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Repeat Offenders in Illinois: Recidivism Among Different Types Of Prison Releasees

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The idea that a small number of criminals are responsible for much of the crime in our communities is now widely accepted by most criminal justice professionals.

Unfortunately, detailed information about the characteristics of repeat offenders has been lacking.

In response to the need for more information on repeat offenders in Illinois, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority initiated the Repeat Offender Project, or ROP.

This research bulletin, the fourth in a series of ROP reports, focuses on recidivism among a group of Illinois offenders who successfully completed parole. These parolees are also compared with the other offenders in the ROP sample, all of whom were released from prison under different conditions.

The Repeat Offender Project (ROP) is tracking the criminal activity of 769 releasees from the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC).

The ROP sample includes offenders who were released on different dates and under different release conditions, such as parole, mandatory supervised release, parole from work release, and final discharge from prison.

Research to date in ROP has focused on the 539 inmates in the sample who were released from IDOC between April 1, 1983 and June 30, 1983 — the ROP sampling "window." Excluded from previous analyses were 230 releasees who were on parole prior to April 1, 1983, but who received their final discharge from IDOC supervision during the three-month sampling period. This bulletin analyzes the criminal activity of these 230 parolees and compares it with the other 539 releasees in the sample. The parolees are expected to differ from the larger group of releasees in many ways, including recidivism rates, because these particular parolees successfully completed parole and eventually received their final discharge from parole (this final discharge occurred during the sampling window).

In order to accurately compare recidivism rates among the 230 parolees with those of the other 539 offenders in the sample, analysis of the parolees' post-release criminal activity began immediately after they were released from prison and went on parole, *not* after they received their final discharge from parole. Therefore, while the length of the follow-up periods for the two groups of releasees is the same — 27 months — the follow-up periods do not cover the same 27 calendar months.

Some parolees, for example, were out of prison and on parole for as long as five years

prior to their final discharge. For the 230 releasees, the "27-month follow-up period" began with the date they were physically released from prison and on parole supervision, and it does not match in calendar time the 27-month follow-up period of the other 539 releasees in the sample. This was done to gain a better picture of the parolees' criminal activity following their release from prison and to make the group comparable with the other 539 releasees in the ROP sample.

Release Types in the ROP Sample

The 769 offenders in the ROP sample were released under various administrative conditions governing, among other things, the length of sentence imposed and the actual time served in prison. These conditions were affected by a variety of laws and policies — for example, the type of sentencing structure (either determinate or indeterminate) in place at the time the offenders were convicted and such legislative changes as the implementation of mandatory supervised release (MSR) in place of parole.

IDOC uses several categories to classify inmates who fulfill the conditions of their sentences and are to be released from the department's custody. Offenders who received one of the following four release types are analyzed in this bulletin:¹

■ *Conditional release from prison (400 inmates; 52 percent of the sample).* Currently this release type most often takes the form of mandatory supervised release (or MSR). In

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Definitions and Terms

Defining and Measuring Recidivism

"Recidivism" has been defined in many ways, and each definition can produce substantially different results. Two definitions of recidivism have been used in the Repeat Offender Project:

■ **Arrest after release.** Any arrest recorded on Illinois' Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system after the date the offender was released from prison. An individual is considered a "recidivist by arrest" on the date of the *first* arrest after being released from the institution.

■ **Incarceration after release.** Any incarceration in an Illinois prison recorded on the CCH system after the initial prison release date. An individual is considered a "recidivist by incarceration" on the date of the *first* incarceration following release from prison.

For the 230 parolees analyzed in this research bulletin, two alternative definitions of recidivism were used (these alternative definitions were needed because the "base release date" for the parolees — the date their 27-month follow-up period began — was the date they were *physically* released from prison and on parole):

■ **Arrest after release on parole.** Any arrest recorded on the CCH system after the date the parolee was physically released from prison. A parolee is considered a "recidivist by arrest" on the date of the *first* arrest following release from prison.

■ **Incarceration after release on parole.** Any incarceration in an Illinois prison recorded on the CCH system after the parolee was physically released from prison. Again, a parolee is considered a "recidivist by incarceration" on the date of the *first* incarceration following release from prison.

"Conviction after release" was *not* used as a definition of recidivism in the ROP study because previous audits of the CCH system have indicated that many arrest events on the system do not have corresponding dispositions indicating convictions, acquittals, and sentences. Given these data-quality problems with CCH dispositions, conviction after release could not have provided a reliable measure of recidivism in Illinois. (For a more complete discussion of missing dispositions, see the Authority's 1985-86, 1984-85, and 1982-83 audits of the CCH system.)

Common Terms

Here are some common terms used in the ROP study:

■ **Base incarceration.** The imprisonment from which the offender was released during the three-month sampling period of 1983. For the 230 parolees in the ROP sample, this is the imprisonment associated with the parole supervision from which they were formally discharged during the sampling period.

■ **Holding offense.** The offense for which the base incarceration occurred. In cases where an offender was sentenced on multiple charges, IDOC determined the holding offense to be the one that carried the longest sentence (this was generally the most serious charge).

In accordance with IDOC practices, when there were multiple charges that resulted in conviction, the holding offense was the one that carried the latest release date. If multiple conviction counts resulted in sentences of equal length, the statutory class of the offense (the legislative ranking of seriousness) was used to determine the holding offense.

However, for the 230 parolees analyzed in this bulletin, the holding offense was unavailable from IDOC.

Therefore, the holding offense for these releasees was determined from files the Prisoner Review Board keeps on each parolee. The same criteria that IDOC uses to determine the holding offense were employed here as well.

■ **Post-release arrests.** All arrests recorded on the CCH system during the 27 months following the offenders' release from prison. For the 230 parolees in the ROP samples, these can include both arrests that occurred while the offenders were still on parole *and* arrests that occurred after they received final discharge from parole.

■ **Post-release incarcerations.** All incarcerations recorded on the CCH system during the 27 months following the offenders' release from prison. For the 230 parolees in the ROP samples, these can include both incarcerations that occurred while the offenders were still on parole *and* incarcerations that occurred after they received final discharge from parole.

■ **Prior arrest history.** A classification that describes each releasee's entire arrest history — either violent, property, drug, "other," or "mixed" (the latter refers to instances where no predominant crime type was clear). This classification was based on the offender's "predominant crime type," which follows the same categorizations used in the national Uniform Crime Reports.

■ **Prior criminal history.** All arrests and incarcerations up to and including the base incarceration.

■ **Statistical significance.** The level of significance of the chi-square statistic. A chi-square test indicates whether the distribution of values produced by two variables under observation could have happened by chance when no relationship between the two variables actually exists.

1978, MSR replaced parole as the prevalent type of conditional release in Illinois. Eligibility for MSR is not at the discretion of the Prisoner Review Board, but is instead statutorily mandated. The supervision period under MSR is also established by statute according to the class of the offense for which the offender was convicted (for example, murder or a Class X felony carries a *mandatory* three-year supervision period). The conditions of MSR are the same as those of parole, plus any additional conditions deemed necessary by the Prisoner Review Board. The board also makes decisions on violations and revocations of conditional release.²

■ *Paroled from work release (66 inmates; 9 percent of the sample).* These are offenders who were paroled from IDOC work release centers to the community.

■ *Maximum time served (49 inmates; 6 percent of the sample).* This group includes releasees who "maxed out" — that is, who served the maximum prison sentence imposed by the courts. These offenders received their final discharge from IDOC during the sampling period, and were not released on conditional release, parole, or MSR at that time. They remained in an IDOC institution until the time of their discharge.

■ *Discharged from parole supervision (230 inmates; 30 percent of the sample).* The offenders in this group, who are the focus of this bulletin, completed parole and were given final discharge during the sampling period. They are the only offenders in the ROP sample to be physically released from prison — and therefore at risk in the community — before the three-month sampling period began.

