CR-Sent
8-21-89

RELEASE OUTCOME IN NEW JERSEY

1982 RELEASE COHORT

A 36 MONTH FOLLOW-UP STUDY

Report Prepared By:

Cynthia A. Corbo
Administrative Analyst
New Jersey Criminal Disposition Commission

In Conjunction With:

New Jersey Department of Corrections
Office of Policy Analysis & Planning

(November 1988)

117207

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examined parole outcome in New Jersey by tracking the criminal activity of a 1982 state prison parole release cohort over a three year follow-up period. Major findings of this study corroborate research conducted in other jurisdictions and are summarized as follows:

- 62% of the parole releasees were arrested within 3 years following release from state prison, with an average of almost 3 arrests for those arrested.

- 49% of the cohort were convicted, with an average of 2 convictions.

- 22% of the releasees were returned to state prison for crimes committed within the 3 year follow-up period.

- 6% of the release cohort were returned to prison for technical parole violations.

- 3% of the cohort were absconders and could be labelled as parole failures.

- The cumulative effect (state prison returns and absconders) was a negative outcome rate of 31%.

- A small proportion of offenders accounted for a disproportionate amount of crime - 20 offenders were responsible for nearly half of all arrest counts.

- The largest proportion of failure occurred among the youngest releasees, with 77% of those age 20 and younger arrested.

- Although the sample included only a small percentage of older offenders, criminal activity subsided after age 40.

- The longer a releasee can go without arrest, the less the likelihood of arrest - 41% were arrested within the first year following release, 14% between one and two years and 7% between two and three years.

- The average time to arrest for all age groups was 11 months.

- Generally, releasees were arrested for crimes in the same category as the paroling offense.

- Arrests for property crimes were predominant.

- Based on the percentage returned to state prison, those paroled for murder, arson and forgery exhibited the lowest failure rates, while property offenders were among the highest.

- New Jersey is within the range of arrest and prison return rates found in other states.

RELEASE OUTCOME IN NEW JERSEY

PURPOSE AND METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine the rate of recidivism by various indicators, for adult offenders paroled from New Jersey state prisons. Since it has been suggested that most negative outcomes occur within the first few years following release, it was decided that a release cohort would be tracked for 36 months. In order to provide a cross-section of 2A & 2C cases and to allow sufficient follow-up time, 1982 was selected as the release year. A random sample of 200 adult parole releasees was drawn from a population of 1926. The sample was comprised of parole releases only and did not include cases that were discharged upon expiration of maximum term.

Releasees included in this study were sentenced under two different criminal codes (i.e. Title 2A and Title 2C). In 1979, a new state criminal code was enacted known as Title 2C. Until that time all criminal cases were cited as Title 2A. An analysis of penal code type determined that 123 or 64% of the cohort were 2C cases, 51 or 27% were 2A cases and 18 or 9% were uncoded.

Due to the short time interval from enactment of Title 2C in 1979 to parole release in 1982, 2C releasees in the sample were sentenced ·to shorter terms and, therefore, served less time in prison than 2A releasees. The average total term for the 2C cases was 5 years and for those with mandatory minimum terms (5 cases out of 123 2C cases), the average mandatory minimum term imposed was 2 years, 4 months. The average time served in prison for the 2C cases was 1 year. The 2A cases were sentenced to

1

longer terms, an average maximum term of 11 1/2 years. They also
had longer lengths of stay - an average of 4 years. A commitment
type comparison for all 1982 adult releases and the release
cohort is illustrated in the following table and graph.

Table 1

Distribution By Commitment Type

1982 Adult Releases		Commitment Type	Release Cohort	
Number	Percent		Number	Percent
1,204	62%	Prison	99	52%
568	30%	Indeterminate	89	46%
21	1%	Sex Offender	3	1.5%
133	7%	Uncoded	1	.5%
-----	---		---	----
1,926	100%	Total	192	100%

