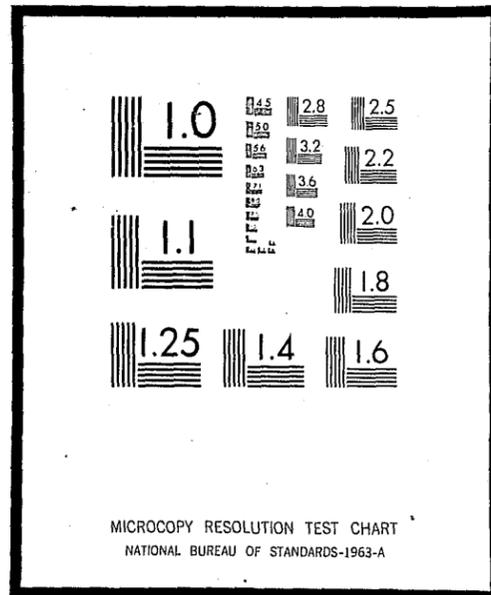


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Characteristics of Juvenile Offenders

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Described herein are eight separate comparisons of questionnaire data collected about 123 male clients who participated in the vocational rehabilitation program at the Georgia Industrial Institute (GII). Rehabilitation counselors rated 78 items pertaining to each client's biographical and personal characteristics and behavior. The ratings were made at the time each client was discharged from the prison into civilian life. Clients who participate in the vocational rehabilitation program at GII are to a certain extent screened, so that these clients are not strictly representative of all prisoners at GII.

The Georgia Industrial Institute is the major prison for young offenders in Georgia. Most of the inmates are between 17 and 20 years of age. The census is usually about 1,000, of whom 125 live in the Rehabilitation Center dormitory. In addition to the Rehabilitation Center there is a high school and a trade school on the prison grounds, but separate from the main part of the prison. All inmates are screened for rehabilitation and other services. At any one time about 700 inmates are being served, at least minimally, by the Rehabilitation Center staff. This staff includes vocational counselors, vocational evaluators and many kinds of support personnel, some on a continuing consultation basis.

The eight analyses to be reported in this study are: (1) The data for all items from white clients were compared with the same data from all "other" clients (the "other" clients consisted only of Blacks). (2) Clients with a history of convictions among family members were compared with clients with no history of convictions among family members. (3) Clients with two or more previous arrests were compared with clients with less than two previous arrests. (4) Clients who reported that they were accompanied by two or more accomplices in their crime were compared with those clients who reported that they were alone or had only one accomplice in their crime. (5) Clients with an excellent or good prognostic rating by their counselor were compared with those clients who received a fair, guarded, or poor rating from their counselors. (6) Clients whose institutional behavior was judged as good by their counselor were compared with clients whose institutional behavior was judged fair, poor, or bad. (7) Clients were separated into four groups for comparison on the basis of the type offense they committed: (a) clients who committed an impulsive act

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resulting in no material gain; (b) clients who committed an impulsive act resulting in material gain; (c) clients who committed a planned crime resulting in material gain, and (d) clients who committed a planned crime resulting in no material gain. (8) Clients were separated into four groups for comparison on the basis of the technical charge involved in their present offense: (a) clients who committed a felony-burglary; (b) clients who committed felonies other than burglary; (c) clients who committed a misdemeanor-burglary, and (d) clients who committed a misdemeanor other than burglary. The above two four-way breakdowns also allowed for the following two-way comparisons: e.g., planned crimes versus impulsive crimes, felonies versus misdemeanors, etc. Chi square tests were computed for all comparisons.

1. Racial Differences

It should be noted that black clients are considerably over represented at GII, as compared with the population in the state. There were 69 black clients (56.2%) and 54 white clients (43.8%) in the GII sample. In Georgia the ratio is about seven Whites to three Blacks. Since white clients in general come from a different socio-economic group than Blacks, they were expected to differ in many ways, such as type of crime, institutional behavior, history of arrests and convictions, etc. It was found that the first reported arrest for the white clients occurred at a significantly later age than did the first arrest for the Blacks ($p < .05$). The black child is more likely to get an earlier start in criminal activity than the white child. Related to this finding was a trend in this sample for Blacks to have had more arrests than white clients. Since black clients in this sample tended to have been arrested at an earlier age, they would be expected to have a longer history of arrests.