This research bulletin was written by Authority research analyst Sheryl Knight with the assistance of research analysts Anmarie Aylward, John Markovic, Roger Przybylski, and Gerard Ramker. It was edited by Kevin Morison.

Data Sources

The Computerized Criminal History (CCH) system maintained by the Illinois Department of State Police (DSP) is the sole source of the criminal history record information used in the ROP study. The CCH transcript, or "rap sheet," is meant to be a cumulative record of a person's contacts with Illinois' criminal justice system.

The Authority tracked the criminal activity of the releasees in the ROP sample by requesting DSP to periodically search through the CCH database for any additions to the rap sheets of those offenders. Thus, only criminal history events that were *recorded* on the CCH system are included in the ROP analysis. In addition, general demographic information about each releasee was obtained from IDOC. Most of this information was originally reported by the inmates upon their admission to IDOC.

The remainder of this bulletin first describes and analyzes the 230 parolees in the ROP sample in terms of their demographic characteristics, prior criminal histories, and recidivism rates. It then compares the parolees with various other types of releasees in the sample along these same variables.

Demographic Profile of the ROP Parolees

Five demographic variables were examined for each of the 230 parolees in the ROP sample: sex, race, age at release, marital status, and educational level.³ According to this analysis:

- All 230 of the parolees were male.
- Blacks made up 54 percent of the parolees; whites accounted for 41 percent and Hispanics, 5 percent.⁴
- Although 74 percent of the parolees were between ages 18 and 30 when they were released from parole, the age at release ranged from 18 through 61. The mean age at release was 28.

■ Upon entering prison, 65 percent of those reporting a marital status were single; approximately 35 percent were married (including common-law spouses).

■ The level of education was defined as the highest grade completed upon admission to IDOC. Two-thirds of the parolees had not finished high school, and the mean number of years of education completed was approximately 11. Twenty-seven percent said they were high school graduates (or had received general equivalency diplomas) but had not gone on to college; another 8 percent reported having finished high school and completed at least some college.

Prior Criminal History of the ROP Parolees

The parolees' "prior criminal history" refers to all arrests and incarcerations that occurred up to and including the base incarceration (see *Definitions and Terms*, page 2). Prior criminal history provides historical information that can be used to compare with the criminal activity of the parolees after they were released from prison. An earlier ROP bulletin that analyzed the other 539 releasees in the sample found that the extent of an offender's prior criminal history is the best indicator of whether or not that person will be arrested again after being released from prison.⁵

Prior Arrests

The average number of prior arrests per parolee was seven (the holding offense was counted as a prior arrest in this analysis). The range, however, varied from one to 55 prior arrests. Eighty-three percent of the parolees had more than one prior arrest, 17 percent had 11 or more, and 4 percent had more than 20. The combined prior criminal history of the 230 parolees included 1,580 arrests and 1,970 offense counts.⁶

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Criminal Justice Policies and the ROP Sample

The volume and severity of crime affects different parts of the criminal justice system in different ways. At every level of the system — law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, and corrections — officials must implement policies that respond to the problems that confront the system. Prison population at any given time, for example, reflects many different policy decisions.

Since 1975, Illinois' prison population has increased at a dramatic and unprecedented rate. Various historical and legislative changes have affected the state's prison population over the years (see Figure A). When considering the criminal activity and the types of releases included in the ROP sample, it is important to place this sample within the historical framework of Illinois' changing prison population. Three recent correctional policies influenced the makeup of the ROP sample:

■ **The forced-release program.** The Illinois Department of Corrections began the forced-release program in June 1980 in response to severe crowding in the state's prisons. Under the program, IDOC awarded multiple 90-day allotments of meritorious good time to certain inmates. In July 1983, one month after the end of the ROP sampling period, the Illinois Supreme Court invalidated the practice by ruling that IDOC could award only one 90-day allotment of meritorious good time per inmate. Still, for the three years the forced-release policy was in effect, many offenders were released sooner than they would have been under previous or current correctional policies. Therefore, forced-release may have affected the ROP sample since there were potentially more inmates released during the ROP sampling period than there might otherwise have been.

■ **The exclusion of misdemeanants from state prison.** Also in July 1983, a change in state law required offenders sentenced for misdemeanors to serve their time in local jails instead of state prisons. Consequently, the ROP sample probably contains a larger number of less-serious offenders than would be included in a similar sample drawn today. However, this change in the law did not affect the 230 parolees that are analyzed in depth in this bulletin.

■ **The implementation of determinate sentencing.** On February 1, 1978, Illinois implemented a determinate, or "flat-time," sentencing system. Under determinate sentencing, offenders are sentenced to a fixed number of years of incarceration. However, each inmate's length of stay — the time actually served of the sentence imposed — can be shortened through good-conduct credits. In general, determinate sentencing is designed to lessen discretion and promote parity.

At the time determinate sentencing was implemented, mandatory supervised release (MSR) also replaced parole as the prevalent type of supervision for inmates released from IDOC. Under determinate sentencing and MSR, each offender's release date is set prior to imprisonment (although the inmate's length of stay can be reduced through good-conduct credits). In addition, the length of time an offender must be supervised after being released from prison is determined by state statute according to the type of crime the offender was convicted of.

Under the old sentencing and supervision structure, the Parole and Pardon Board was the agency responsible for granting and revoking parole. In 1978, this board, which was part of

IDOC, was replaced by the Prisoner Review Board, an agency now independent of IDOC.

The Prisoner Review Board is responsible for making judgments on MSR violations and revocations. However, since MSR eligibility is determined by statutory guidelines, the review board does not decide who receives MSR and when.

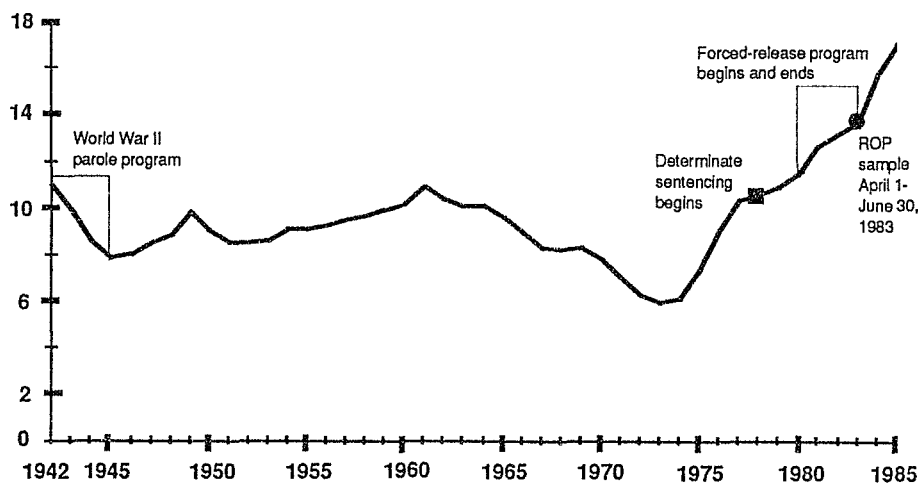
The review board also remains as the state's paroling authority for those prisoners who continue to serve indeterminate sentences. The board is also responsible for setting conditions of release for those prisoners released under determinate sentencing and MSR, for making final decisions on all revocations of good-conduct credits, and for conducting executive clemency hearings.

Because of these changes in Illinois' sentencing and supervision structures, offenders released from IDOC since 1978 represent a combination of those serving relatively short determinate sentences and those serving the longest indeterminate sentences. As time goes on, a smaller proportion of releases in Illinois will have served indeterminate sentences. However, the 230 parolees in the ROP sample were not affected by these changes because all of them served indeterminate sentences and then received parole.

Figure A

Illinois' prison population has increased steadily since 1975.