Graph 1

PERCENT DISTRIBUTION BY COMMITMENT TYPE
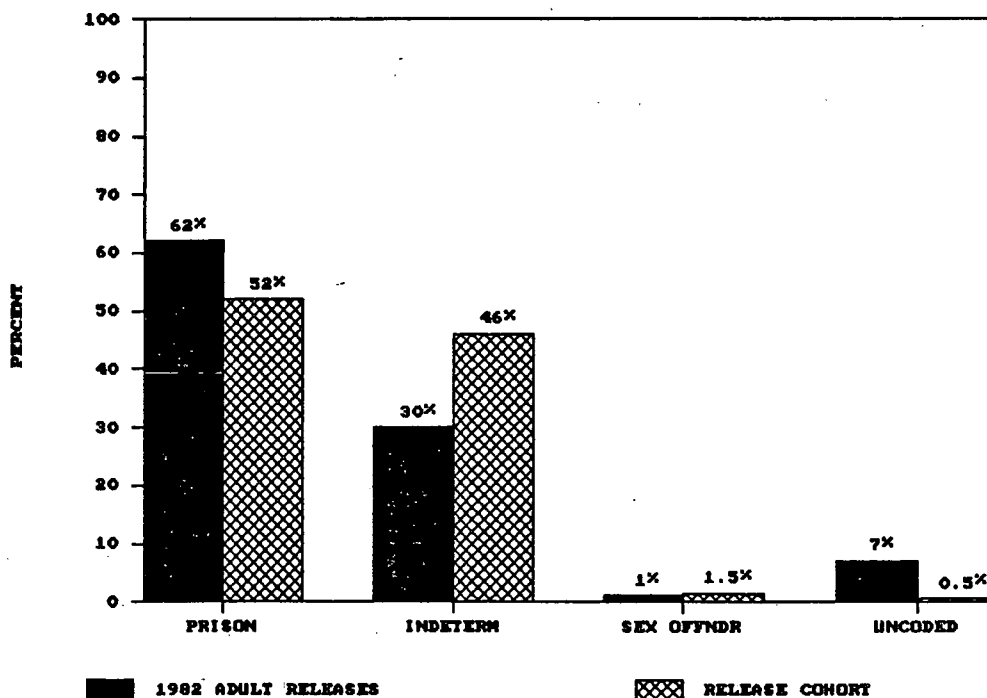
Due to differing definitions of recidivism based upon various combinations of multiple indicators, subsequent arrest, conviction and incarceration data were collected and recorded to facilitate analysis dependent upon definition of recidivism. CCH (Computerized Criminal History) rap sheets obtained from the State Police were generated for the cohort and analyzed. This study does not include crimes committed in jurisdictions outside of New Jersey. Arrests and/or final dispositions occurring during the period following discharge from parole supervision are included.

For each subsequent arrest, the arrest date, nature of each new crime, disposition date and result were entered into a database. Only arrests that were posted to the CCH system were included in the analysis. Also, it is important to note that 92 or 27% of the arrest events lacked final dispositions. As a result, the various outcomes examined (i.e., return to state prison, technical parole violation, etc.) are likely to be slightly higher than recorded in this study. In addition, due to incorrectly coded SBI numbers, rap sheets for eight members of the sample were not available and thus reduced the cohort to 192.

RESULTS

ARREST FOLLOWING RELEASE

As indicated by the following table and graph, 62% or 118 of the 192 parolees were arrested within the 36 months following release from prison. As indicated above, any arrest posted to the CCH system is included, regardless of seriousness. It appears that the longer a releasee can go without arrest, the

3

lesser the likelihood of arrest. Forty-one percent of the cohort
were arrested within one year following their release from
prison, 14% between one and two years and 7% between two and
three years.

Table 2

| | NUMBER OF MONTHS AFTER RELEASE | | | | | | |
	1-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	Total
# Releasees Arrested	54	25	16	10	10	3	118
Percent of Sample	28.1%	13.0%	8.3%	5.2%	5.2%	1.6%	61.5%
Probability of Arrest	.28	.18	.14	.10	.11	.04	