Significantly fewer white than black clients were unemployed during the six months prior to their present conviction ($p < .001$). The employment problems of Blacks are well documented. White clients had a significantly higher average weekly income than did the Blacks ($p < .01$). Blacks scored significantly lower on both the performance and verbal parts of the WAIS intelligence scale than did white clients ($p < .001$). This finding is in agreement with evidence that Blacks score consistently lower than whites on measures of intelligence (Jenson, 1969; Kennedy, 1963).

A significantly greater number of white clients admitted that they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of

their present crime than did the Blacks ($p < .01$). There are several possible explanations of this. First, it is possible that alcohol and drugs are more accessible to Whites (that is, Whites may be more able to afford drugs and alcohol). Another possibility is that because of their value system and superego development, it may have been necessary for many of the white clients to use alcohol or drugs in order to lower their inhibitions against breaking the law. Blacks with their particular value systems perhaps were less likely to see their crimes as wrong and, thus, might not need to lower their inhibitions in order to commit a crime.

2. Family Criminal Record

Family pathology is generally considered to be very important in determining delinquent behavior (Quay, 1965; Anderson, 1968; Glueck & Glueck, 1968; Kulick, Stein & Sarbin, 1968). The findings of the present study are in agreement with this. For example, it was found that of the clients who reported no family convictions, a significantly larger proportion also reported that there was a father or father-surrogate in the home.

Anderson (1968) found that paternal deprivation generally distinguished delinquents from non-delinquents with the difference becoming greater with age of the delinquent. Thus, it was expected that clients whose family (mother, father, or siblings) had no record of convictions would have distinguishing characteristics when compared with clients whose family had convictions. The comparison was made between 69 clients who reported that neither their mother nor their father nor any of their siblings had had any convictions, and 54 clients who reported that either their mother and/or their father and/or one or more of their siblings had had one or more convictions.

It might be expected for example that clients with no history of family convictions would themselves be less criminally inclined or would manifest less severe maladjustment than would clients with a history of family convictions. There is evidence from psychological and sociological research to support the contention that the most powerful influence on the formation and structure of a child's value system is parental influence. Despite "peer-group" pressure influence, most experts feel that adolescents in the final analysis do adopt their parents' value system. Thus, one might expect that a child whose parents' value system condones criminal activities would also condone such behavior.

In this study it was found that of the clients who reported no family

convictions, a significantly larger proportion also reported that there was either a natural father, a step-father, or some other father substitute in the home ($p < .02$). This is in agreement with a finding from a previous analysis of GII data ($N=93$) in which it was found that clients with either a natural father, a step-father, or some other father substitute in the home reported that their father had been convicted significantly fewer times than did clients who reported no father in the home. These two findings suggest that a positive relation exists between some type of father in the home and fewer convictions in the family (particularly of the father).

The nature of this relation becomes more clear when it is noted that fathers of the clients were reported to have had more convictions than mothers or siblings. The greatest number of convictions of a mother was two, of siblings -four, and of a father -nine. Thus the convictions in the family (one or more) tended to refer more to the father than to the mother or siblings. However, fifty-six percent of the total client sample reported "no convictions" in their family. This is not consistent with the general hypothesis that children tend to adopt the value systems of their parents. In other words, when a prisoner-client reported no convictions of his other family members, it may be that he was deviating somewhat from the general value system of the rest of his family members.

A related finding is that a positive association exists between the number of family convictions and the number of client convictions. Clients who reported no family convictions tended themselves to have been convicted fewer times ($p < .05$). While this finding suggests a more stable pattern among familial values and value systems, it does not necessarily mean that most of the GII population tend to adopt their parents' value system. For example, while the group designated "no family convictions" is quite distinctly defined, the group with "one or more family convictions" includes clients with both parental and/or sibling convictions. Inferences about this latter group must be more tentative.

It was found that the number of convictions in the family is negatively associated with the age at which the client was first arrested. A significantly larger proportion of the clients who reported no family convictions were first arrested at age 16 or later ($p < .02$). The fact that clients with no record of family convictions do not, in general, commit crimes at an early age is in agreement with an earlier analysis of GII data in which it was found that arrest at an early age tended to be associated with increased delinquent behavior in the future. The above several findings suggest that family pathology as indicated by family convictions is associated with maladaptive client behavior.