Prison population (thousands)



Source: Illinois Department of Corrections

These 1,970 offense counts were divided into four categories for analysis: violent, property, drug-related, and "other" crimes (see Table 1). Violent offenses accounted for nearly 24 percent and property offenses for more than 44 percent of the offense counts. Drug-related offenses constituted 8 percent of the total, and other crimes accounted for 22 percent.⁷

Age at First Arrest

Sixty-six percent of the 230 parolees were younger than age 20 at the time their first adult arrest was recorded on the CCH system. Thirty-eight percent had at least one CCH-recorded adult arrest before reaching age 18. The average age of the parolees at the time of their first adult arrest was 20.

Prior Incarcerations

For 71 percent of the parolees, the base incarceration was their first state prison admission recorded on the CCH system. Approximately 29 percent had more than one prior state commitment, and 2 percent of this group had more than five.

Holding Offense

Violent crimes accounted for 52 percent of the holding offenses for the 230 parolees; property crimes made up nearly 34 percent (see Table 2). The remaining holding offenses that were known involved either drug-related (4 percent) or other crimes (1 percent). For 9 percent of the parolees, no information on holding offenses was available from either IDOC or the Prisoner Review Board (see *Definitions and Terms*, page 2, for more information about how holding offenses were determined for this part of the ROP sample.)

Time between Physical Release from Prison and Final Discharge from Parole

Because the 230 parolees were released from prison and on parole prior to the beginning of the three-month sampling period, the majority of them were in the community considerably longer than were the other 539 releasees in the sample. In fact, only one parolee in the sample spent less than a year on parole.

Table 1

Prior criminal history of the ROP parolees (in offense counts).

Violent crimes

Murder*	44
Kidnapping	1
Unlawful restraint	3
Rape	25
Deviate sexual assault	21
Armed violence	8
Armed robbery	122
Robbery*	67
Home invasion	2
Aggravated assault	22
Aggravated battery	50
Assault/battery	85
Arson	5
Other	7
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	462 23.5%

Property crimes

Burglary*	265
Theft*	439
Shoplifting	8
Other	163
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	875 44.4%

Drug-related crimes 166 8.4%

Other crimes

Contempt of court	6
Unlawful use of weapon	94
Disorderly conduct	52
Other**	288
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	440 22.3%

No information 27 1.4%

Total offense counts 1,970 100%

* Includes attempts.

** For example, prostitution, pandering, pimping, firearm owners' identification violations, and felony traffic violations.

Source: Illinois Computerized Criminal History System

Table 2

Holding offenses of the ROP parolees.

Violent crimes

Murder*	13
Voluntary manslaughter	11
Involuntary manslaughter	3
Unlawful restraint	1
Rape*	7
Deviate sexual assault	1
Indecent liberty with child	7
Aggravated incest	1
Armed violence	2
Armed robbery*	25
Robbery*	33
Aggravated battery	11
Intimidation	1
Arson	4
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	120 52.2%

Property crimes

Burglary*	47
Theft	22
Possession of stolen property	1
Deceptive practices	2
Forgery	4
Criminal damage to property	1
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	77 33.5%

Drug-related crimes 10 4.3%

Other crimes 2 0.9%

No information 21 9.1%

Total holding offenses 230 100%

* Includes attempts.

Source: Illinois Prisoner Review Board

The average time between the parolees' physical release from prison and their final discharge from parole was 18 months; the actual times ranged from seven to 65 months (or more than five years). More than 59 percent of the parolees had been on parole less than two years prior to their final discharge (see Table 3). The amount of time these releasees spent on parole varied because of several factors, including: the seriousness of the holding offense and the length of the sentence imposed; whether the parolee was arrested, was incarcerated, or was found to have violated the conditions of release while on parole, and therefore had the period of parole lengthened; and whether the paroling board considered the parolee sufficiently adjusted to life in the community.

Table 3 also shows that the majority of the parolees who were arrested within 27 months of their release from prison were on parole for less than two years. Offenders who were on parole for longer periods of time were less likely to recidivate by arrest.

Approximately 69 percent of the parolees who were incarcerated for property crimes were on parole less than two years (see Table 4). Nearly half of the offenders with violent holding offenses were on parole less than two years, and another 42.5 percent were on parole between two and three years. This distribution, however, was not statistically significant.

Seventy-one percent of the parolees had been incarcerated only once before being included in the ROP sample. Of these 164 offenders, more than 57 percent were on parole less two years before receiving their final discharge (see Table 5). Similarly, almost 64 percent of the 66 parolees in the sample who had two or more prior incarcerations were on parole for less than two years.

Table 3

Percentage of ROP parolees arrested during follow-up period, based on the time they spent on parole.

Time spent on parole	All parolees		Parolees arrested within 27 months	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 2 years	136	59.1%	57	24.8%
2 to 3 years	81	35.2%	27	11.7%
3 to 4 years	9	3.9%	2	0.9%
4 to 5 years	1	0.4%	1	0.4%
More than 5 years	3	1.3%	1	0.4%
	230	99.9%*	88	38.2%

* Percentage does not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 4

Percentage of ROP parolees with different types of holding offenses, based on the time they spent on parole.

Time spent on parole	Violent holding offenses		Property holding offenses	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 2 years	59	49.2%	53	68.8%
2 to 3 years	51	42.5%	23	29.9%
3 to 4 years	8	6.7%	0	—
4 to 5 years	1	0.8%	0	—
More than 5 years	1	0.8%	1	1.3%
	120	100%	77	100%

Table 5

Percentage of ROP parolees with different incarceration histories, based on the time they spent on parole.

Time spent on parole	One prior incarceration		Two or more prior incarcerations	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than 2 years	94	57.3%	42	63.6%
2 to 3 years	58	35.4%	23	34.8%
3 to 4 years	8	4.9%	1	1.5%
4 to 5 years	1	0.6%	0	—
More than 5 years	3	1.8%	0	—
	164	100%	66	99.9%*

* Percentage does not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Recidivism among the ROP Parolees

This section presents summary information about the criminal activity — both arrests and incarcerations — of the 230 parolees after they were released from prison and on to parole. Any of these post-release arrests that occurred while the offenders were on parole, but before their final discharge from parole, are also analyzed separately.

Post-Release Arrests

Thirty-eight percent of the ROP parolees were arrested at least once during the 27 months following their physical release from prison. These 88 offenders were responsible for 194 CCH-reported arrests during that time.

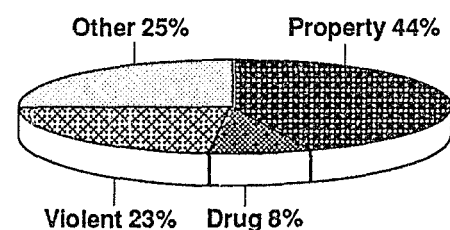
The 194 post-release arrests included 224 offense counts recorded on the CCH system. Property crimes accounted for 44 percent of the post-release offense counts, while violent crimes constituted 23 percent of the total (see Figure B). Drug-related offenses made up 8 percent and “other” crimes 25 percent of the total number of post-release offense counts. Table 6 presents a more detailed breakdown of the parolees’ post-release offense counts.⁸

Post-Release Arrests during the Period of Parole

Offenders who are ultimately discharged from parole (as the 230 parolees in the ROP sample were) would be expected to have fewer post-release arrests during their parole period than would other

Figure B

Most post-release arrests involving ROP parolees were for property crimes.



types of offenders following their release from prison. This is because the former parolees, by the very fact of their eventually receiving final discharge from parole, had successfully met the conditions of their release.

The average time the 230 ROP parolees spent on parole was 549 days, or about 18 months. The average parolee, therefore, spent slightly more than two-thirds of the 27-month follow-up period on parole and about one-third of the time without any IDOC supervision.

Of the 88 parolees who were arrested during the 27-month follow-up period, 65 of them, or about 74 percent,

Table 6

Arrests involving the ROP parolees (in offense counts) during the 27 months following their release from prison.