Graph 2

CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF RELEASEES ARRESTED

AT SIX MONTH INTERVALS

4
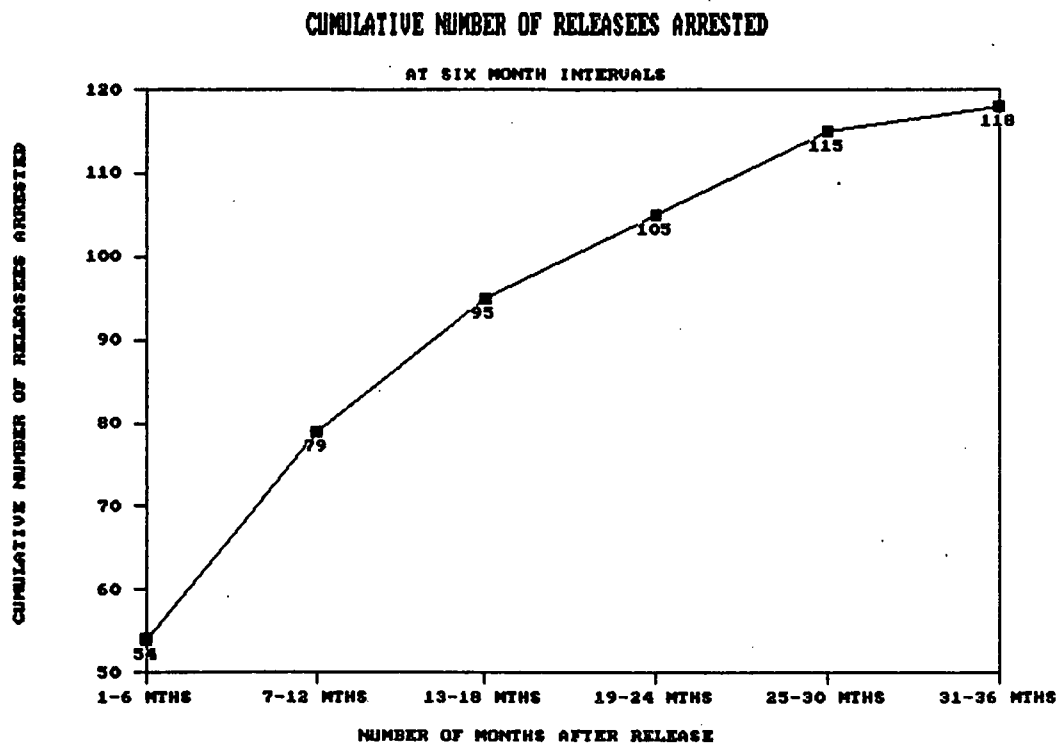
As recorded by the CCH system, these 118 offenders were responsible for 340 post-release arrest events, with an average of 2.88 arrests (Table 3). Nearly 70% of the 118 offenders were arrested more than once. A major finding of this study is that a small percentage of offenders account for a large amount of crime. Twenty offenders were responsible for nearly half of all post-release arrest counts. This finding is substantiated in research conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Recidivism of Young Parolees.

Table 3

REARREST DISTRIBUTION WITHIN THREE YEARS

Number Arrests	Number Releasees Arrested	Total Number of Arrest Events
1	37	37
2	32	64
3	23	69
4	6	24
5	6	30
6	3	18
7	2	14
8	1	8
9	4	36
10	4	40
Total	118	340

Average Arrests ---> 2.88

As illustrated in Table 4, the largest proportion of failure occurs among the youngest releasees, with a post-release arrest rate of seventy-seven percent (77%). This age group (20 years old and less at release) was arrested more often than any other. In addition, youthful offenders in the 21-23 age group exhibited the most rapid failure (7 months). These findings are supported by research conducted in other in other jurisdictions, including

the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority's study
entitled, The Impact of Prior Criminal History on Recidivism in
Illinois.

The average time to arrest for all age categories was 11
months. The mean age at release for those arrested was 27, as
compared to 30 for those who were not arrested. As demonstrated
by the rapid decline in arrests, it appears that criminal
activity subsides after age forty.

Table 4

POST-RELEASE ARRESTS BY AGE

Age at Release	Number Released	Number Arrested	Percent Arrested	Average Time to Arrest (Months)
<20	17	13	77%	13
21-23	45	31	69%	7
24-26	40	26	65%	12
27-29	31	16	52%	11
30-34	28	16	57%	12
35-39	19	13	68%	11
40-49	8	2	25%	10
50+	4	1	25%	16
Total	192	118		

Arrests for property crimes were predominant and represented
the highest proportion of failure (Table 5). Forty-six percent
of all post-release arrests involved property crimes and 22%
involved drug offenses.