Clients who reported no family convictions also had had significantly more individual counseling interviews than did those clients who reported one or more family convictions ($p < .05$). The most likely explanation for this finding is that these clients (i. e. , those who reported no family pathology and thus deviated from familial value systems) were considered by their counselors to have a more favorable prognosis for rehabilitation. Counselors conducted more interviews with those clients whose prognosis appeared to be more favorable.

3. Previous Record

One of the best predictors of future behavior is past behavior. Conger and Miller (1966) reported that future delinquents were rated differently on items such as social behavior, academic difficulty, and emotional difficulty as early as the third grade. The GII clients in this sample were separated into two groups: 47 clients with less than two previous arrests, and 74 with two or more previous arrests. These data were missing for two clients. Clients with more serious criminal backgrounds (i. e. , with more previous arrests) were expected to exhibit criminal manifestations in other areas: earlier age of first arrest, more serious offense, poorer counselor rating, etc.

As expected, clients with less than two (none or one) previous arrests had also been convicted significantly fewer times ($p < .05$). A negative relationship was found between number of previous arrests and age at first arrest. Clients with two or more previous arrests were first arrested at age 16 or younger significantly more often than were clients with less than two previous arrests ($p < .001$). The younger the clients were at the time of their first arrest, the more subsequent arrests they reported. This finding lends some support to the hypothesis that early arrest is associated with more severe behavior pathology. Individuals arrested at an early age tended to have a more unfavorable prognosis, a conclusion supported by many other studies.

An unexpected finding was that those clients who were 17 to 19 years of age reported having two or more previous arrests significantly more often than did clients who were 20 to 23 years of age ($p < .02$). There was a significant negative correlation between age at first arrest and number of previous arrests. This finding was contrary to the expectation that older clients would have had more previous arrests because they would have had more opportunity (because they had lived longer). One explanation for this unexpected finding might be that older clients with a history of previous arrests would most likely be incarcerated in one of the state penitentiaries rather than at GII.

It was found that clients with two or more previous arrests had served more time in some institution than have clients with less than two previous arrests ($p < .01$). Clients with more previous arrests are also likely to have had more previous convictions and therefore are more likely to have served more time. A significantly larger proportion of the clients with two or more arrests had not lived in the Rehabilitation Center at GII ($p < .05$). This probably reflects the screening process used by counselors in selecting clients to participate as residents in the vocational rehabilitation program at GII. Those clients with two or more previous arrests probably appeared to have a less favorable prognosis for rehabilitation than did clients with less than two previous arrests. In consonance with the above finding was a trend for clients with two or more previous arrests to have had fewer individual counseling interviews than did clients with less than two previous arrests. This trend was in agreement with the finding (mentioned above) that clients who reported no family convictions also had significantly more individual counseling interviews than did clients who reported one or more convictions in their family.

These findings suggest that factors such as past record, both of the client and his family, are important to counselors as prognostic indicators. Clients with a history of personal arrests and family convictions were seen by counselors as having a less favorable prognosis and hence may have been given less time and attention. While the length of a client's present sentence is an important factor in determining whether a client is asked to participate in the vocational rehabilitation program at GII, it appears that the counselors' judgement of prognosis (which is in part determined by his past record) also is an important factor in this determination. It was mentioned above that there was a tendency for clients with two or more previous arrests to be black clients.

4. Accomplices

This analysis involved comparing the 59 clients who reported that they were accompanied by two or more accomplices in their crime with the 64 clients who reported that they were alone or had only one accomplice. It was expected that those clients who were accompanied by two or more accomplices would most likely be those who were "going along with the gang," as opposed to the more hardened criminal who typically works alone or with one partner and whose motivation is generally the acquisition of material gain.

Of the 64 clients who reported being accompanied by less than two accomplices, a significantly larger proportion were black

clients ($p < .01$). The fact that black clients tend to work alone or with a single partner might indicate that in general they are more materialistically motivated and/or are less influenced by peer pressure than the other clients. There also was a tendency for those clients who were alone or had only one accomplice in their crime to have committed planned crimes. Although not statistically significant, this trend is in the expected direction. Those clients who were accompanied by two or more accomplices tended to have committed impulsive crimes and were more likely to have been influenced by peer group pressure, e.g., "spur-of-the-moment" crimes such as stealing a car for a "joy ride." Another trend suggested that clients with two or more accomplices also tended to have been under the influence of alcohol or drugs when committing their present offense. Perhaps those clients who committed crimes in a group needed the support of the other accomplices and the disinhibiting effects of the alcohol and/or drugs in order to commit their crimes.