Violent crimes

Rape	1	
Deviate sexual assault	3	
Armed violence	1	
Armed robbery	5	
Robbery	3	
Aggravated assault	1	
Aggravated battery	6	
Assault/battery	31	
Other	1	
	52	23.2%

Property crimes

Burglary	13	
Theft	61	
Shoplifting	6	
Other	18	
	98	43.7%

Drug-related crimes 19 8.5%

Other crimes

Unlawful use of weapon	7	
Disorderly conduct	8	
Other*	40	
	55	24.6%

Total post-release offense counts 224 100%

* For example, prostitution, pandering, pimping, firearm owners' identification violations, and felony traffic violations.

were arrested while still on parole. The other 23 offenders were arrested after their final discharge from parole. Sixteen of these 88 repeat offenders, or about 18 percent, were arrested and incarcerated during the follow-up period. However, none of these 16 offenders were incarcerated while still on parole. All of the post-release incarcerations occurred after the offenders received their final discharge from parole during the three-month ROP sampling period. By that time, they were theoretically no longer under IDOC supervision.

Of the 194 post-release arrests these 88 parolees were responsible for during the follow-up period, 52 percent occurred while the offenders were on parole. These 100 arrests included 133 offense counts: 18 percent for violent crimes, 42 percent for property crimes, and 40 percent for drug-related and other offenses (see Table 7).

Table 7

Arrests involving the ROP parolees while they were still on parole within the 27-month follow-up period (in offense counts).

Violent crimes

Rape	1	
Deviate sexual assault	1	
Armed violence	1	
Armed robbery	3	
Robbery	1	
Assault/battery	14	
Aggravated battery	3	
	24	18.0%

Property crimes

Burglary	5	
Theft	32	
Shoplifting	5	
Other	14	
	56	42.1%

Drug-related crimes 16 12.0%

Other crimes 37 27.8%

Total offense counts while on parole 133 99.9%*

* Percentage does not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

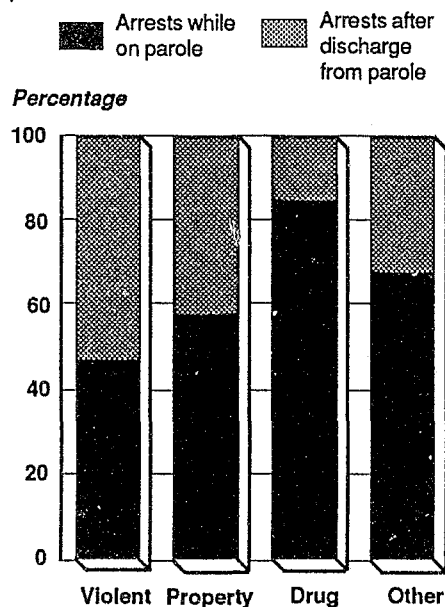
For three of the four crime types, the majority of the parolees' post-release arrests occurred while they were still on parole (see Figure C). Eighty-four percent of all drug-related arrests occurred during the parole period, although the total number of offense counts was small (19). Sixty-seven percent of the arrests for "other" crimes and 57 percent of the arrests for property offenses occurred while the offenders were still on parole. Approximately 46 percent of the post-release arrests for violent crimes took place while the offenders were on parole.

Post-Release Incarcerations

During the 27-month follow-up period, 21 of 230 parolees were incarcerated again in an Illinois state prison, either for a new offense or for violating the conditions of their parole.⁹ These 21 repeat offenders were responsible for 24 new state prison incarcerations. Nineteen of the offenders had one post-release incarceration, one offender had two, and one had three.

Figure C

Most of the parolees' arrests for property and drug offenses occurred while they were still on parole.



Factors Related to Recidivism

Previous ROP research has found that several factors were related to recidivism among the 539 releasees whose criminal activity has already been analyzed. For example, a strong relationship was found between an offender's prior criminal history and the likelihood of that offender recidivating within the 27 to 29 months following their release from prison.¹⁰ The relationships between recidivism and such variables as prior criminal history and demographic characteristics were also examined for the group of ROP parolees.

Each relationship was tested for statistical significance using the chi-square statistic (see *Definitions and Terms*, page 2). The statistical significance of a relationship is expressed in terms of probabilities. Significance at the .05 level ($p < .05$) means the probability that the relationship is attributable to chance is no more than 5 in 100. Significance at the $p < .01$ level means this probability is no more than 1 in 100. In this bulletin, relationships were considered statistically significant if they were significant at the .05 level.

Factors Related to Arrest Recidivism

Prior Arrests and Prior Incarcerations.

Parolees in the sample who had several prior arrests were more likely to be arrested during the 27-month follow-up period than were those with fewer prior arrests (see Figure D). Twenty-six percent of the parolees with one to three prior arrests were arrested during the follow-up period, compared with 52 percent of those with seven to 10 prior arrests and 48 percent of those with 11 or more prior arrests.

No significant relationship was found between the number of prior incarcerations a parolee had and the likelihood of arrest after release (see Table 8). Thirty-five percent of the parolees with one prior incarceration were arrested during the follow-up period, compared with 50 percent of those with two prior incarcerations and 39 percent of those with three or more.

Demographic Variables. The only demographic variable found to be significantly related to arrest recidivism was race (see Table 8). Black parolees were more likely than whites to be

Figure D

Parolees with more extensive criminal histories were generally more likely to be arrested again than were parolees with fewer prior arrests or incarcerations.

Percentage of parolees with different criminal histories arrested within 27 months

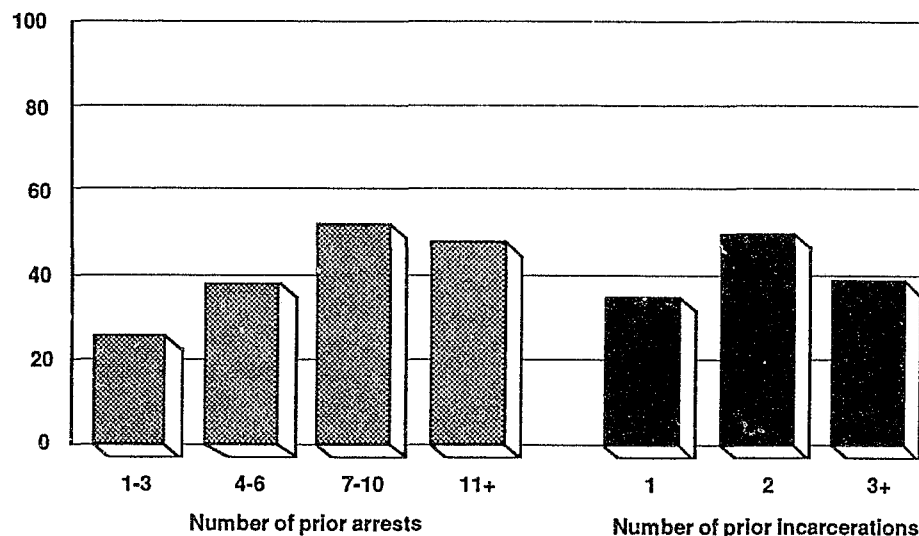


Table 8

Relationship of selected criminal history and demographic variables to arrest recidivism among the ROP parolees.

Variable	Significance of chi-square
Number of prior arrests	p<.05
Number of prior incarcerations	*
Holding offense	*
Prior arrest history	p<.01
Age at release	*
Marital status	*
Race	p<.01

* Not statistically significant.

arrested during the 27-month follow-up period (50 percent vs. 25 percent, respectively).

However, when the number of prior arrests was used as a control variable, race was significantly related to arrest recidivism only for the 40 parolees who had 11 or more prior arrests. Similarly, when the number of prior incarcerations was used as a control variable, there was a significant relationship between race and arrest recidivism only for those parolees who had one or two prior incarcerations. For those offenders with three or more prior incarcerations, the relationship was not statistically significant.

