SCORING

1. TYPE OF DETAINER

- 0 = None
- 1 = Lowest/Low Moderate
- 3 = Moderate
- 5 = High
- 7 = Greatest

2. SEVERITY OF CURRENT OFFENSE

- 0 = Lowest
- 1 = Low Moderate
- 3 = Moderate
- 5 = High
- 7 = Greatest

3. PROJECTED LENGTH OF INCARCERATION

- 0 = 0-12 months
- 1 = 13-59 months
- 3 = 60-83 months
- 5 = 84 plus months

4. TYPE OF PRIOR COMMITMENTS

- 0 = None
- 1 = Minor
- 3 = Serious

5. HISTORY OF ESCAPES OR ATTEMPTS

	None	> 15 years	10-15 years	5-10 years	< 5 years
Minor	0	1	1	2	3
Serious	0	4	5	6	7

6. HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

	None	> 15 years	10-15 years	5-10 years	< 5 years
Minor	0	1	1	2	3
Serious	0	4	5	6	7

7. PRE-COMMITMENT STATUS

- 0 = Not Applicable
- 3 = Own Recognizance
- 6 = Voluntary Surrender

9. SECURITY LEVEL

- 2 = 7-9 points
- 1 = 0-6 points
- 4 = 14-22 points
- 3 = 10-13 points
- 6 = 30-36 points
- 5 = 23-29 points

APPENDIX B

CUSTODY SCORING

1. PERCENTAGE OF TIME SERVED
 - 3 = 0 thru 25%
 - 4 = 26 thru 75%
 - 5 = 76 thru 90%
 - 6 = 91 plus %

2. INVOLVEMENT WITH DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
 - 2 = Within past 5 years
 - 3 = More than 5 years ago
 - 4 = Never

3. MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL STABILITY
 - 2 = Unfavorable
 - 4 = No Referral of Favorable

4. TYPE OF MOST SERIOUS DISCIPLINARY REPORT
 - 1 = Greatest
 - 2 = High
 - 3 = Moderate
 - 4 = Low Moderate
 - 5 = None

5. FREQUENCY OF DISCIPLINARY REPORTS
 - 0 = 10 plus
 - 1 = 6 thru 9
 - 2 = 2 thru 5
 - 3 = 0 thru 1

6. RESPONSIBILITY INMATE HAS DEMONSTRATED
 - 0 = Poor
 - 2 = Average
 - 4 = Good

7. FAMILY/COMMUNITY TIES
 - 3 = None or Minimal
 - 4 = Average or Good

PRESENT SECURITY LEVEL	CONSIDER FOR CUSTODY INCREASE IF POINT RANGE	CONTINUE PRESENT CUSTODY IF POINT RANGE	CONSIDER FOR CUSTODY DECREASE IF POINT RANGE
SL-1	11-19	20-22	23-30
SL-2	11-19	20-23	24-30
SL-3	11-19	20-24	25-30
SL-4	11-19	20-26	27-30
SL-5	11-19	20-27	28-30
SL-6	11-19	20-27	28-30