Table 5

POST-RELEASE ARRESTS BY OFFENSE[*]

		Violent		Property		Drug		Other		Total Offenders
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Arrested
A g e	<20	3	23%	8	62%	1	8%	1	8%	13
	21-23	3	10%	14	45%	6	19%	8	26%	31
	24-26	4	15%	11	42%	7	27%	4	15%	26
A t	27-29	1	6%	4	25%	6	38%	5	31%	16
	30-34	3	19%	7	44%	5	31%	1	6%	16
	35-39	3	23%	9	69%	1	8%			13
R e l	40-49			1	50%			1	50%	2
	50+	1	100%							1
	Total	18	15%	54	46%	26	22%	20	17%	118

* Violent offenses include homicide, robbery, kidnapping, (aggravated) assault and aggravated sexual assault. Property offenses include burglary, receiving/possession of stolen property/vehicles, forgery, fraud, damage property, larceny, possession of burglary tools and shoplifting.

Drug offenses include manufacture/distribution of dangerous drugs, possession/under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance, possession of narcotic equipment and possession of marijuana. Other offenses include weapons offenses, eluding police, resisting arrest, obstruction of justice and escape.

CONVICTION FOLLOWING RELEASE

Eighty percent or 94 of the 118 offenders arrested after release were convicted for new crimes, with an average of two convictions each. From the perspective of the total release cohort, 49% of the 192 releasees were convicted for new offenses during the three year post-release follow-up period. Approximately 65% of the conviction counts resulted in state or county sentences. The conviction distribution is as follows.
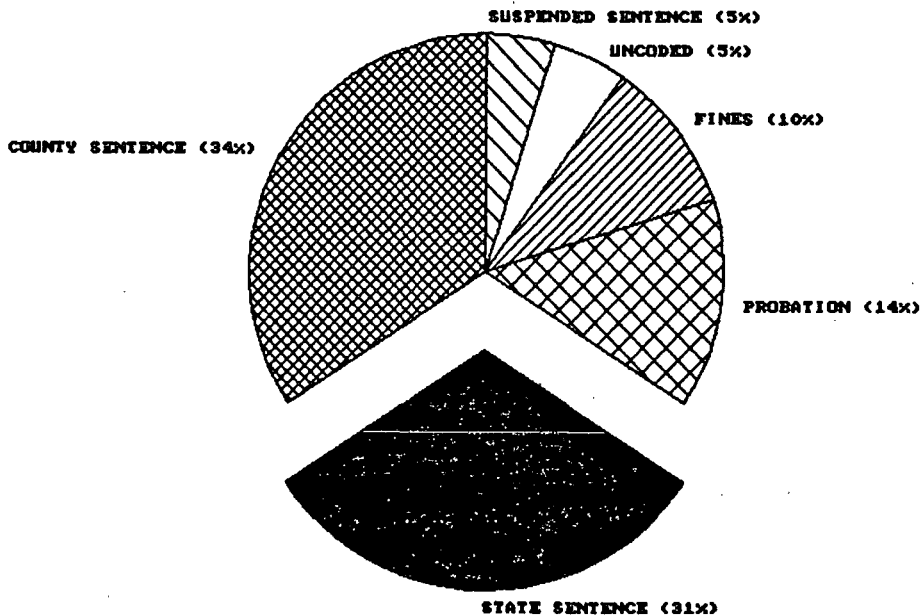
7

Table 6

CONVICTION COUNTS
(Includes Multiple Convictions Per Arrest)

Suspended Sentence	Fines	Probation	County Sentence	State Sentence	Uncoded	Total Convictions
8	18	25	60	55	9	175
(5%)	(10%)	(14%)	(34%)	(31%)	(5%)	

Graph 3

CONVICTION OUTCOME

(INCLUDES MULTIPLE CONVICTIONS PER ARREST)

SUSPENDED SENTENCE (5%)

UNCODED (5%)

FINES (10%)

COUNTY SENTENCE (34%)

PROBATION (14%)

STATE SENTENCE (31%)

REINCARCERATION FOLLOWING RELEASE

Forty-two (42) releasees, or 22% of the total release cohort were returned to state prison for crimes committed within three years following release. Of the 118 releasees in the cohort that were arrested following release, approximately 36% were reincarcerated in state prison.