Factors Related to Incarceration Recidivism

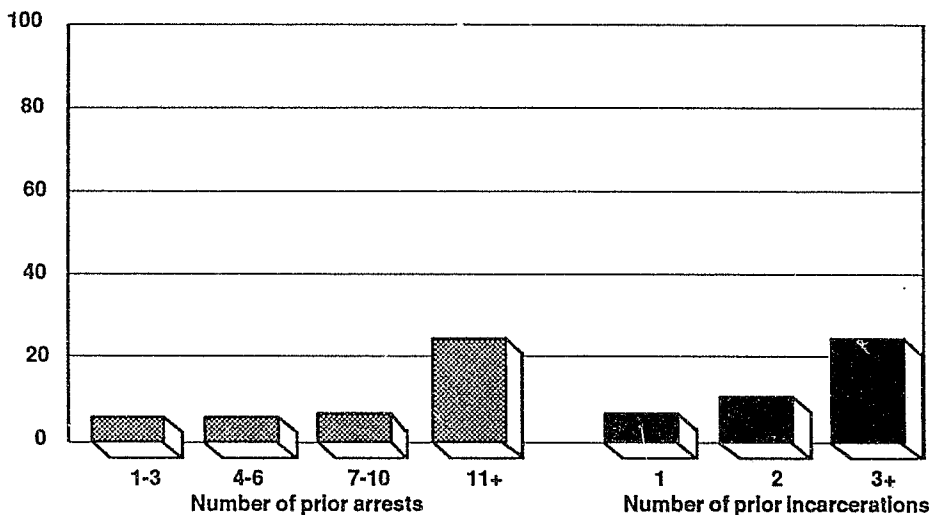
Prior Arrests and Prior Incarcerations.

The number of prior arrests and the number of prior incarcerations a parolee had were both found to be significantly related to incarceration recidivism (see Table 9). This contrasts with the finding that the number of prior incarcerations was not significantly related to arrest recidivism. However, parole violations, rather than new offenses, may account for the relationship between the number of prior incarcerations and incarceration recidivism. An offender can be remanded to IDOC custody on a technical parole violation only, even if a new arrest never took place.

Figure E

Parolees with more prior arrests or incarcerations were also more likely to be incarcerated again than were parolees with less extensive criminal histories.

Percentage of parolees with different criminal histories incarcerated within 27 months



In general, as the number of prior arrests a parolee had increased, so did the likelihood of that person being incarcerated during the follow-up period (see Figure E). Parolees with one to three prior arrests were much less likely to be incarcerated (6 percent) than were those with 11 or more prior arrests (25 percent). Similarly, as the number of prior incarcerations a parolee had increased, so did the likelihood of that offender being incarcerated again. Twenty-five percent of the parolees who had three or more prior incarceration

were incarcerated again within 27 months, compared with 7 percent of those with one prior incarceration.

Demographic Variables. None of the demographic variables were found to be significantly related to incarceration recidivism among the 230 parolees in the sample (see Table 9).

Recidivism: ROP Parolees vs. the Rest of the Sample

As was explained earlier in this bulletin, the 230 ROP parolees were examined separately from the other 539 releasees in the sample because the former were already on parole and in the community prior to April 1, 1983, the start of the ROP sampling period. These parolees became part of the sample because they received their final discharge from parole during the three months in which the sample was drawn. The other 539 releasees either received their conditional release from prison, "maxed out" (completed their entire prison sentences), or were paroled from work release during this period. To test the hypothesis that there may

Table 9

Relationship of selected criminal history and demographic variables to incarceration recidivism among the ROP parolees.

Variable	Significance of chi-square
Number of prior arrests	p<.01
Number of prior incarcerations	p<.01
Holding offense	*
Prior arrest history	p<.01
Age at release	*
Marital status	*
Race	*

* Not statistically significant.

be differences in recidivism — in both its level and its pace — between the parolees and the other three groups of releasees as a whole, they were compared along several dimensions.¹¹

Arrest and Incarceration Recidivism

Table 10 compares the parolees' criminal activity — both arrests and incarcerations — with that of the rest of the sample during the 27 months following their release from prison. During the follow-up times, 38 percent of the parolees and 60 percent of the other releasees were arrested. Similarly, 9 percent of the parolees, but 41 percent of the other releasees, were incarcerated again in state prison.

Table 11 shows the statistical significance of the relationship between two groups of releasees — the parolees and the rest of the sample combined — in terms of prior criminal history, demographic variables, and post-release criminal activity. The only variable for which the relationship was not significant was race. Only the type of prior arrest history and age at release were significant at less than the .01 level. These relationships demonstrate that generally the four types of releasees were significantly different in every respect except race.

Holding Offense

There were also differences between the parolees and the other ROP releasees in their holding offenses (see Figure F). The parolees were significantly more likely ($p < .01$) to have a violent holding offense than were the other releasees in the sample (52 percent vs. 38 percent, respectively). Conversely, the parolees were less likely to have a *property* holding offense (34 percent for this group vs. 47 percent for the other releasees combined).

Murder, attempted murder, voluntary manslaughter, and involuntary manslaughter accounted for 12 percent of the parolees' holding offenses, compared with 5 percent for the other releasees. Sex offenses made up 7 percent of the parolees', but only 2 percent of the other releasees', holding offenses. Clearly then, the parolees were more likely to be in prison for violent crimes such as murder, manslaughter, and sexual assault than were the other 539

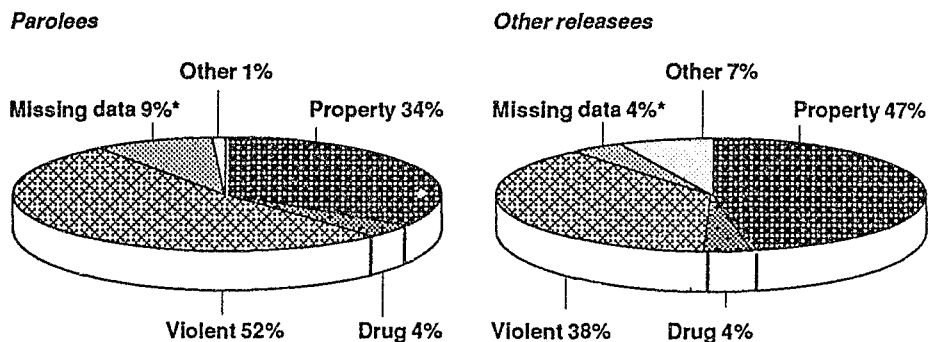
Table 10

Recidivism after 27 months: ROP parolees vs. the other releasees in the sample combined.

	Parolees	Others
Total number in sample group	230	539
Post-release arrests		
Number of offenders arrested	88	324
Percentage of group	38%	60%
Number of arrest events	194	775
Number of offense counts	224	972
Percentage property crimes	44%	48%
Percentage violent crimes	23%	23%
Percentage drug crimes	8%	10%
Arrests per offender		
Range	0-8	0-14
Average number	<1	2
Median	<1	<1
Distribution of arrests among recidivists		
1 arrest	47%	43%
2-3 arrests	36%	38%
4 or more arrests	17%	19%
Post-release incarcerations		
Number of offenders incarcerated	21	222
Percentage of group	9%	41%
Number of prison admissions	24	275
Incarcerations per offender		
Range	0-3	0-4
Average number	<1	<1
Distribution of incarcerations among recidivists		
1 incarceration	90%	80%
2 incarcerations	5%	18%
3 or more incarcerations	5%	2%

Figure F

Parolees had more violent holding offenses than did the other releasees.



*Missing data $p < .01$

Table 11

Comparison of ROP parolees and the three other types of releasees in the ROP sample across selected variables.