5. Prognosis

This analysis involved comparing the 47 clients who were given an excellent or good prognostic rating with the 76 clients receiving a fair, guarded or poor prognostic rating from their counselor. It was expected that those clients rated less favorably might distinguish themselves on other items indicating more severe criminal characteristics.

The research literature is not clear as to the role of intelligence in delinquent behavior. Healy & Bronner (1936) reported that delinquents are academically inferior to controls. Quay (1965) stated that delinquents typically do less well on verbal tests of ability than on performance tests. Conger and Miller (1966) reported that delinquents are over-represented in the normal and dull I.Q. range of intelligence and under-represented in the bright and superior categories. Glueck & Glueck (1968) reported no significant difference in I.Q. scores of delinquents and non-delinquents when socio-economic status was controlled. Martin and Barry (1969) found recidivism to be only occasionally related to intelligence in their review. In the present study it was found that clients with WAIS I.Q. scores over 80 were given an excellent or good prognostic rating significantly more often than were clients with scores of 80 or less ($p < .001$). Thus, this suggests that intelligence appears to be a significant variable associated with the prognostic rating at GII.

Clients whose institutional behavior at GII was judged to be good

also were given excellent or good prognostic ratings by their counselor significantly more often than were clients whose institutional behavior was judged to be fair, poor or bad ($p < .001$). This suggests the possibility of some sort of "halo effect" in the counselor ratings. However, it is interesting to note the deviations from this relationship: of the 58 clients whose institutional behavior was judged to be good, 23 were judged to have a less-than-excellent prognosis. Although their institutional behavior was good, for reasons determined by their counselor, 23 clients were judged to have an unfavorable prognosis.

Of the 47 clients judged to have an excellent or good prognosis, significantly fewer were reported to have two or more tattoos upon release from GII ($p < .01$) when compared to clients with a less favorable prognosis. The absence of tattoos was associated with a favorable prognostic rating. The hypothesis that the presence or absence of tattoos is a significant prognostic indicator should be tested in a follow-up study. An unexpected trend in these data was that the clients with more accomplices tended to receive better prognostic ratings from their counselors.

6. Institutional Behavior

This analysis involved comparing the 58 clients whose institutional behavior was rated "good" by their counselor with the 65 clients whose institutional behavior was rated "fair," "poor," or "bad" by their counselors. Of the clients who were given a less than good institutional rating, a significantly larger proportion also were given a fair, guarded, or poor prognostic rating by their counselor ($p < .001$). This relationship was discussed above. A significantly larger proportion of those clients who received a good institutional behavior rating were 16 years or older at the time of their first arrest ($p < .01$). Age at first arrest is generally a good prognostic indicator.

7. Characteristics of Offense

This analysis involved separating the clients into four groups for comparison on the basis of the type offense they committed. The four groups were: 48 clients who committed an impulsive act resulting in material gain; 36 clients who committed an impulsive act resulting in no material gain; 32 clients who committed a planned crime resulting in material gain; and 6 clients who committed a planned crime resulting in no material gain. This procedure also allowed for combining the groups for the following analyses: planned versus impulsive crimes; and material gain versus no gain crimes. The offense of one client could not be classified in this manner.

A significantly larger proportion of the clients who committed crimes resulting in material gain were accompanied by two or more accomplices ($p < .01$). The fact that crimes committed by larger groups tended to result in material gain is not consistent with the expectation mentioned above, that clients who work alone or with only one partner are generally the more hardened criminals who are more motivated for material gain. These inconsistent findings suggest that this relationship is quite complex.

Of the clients who committed crimes resulting in material gain, a larger than expected number admitted having been under the influence of alcohol or drugs when they committed their crime ($p < .05$). Those clients whose motivation was primarily for material gain tended to need the support of two or more accomplices, as well as the inhibition-reducing effects of alcohol and/or drugs, in order to commit their crimes.