An analysis of the releasees returned to state prison revealed that murderers, arsonists and forgers exhibited the

8

lowest failure rates, while property offenders were among the highest (Table 7). Due to the small number of releasees in the offense categories, caution should be taken when making inferences concerning this data.

Table 7

BASE OFFENSE AT RELEASE
RANKED BY PERCENT RETURNED TO STATE PRISON

| Most Serious Paroling Offense	Number Releasees in Sample	Number Returned to State Prison	Failure Rate
Sexual Assault	6	2	33%
Assault	22	6	27%
Burglary	57	15	26%
Receiving/Possession Stolen Property	12	3	25%
Drugs	20	5	25%
Robbery	34	8	24%
Weapons	8	1	12%
Fraud	9	1	11%
Larceny	11	1	9%
Homicide	7	0	0%
Arson	4	0	0%
Forgery	2	0	0%
Total	192	42	

TECHNICAL PAROLE VIOLATORS AND PAROLE ABSCONDERS

A study of post-release criminal activity would be incomplete without considering the number of parolees who are returned to prison for technical violations. Information concerning parole revocation was extracted from inmate files and it was determined that twelve releasees were returned to prison for technical violations. Persistent drug use and non-reporting were the primary reasons for technical parole revocation. In terms of the total release cohort, this translated to a technical violation rate of 6%. When added to the 22% for new commitments,

the cumulative return rate was 28%.

An additional parole outcome consideration involved parolees
who were missing after the 3 year post-release period. This
group can be labelled as parole failures. While not returned to
prison, these cases might be considered negative parole outcomes.
Absconders consisted of six releasees or 3% of the total release
cohort. As illustrated in Graph 4, the cumulative effect for the
total cohort of 192 releasees was a negative outcome of 31%.

Graph 4

RELEASE OUTCOME

(1982 RELEASE COHORT)
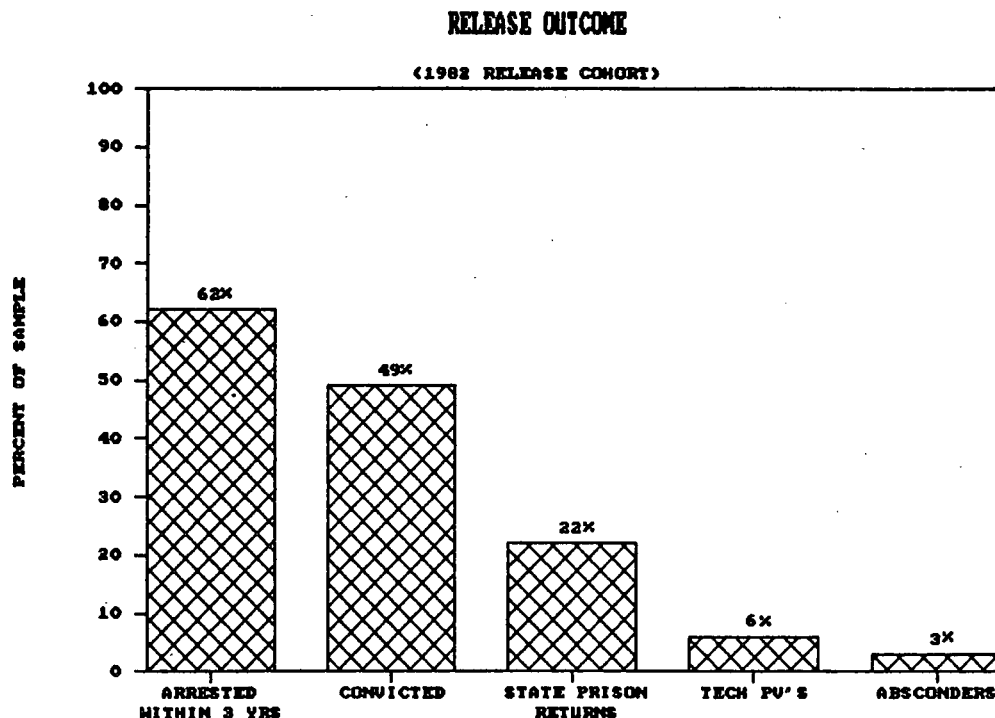
CONCLUSION

Despite differences in sample size, release year, methods,
data sources and possible variations in parolee characteristics,
the results of this study appear to be similar to recidivism
research conducted in other jurisdictions. Findings of a Rand

Corporation study indicated that after a three year follow-up period, rearrest rates were 76% in California, 60% in Texas and 53% in Michigan. As illustrated in the following graph, a 62% arrest rate within a three year follow-up period in New Jersey appears to be well within the range of arrest rates found in other states.