Variable	Significance of chi-square
Number of prior arrests	p<.01
Number of prior incarcerations	p<.01
Holding offense	p<.01
Prior arrest history	p<.05
Age at release	p<.05
Marital status	p<.01
Race	*
Arrest recidivism	p<.01
Incarceration recidivism	p<.01
Number of post-release arrests	p<.01
Number of post-release incarcerations	p<.01

* Not statistically significant.

releasees (see Table 11 for a summary of these relationships).

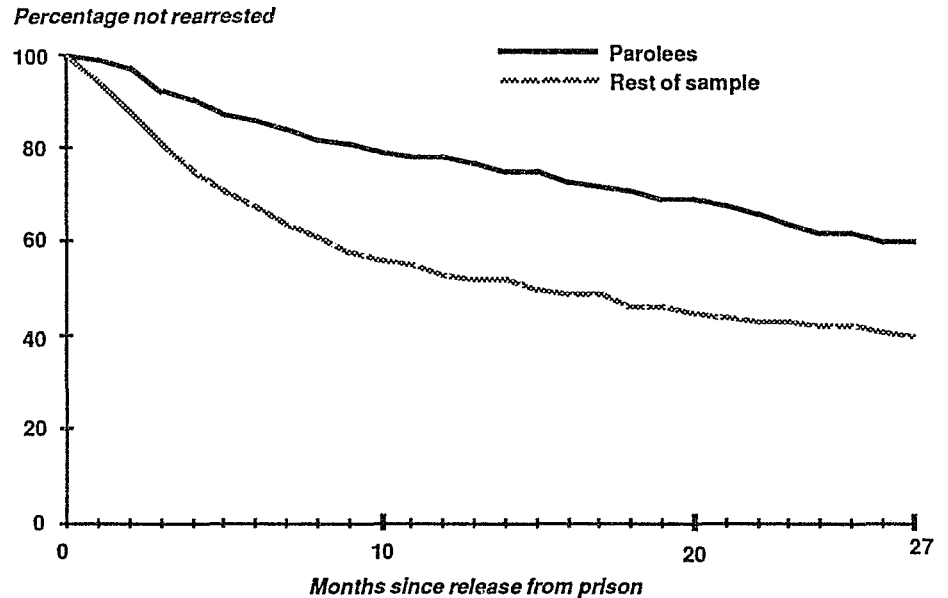
It should be noted, however, that the source of the holding offense variable for the 230 parolees was the Prisoner Review Board; for the other 539 releasees in the sample, the source of the holding offense was IDOC.

Survival Analysis Comparisons

So far, this bulletin has analyzed only the proportion of the sample (or certain subgroups in the sample) who recidivated by the end of the 27 months following their release from prison. However, it is also useful to examine recidivism rates *within* the follow-up period. It may turn out, for example, that the same percentage of offenders in two groups of releasees were arrested by the end of the follow-up period, even though their first arrest occurred at different times during that period. One group may have a high "failure rate" early on in the follow-up time that then diminishes over time, while the other may have a more even rate of failure across the entire follow-up period.

Figure G

Parolees were rearrested at a slower pace than were the other releasees.



A technique called "survival analysis" was conducted in the ROP study to measure recidivism rates across time. In general, survival analysis shows the cumulative proportion of the sample that "survives" at each interval within the follow-up period.

In ROP, survival analysis measures the proportion of releasees (or subgroups of releasees) who have yet to be arrested — that is, to fail — at each monthly interval following their release from prison.¹² That way, the rate at which different groups of releasees recidivate can be examined.

Figure G shows a clear distinction in the arrest recidivism rates of the 230 parolees and the other 539 releasees in the ROP sample during the 27-month follow-up period. The other releasees recidivated at a rapid pace during the first 12 months, as demonstrated by the steep decline in the proportion of these releasees who survived. After 12 months, their recidivism rate generally diminished over time. In contrast, the parolees had a much more consistent pace throughout the follow-up period.

This gap between the proportion recidivating in the two groups of releasees is evident even after one month: 99 percent of the parolees, compared with 94 percent of the rest of the sample, had

survived. The gap gradually widens until the 12th month, at which time 78 percent of the parolees, but only 53 percent of the others, had survived. Thereafter, a difference between the two groups of about 25 percentage points remains constant.

These results confirm what was expected: *The releasees who had been discharged from parole — a status that in a sense distinguishes them as "successful" — were less likely than the rest of the sample to be arrested during the follow-up period.* And when these parolees did recidivate, they did so at a much slower pace initially.

After 12 months, however, the recidivism rate for the rest of the sample who had survived up to that time paralleled that of the parolee group for the remainder of the 27-month follow-up period. Thus, the superior performance of the parolees is reflected mostly in the first year. If the other releasees were not arrested for the first 12 months following their release, they performed from then on about as well as the parolees.

Comparison of All Release Types

As was explained earlier, the 769 releasees in the ROP sample were categorized according to IDOC release classifications. More detailed analyses were conducted to try to determine whether there were real differences between these groups of releasees and whether the separate analysis for the 230 parolees was, in fact, justified.

The previous analyses found significant differences between the 230 parolees in the sample and the other three types of releasees as a whole. To examine more closely the differences among the releasees in the ROP sample, all four types — those who received conditional release, those who were paroled from work release, those who served their maximum sentences in prison, and those who were discharged from parole — were compared using the same variables employed in the previous analyses. Again, statistically significant differences were found among the four release types and a number of demographic, prior criminal history, and recidivism variables (see Table 12).

Demographic Variables

Age. A statistically significant relationship was found between the four types of releasees and their age at release from prison. Offenders on conditional release were more likely to be younger (ages 17 through 20) or older (ages 31 and older) than were the other three types of releasees who tended to be ages 21 through 25 or 26 through 30.

Race. There was also a significant relationship between the four types of releasees and race. This relationship was largely due to the differences between those releasees who served their maximum sentences and the other three release types. Releasees who maxed out were disproportionately white (67 percent vs. 40 percent of the total sample). Blacks accounted for the majority of releasees in the other three groups.

Prior Criminal History Variables

Prior Arrests. There was a significant relationship between the different types of releasees and the number of prior arrests. Offenders on conditional release were equally distributed among the four groups that were analyzed: one to three, four to six, seven to 10, and 11 or more prior arrests. The parolees, on the other hand, tended to have proportionally fewer prior arrests than did the conditional releasees. There were no significant differences between the other two types of releasees. Therefore, the significance of this relationship was due to differences between the conditional releasees and the parolees.

Prior Incarcerations. Except for those offenders who served their maximum prison sentences, the majority of all releasees had only one prior incarceration (that is, the base incarceration). Nearly 70 percent of those who maxed out had two or more prior imprisonments. The statistical significance of the relationship between number of prior incarcerations and release types is due to differences between the group who maxed out and the three other types of releasees.

Holding Offense. The majority of all releasees, except for those discharged from parole, were incarcerated on a property holding offense. Most parolees were held on a violent crime. A relatively large proportion — about 33 percent — of those who maxed out had holding offenses categorized as “other” crimes.

Prior Arrest History. A significant relationship was found between the four groups of releasees and the predominant type of prior arrest history. This significance was due to differences between

Table 12

Comparison of all four types of releasees in the ROP sample across selected variables.

Variable	Significance of chi-square
Number of prior arrests	p<.05
Number of prior incarcerations	p<.01
Holding offense	p<.01
Prior arrest history	p<.05
Age at release	p<.01
Sex	p<.01
Race	p<.01
Arrest recidivism	p<.01
Incarceration recidivism	p<.01
Number of post-release arrests	p<.01
Number of post-release incarcerations	p<.01

those who received conditional release and those who were discharged from parole. The parolees were more likely to have prior arrest histories typified by violent crimes and less likely to have ones dominated by property crimes than were the conditional releasees.