Clients who committed impulsive crimes tended to score higher on the WAIS Performance scale than did clients who committed planned crimes ($p < .05$). It might be that clients who planned their crimes are more verbally oriented and less likely to do well on performance tasks. There was also a tendency for clients who committed crimes resulting in material gain to have had two or more tattoos (upon referral to VR) more often than clients who committed crimes resulting in no material gain.

8. Kind of crime

This analysis involved comparing clients on the basis of the technical charge involved in their present offense. For this analysis, the clients were separated into four groups for comparison: felony-burglary ($N=38$), other felonies ($N=44$), misdemeanor-burglary ($N=12$), and other misdemeanors ($N=29$). This analysis also allowed for combined group comparisons. Of the clients who had been convicted of a misdemeanor, a significantly larger proportion had earned at least \$60 per week when compared with clients who had been convicted of felonies ($p < .01$). It might be that those clients who had jobs paying a reasonable salary (at least \$60 per week) tended to commit crimes not motivated by material gain, and hence crimes less likely to be called felonies. There was also a tendency for the burglary-felony crimes to have been described as impulsive acts not resulting in material gain. There was a tendency for clients who committed burglary crimes not to have used force in their crimes.

Summary

There are several meaningful findings. Black clients were first arrested at a significantly earlier age than white clients. Fewer black than white clients were employed six months prior to their present conviction. Also, white clients had had a significantly higher income than black clients. Another finding consistent with the research literature on racial differences was that black clients scored significantly lower on both the performance and verbal parts of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale.

An unexpected finding which should be cross-validated in other samples was that white clients were under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs more often than were Blacks at the time of their offense. Another finding that should be cross-validated was that black clients were accompanied by fewer accomplices than were white clients. Some interesting questions might be asked as to why black clients tend to work alone or with one partner rather than with a group or "gang." It might be that black clients are more materialistically motivated than white clients, or that they have less need for group support.

With regard to family pathology, it was found that clients who reported no family convictions were themselves convicted fewer times and were first arrested at a later age than other clients. An unexpected finding was that clients who reported no family convictions received significantly more individual counseling interviews than did other clients. It was found that clients who reported no family convictions also reported that there was some type of father in the home.

With regard to the number of previous arrests, clients with two or more were first arrested before the age of 17 significantly more often than were clients with less arrests. Seventeen to nineteen year old clients reported having two or more previous arrests significantly more often than the 20 to 23 year old clients. Clients with two or more previous arrests had served more time in some institution than had other clients. An unexpected finding was that a significantly larger proportion of the clients who reported two or more previous arrests had not lived in the Rehabilitation Center. This most likely reflects the screening process used by the counselors in admitting clients to the Center based upon their pre-rehabilitation prognostic estimate.

When compared on counselor ratings of prognosis and institutional behavior, clients whose institutional behavior was rated "good" were also given higher prognostic ratings. This might represent a "halo effect." A finding that should be cross-validated and supplemented with follow-up data was that clients who received a "good" institutional behavior rating tended to have been over 15 years of age when first arrested. Another finding to be cross-validated was that clients receiving an "excellent" or "good" prognostic rating were reported to have fewer tattoos upon release. In the present study clients with WAIS I.Q. scores over 80 were given higher prognostic ratings by their counselors. Cross-validation and follow-up data would allow for more conclusive inferences.

When compared on type and method of crime, it was found that clients committing crimes resulting in material gain tended to report having two or more accomplices. A finding suggesting some interesting hypotheses was that clients committing crimes resulting in material gain tended to report having been under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs at that time.

An unexpected finding was that clients committing impulsive crimes tended to score higher on the WAIS performance scale. Quay (1965) found that delinquents typically do less well on verbal tests than on performance tests. It may be that clients committing impulsive crimes (rather than planned crimes) possess fewer delinquent characteristics than other clients. Or perhaps relatively high performance scores are associated with impulsive tendencies in delinquents. In either case, cross-validation is called for. Another unexpected finding was that clients convicted of misdemeanors (as opposed to felonies) earned more money in the six months prior to their present offense than other clients. Clients with reasonably well-paying jobs are perhaps less likely to commit felonies.

All of these findings suggest that biographical data is useful both in making inferences about this population and in formulating hypotheses to be tested in further studies. There is a great need for more research in order to isolate some of the more relevant variables in the delinquent population and to relate these to follow-up data. This is currently underway at GII.

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Footnote

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