Graph 5

ARREST RATES IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS

(WITHIN 3 YEAR FOLLOW-UP PERIOD)

SOURCE: RAND CORPORATION
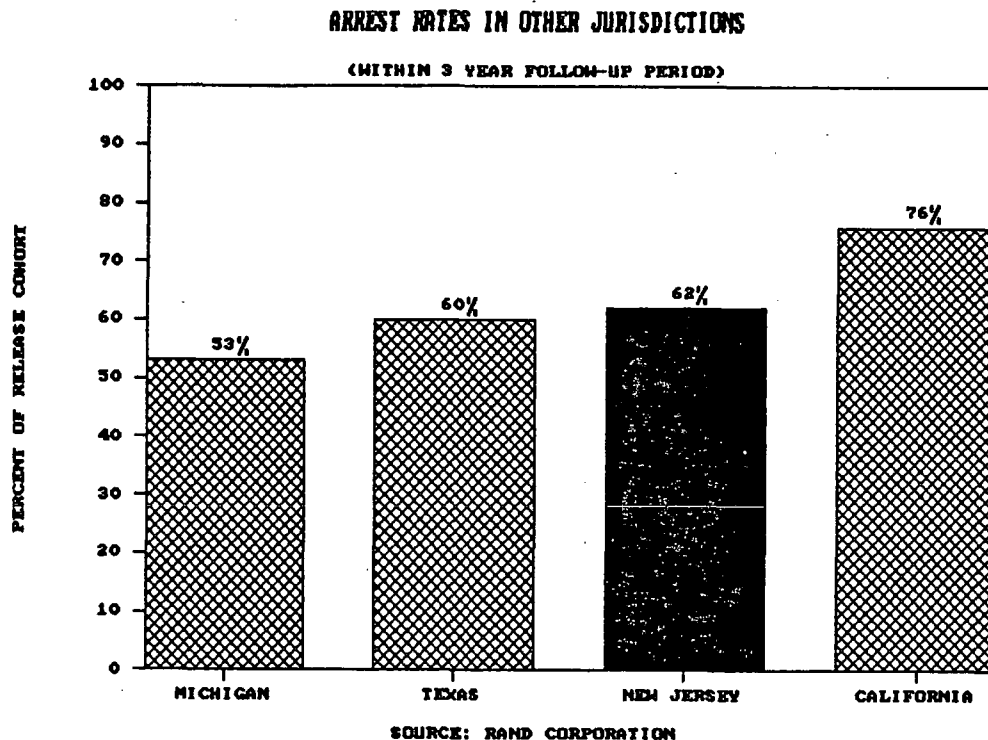
A study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, Returning to Prison, found that in 14 states, approximately 30% of those released were returned to prison within three years. The median prison return rate was 31.5%. In a Bureau of Justice Statistics research project using data from the 1979 Survey of Inmates in State Facilities, the nationwide rate of return to state prison was found to be 29.4% within three years. Based on

the 1982 release cohort, New Jersey's prison return rate of 28% appears to be consistent with the Bureau of Justice Statistics nationwide prison return rate of 29.4%.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Beck, Allen J. and Bernard E. Shipley (May 1987). "Recidivism of Young Parolees", Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.

Caggiano, Michael N. and Stephan P. Klein (August 1986). The Prevalence, Predictability and Policy Implications of Recidivism. Rand Corporation.

Greenfeld, Lawrence A. (February 1985). "Examining Recidivism," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.

Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (July 1986). "The Impact of Prior Criminal History on Recidivism in Illinois."

Wallerstedt, John F. (November 1984). "Returning to Prison," Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report.