Arrest and Incarceration Recidivism

There was also a significant relationship between type of releasee and whether a releasee was arrested during the 27-month follow-up period. Those offenders who received conditional release (mostly MSR) were the most likely type of releasee to be arrested again, while parolees were the least likely to recidivate by arrest (see Table 13).¹³ This finding, however, is not surprising since these parolees, by defi-

Table 13

Recidivism rates among the four types of releasees in the ROP sample after 27 months.

Type of releasee	Percent arrested	Percent incarcerated
Conditional release from prison	65%	46%
Maximum time served	47%	27%
Discharged from work release	42%	23%
Discharged from parole	38%	10%

dition, successfully completed their supervision periods and received their final discharges from IDOC.

On the other hand, the offenders in the ROP sample who received conditional release had just been physically released into the community during the three-month sampling period of 1983. Therefore, unlike the parolees in the sample, these releasees were just at the beginning of their period of IDOC supervision when the study began.

There was also a significant relationship between type of releasee and whether a releasee was *incarcerated* following their release from prison. Offenders on conditional release were more likely to be reincarcerated following release than were any of the other types of releasees. Again, the parolees were the least likely group to be reincarcerated during the follow-up period.

Survival Rates among the Release Types

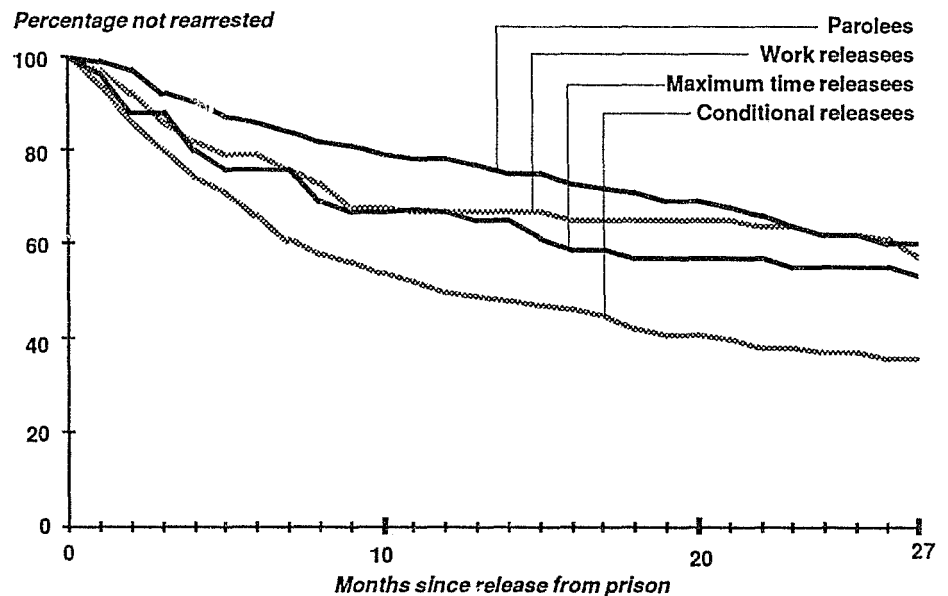
Survival analysis was used to compare the cumulative proportion of offenders in each of the four groups of releasees who had *not* been arrested at monthly intervals during the 27-month follow-up period (see Figure H). Clearly, offenders who received conditional release not only were the most likely to be arrested, but they also recidivated by arrest at the most rapid pace.

Conversely, the parolees had the slowest pace of recidivism, but only during the first 22 months of the follow-up time. By the 23rd month, the arrest recidivism pace among the parolees was equal to that of the releasees paroled from work release. For both groups, approximately 64 percent of the releasees had survived by that time, and their rates of recidivism remained similar thereafter.

For two groups of releasees — those who were discharged from work release and those who completed their maximum sentences — the proportion who survived remained fairly similar until the 14th month after release, when approximately 67 percent had not been arrested. After that time, however, the releasees who maxed out continued to recidivate at about the same pace, while

Figure H

Parolees had the slowest pace of recidivism during the first 22 months following release from prison.



those paroled from work release recidivated at a much slower pace than before.

Differences among Types of Releasees in the ROP Sample

Are there differences, then, among the four types of releasees in the ROP sample? Based on the previous data, it appears that there are — and that they are not due solely to IDOC's administrative classifications. Furthermore, most of the differences are due to differences between those offenders on conditional release and the other types of releasees as a whole, or between those on conditional release and the parolees specifically.

Those offenders on conditional release (mainly MSR) include releasees with many different characteristics. Most important, this group includes offenders who were sentenced under the new determinate sentencing structure — and who received relatively short prison sentences under this structure. Because of the time period used in the ROP study, this group did not include offenders who received relatively long determinate sentences, usually the more serious, violent, or repeat offenders. This group also includes some offenders who were given determinate sentences with a fixed date of release on to MSR

and some inmates who were released under IDOC's forced-release program.

Those releasees who served the maximum sentences imposed by the courts are largely inmates who were sentenced under the old indeterminate sentencing structure. These offenders were not released on parole because of the circumstances or severity of their original offenses, or they did not receive good-conduct credits because of their behavior during imprisonment. This group could also include inmates who were previously released on parole but who were reincarcerated because of technical violations or new offenses.

The releasees who received final discharge from parole were sentenced under the old indeterminate sentencing structure; they served a portion of their sentences in prison and then completed a period of parole supervision by IDOC. It is not surprising that this group had a smaller number of prior arrests than did the other releasees; the parolees tended to be violent offenders, which meant they had a history of serving relatively long prison sentences, which in turn meant they were not at

risk of being arrested for new crimes while they were incarcerated.

This group was also more likely to have had a violent holding offense, including murder, manslaughter, and forcible rape. Because violent offenses generally carry longer prison sentences, the time that these offenders were at risk in the community was also reduced. The longer prison sentences are also related to the fact that this group of releasees tended to be in the middle of the age distribution — ages 21 to 30.

Conclusion

Significant differences were found between the 230 parolees and the other types of releasees in the ROP sample. These included differences in demographic characteristics, such as their age at release; prior criminal history, including the number of prior arrests and incarcerations the offenders had and their holding offenses; and recidivism, including both overall levels and the rates at which offenders recidivate. The recidivism comparisons showed that, of the four types of releasees analyzed, parolees were the least likely to recidivate, while offenders who received conditional release were the most likely. In addition, parolees recidivated at a much slower pace than did any other type of releasee.

At first glance, it may appear that these data suggest parole was a more effective system for reducing recidivism among former prison inmates. However, there are some methodological limitations inherent in the ROP sample. The 230 parolees in the ROP sample are, by definition, "success" cases — especially when compared with the other releasees in the sample — because only the parolees are known to have eventually completed the conditions of their release.

Although some of them were arrested following their physical release from prison, including some who were arrested during their parole periods, in most cases these arrests merely prolonged the parolees' final discharge from IDOC. In other words, *all* of the parolees in the ROP sample successfully completed the specified period of IDOC supervision and were discharged.

This was not the case with the other releasees in the sample. Those who were on MSR had not necessarily completed their supervision periods during the 27 months following their release from prison, and it was impossible to select out a group who had. Methodologically, the only way to compare the relative success of parole vs. MSR in controlling recidivism would be to compare a "successful" MSR group with a group of "successful" parolees.

One significant finding from this study — and one that is consistent with previous ROP research — is that *prior criminal history is the most important factor for distinguishing recidivists from non-recidivists*. Previous ROP research found that, among the 539 non-parolees in the sample, those offenders with the most extensive prior criminal histories were also the ones who were most likely to be arrested or incarcerated following their release from prison. The same was true with the 230 parolees examined in this bulletin.

Generally, parolees with 11 or more prior arrests were more likely to be arrested or incarcerated during the 27 months following their release from prison than were parolees with less extensive criminal histories. Similarly, parolees with three or more prior state prison incarcerations were more likely to be incarcerated again than were parolees with fewer than three prior incarcerations.

Such findings demonstrate the need for accurate and up-to-date criminal history information on repeat offenders to be collected in Illinois. In addition, this information must be disseminated in a timely manner to those agencies involved in making decisions at arraignment, sentencing, and other critical junctures in the criminal justice system.

Notes

¹ Three other types of releasees were excluded from the analysis because their numbers were so small: 1) discharged from work release, which refers to releasees who received final termination from IDOC custody; 2) parole unknown; and 3) discharge unknown (for the latter two groups, the institution from which the offenders were released could not be determined from IDOC's Correctional Institution Management Information System). In all, 24 offenders, or about 3 percent of the total ROP sample, were included in these three categories.

² For a more complete discussion of MSR, see Block (1979) and *Illinois Revised Statutes*, chap. 38, par. 1005-8-1.

³ Since this demographic information was reported by the offenders themselves at the time they were admitted to IDOC, the analysis does not include any educational credits the offenders earned while they were in IDOC custody (except for any credits earned during previous incarcerations). In addition, these findings should be interpreted with caution, again because the data were self-reported.

⁴ The small percentage of Hispanics in the ROP sample is due partially to the fact that the releasees were classified under an old IDOC racial classification system that may have undercounted Hispanics. Among the other 539 releasees in the sample, there were 25 Hispanics, also about 5 percent.

⁵ See Przybylski (1986).

⁶ The total number of offense counts is greater than the number of arrests because a person can be charged with more than one offense count for a single arrest. For example, someone could be arrested for multiple counts of the same offense or for one count of each of many different offenses. These offense counts were coded from CCH system rap sheets; therefore, they do not correspond directly with counts filed by individual state's attorneys' offices.

⁷ "Other" crimes include offenses — contempt of court, unlawful use of weapon, disorderly conduct, and others —

that cannot be easily categorized as violent, property, or drug-related crimes.

⁸ See Markovic (1986) for an alternative method of measuring recidivism known as "survival analysis." Unlike the "fixed-interval" method used here, survival analysis identifies the proportions of releasees who "survive" (that is, who are *not* rearrested) at specific time intervals within the follow-up period. In other words, survival analysis allows researchers to determine whether two or more groups of releasees recidivate at the same rate, or pace, over time. Survival analysis is used later on in this bulletin as well.

⁹ Since there is no accurate recording on the CCH system of parole violations vs. new offenses, the two could not be separated. Subsequent ROP research will address this issue.

¹⁰ See Przybylski (1986).

¹¹ Three types of releasees were excluded from this analysis because their numbers were so small: 1) discharged from work release, 2) parole unknown, and 3) discharge unknown. See Note 1.

¹² In this bulletin, survival analysis is used to measure only *arrest* recidivism. It was not used to analyze *incarceration* recidivism because very few of the parolees — about 10 percent — returned to prison during the follow-up period. For the arrest recidivism analyses, survival times were calculated based on the date each individual was released from prison and on to parole. Parolees who were arrested between one and 30 days after their release are considered to have failed in the first month; those who were arrested between 31 and 60 days, in the second month; and so on. See Markovic (1986) for a more detailed explanation of survival analysis and recidivism.

¹³ Table 13 should *not* be interpreted as evidence that parole, as a system of supervision, produced lower recidivism rates than other types of supervision have. The parolees in the ROP study

are, by the very fact that they ultimately received their final discharge from parole, success cases. Although some parolees did recidivate during the follow-up period, and therefore were under IDOC supervision for longer periods of time, by and large their recidivism rates were expected to be lower than the rates for other types of releasees. One way to measure the success of parole vs. MSR in controlling recidivism would be to select people who successfully completed MSR — a comparable success group to those who were discharged from parole — and compare their recidivism rates with those of the parolees. Unfortunately, there was no way, within the context of this study, to identify such an MSR success group. These findings, however, do suggest that indeterminate sentences and parole may be an avenue for reducing the resources the criminal justice system needs to process repeat offenders. This is an issue for further research.

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Other ROP Publications

This is the fourth research bulletin from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's Repeat Offender Project. Previous ROP publications included:

■ *Repeat Offenders in Illinois (November 1985)*. This research bulletin analyzes the criminal activity of 539 of the 769 releasees in the ROP sample during the first 18 to 20 months following their release from prison in 1983. (The 230 parolees in the sample, who are the focus of this report, were excluded from the first three ROP publications.) This first report also describes in detail the demographic characteristics of the ROP sample and the ROP methodology.

■ *The Pace of Recidivism in Illinois (April 1986)*. This research bulletin provides a detailed explanation of the use of survival analysis in recidivism research. It also compares recidivism rates among various subgroups of the ROP sample. These analyses were based on the 27 to 29 months following the offenders' release from prison.

■ *The Impact of Prior Criminal History on Recidivism in Illinois (July 1986)*. This research bulletin analyzes the relationship between prior criminal history and recidivism among the non-parolees in the ROP sample. It also updates the findings of the first ROP report by analyzing an additional nine months of data (a 27- to 29-month follow-up period).

Also planned is a fifth report that will analyze the ROP sample for three years following their release from prison. This report will also identify how much recidivistic activity among the ROP sample is accounted for by new offenses vs. violations of the offenders' release conditions.

For copies of any of the published ROP reports, contact Olga McNamara at the Authority, 120 South Riverside Plaza, Chicago, Ill., 60606-3997.

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Summary of Findings

Overall Findings

■ For the ROP parolees, as for the other releasees in the sample, *prior criminal history* was the most important factor for distinguishing recidivists from non-recidivists. Generally, parolees who had several prior arrests or incarcerations were more likely than those with less extensive criminal histories to be arrested or imprisoned in the 27 months following their release from prison.

■ Releasees who were discharged from parole — a status that in a sense distinguishes them as "successful" — were less likely than the other releasees in the ROP sample to be arrested during the 27-month follow-up period. Those who received conditional release (mostly mandatory supervised release) were most likely to be rearrested.

Prior Criminal History of the ROP Parolees

■ Eighty-three percent of the parolees had more than one prior arrest; 17 percent had 11 or more.

■ Violent crimes accounted for nearly one-fourth of the parolees' prior offense counts; property offenses accounted for another 44 percent.

■ For 71 percent of the parolees, the base incarceration was their first state prison admission.

■ Fifty-nine percent of the parolees were on parole between one and two years; the average time they spent on parole was 18 months.

Recidivism among the ROP Parolees

■ Thirty-eight percent of the 230 parolees were arrested at least once during the 27 months following their release from prison. Forty-four percent of these post-release arrests were for property crimes, and 23 percent were for violent offenses.

■ Nearly three-quarters of the parolees who recidivated by arrest during the 27-month follow-up period were arrested while they were still on parole.

■ Less than 10 percent of the parolees were incarcerated in an Illinois prison during the 27 months following their release from prison.

Comparison of ROP Parolees and the Other Releasees Combined

■ The 230 parolees and the other 539 releasees in the sample differed significantly in terms of their age upon release from prison. The parolees tended to be clustered in the 21-30 age group.

■ Parolees tended to have fewer prior arrests than the other types of releasees did. The average number of prior arrests per parolee was seven, compared with nine for the other offenders in the sample.

■ Twenty-nine percent of the parolees had two or more prior incarcerations, compared with 40 percent of the other releasees.

■ Approximately 61 percent of the parolees were *not* arrested during the 27 months following their release from prison. Conversely, this same percentage of offenders who received conditional discharge or who completed their entire sentences in prison *were* arrested during the follow-up period.

Comparison of all Four Release Types

■ Blacks constituted the majority of offenders in three of the four release groups. Whites were disproportionately represented in the group who "maxed out" — that is, who served in prison the maximum sentences imposed.

■ Parolees were the only type of releasee who had predominantly violent holding offenses.

■ Offenders who received conditional release were more likely to be arrested during the 27-month follow-up period than were the offenders in any of the other release groups; offenders who received conditional release were also more likely to return to prison.



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