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AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM AMONG RESIDENTS RELEASED FROM  
MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING THE YEAR 1972  
IN COMPARISON WITH RELEASES IN THE YEAR 1966 AND 1971

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## ABSTRACT

A study of releases from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions during the year 1972 revealed that 22% of the releasee population returned to prison within one year of the date of their release. Analyses reveal the following important findings:

- (1) The recidivism rate for individuals released in the year 1972 was significantly below the recidivism rate for releases in previous years.
- (2) Higher rates of recidivism occurred for releases directly from maximum security institutions than for releases from medium and minimum security institutions.
- (3) While there was an unusually large increase in the number of individuals released from MCI-Concord in the year 1972, the recidivism rate for MCI-Concord actually dropped. It was concluded, therefore, that the increased numbers of individuals paroled and discharged as part of an effort to enable the planned reduction in bed space at MCI-Concord did not result in an increased rate of recidivism.
- (4) Fewer individuals who were paroled from correctional institutions in Massachusetts in the year 1972 were found to be returned to prison for the single reason of a technical violation of parole rules. A possible explanation for this trend is that the effects of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision are now being felt in Massachusetts criminal justice system.
- (5) Analysis revealed that for individuals originally committed to MCI-Walpole recidivism rates varied according to the specific institution from which they were released. Walpole commitments who were transferred to and released from lower security institutions had significantly lower rates of recidivism than those released directly from a maximum security institution. It is suggested that the above finding lends support to the possibility of a reintegrative or rehabilitative quality in the movement from maximum to medium and/or to minimum security levels as opposed to an abrupt release directly from a maximum security institution.
- (6) For all releasing institutions, individuals who received a parole had significantly higher rates of recidivism than individuals who had received a discharge. One clear reason why it would be expected for individuals receiving a discharge would have lower rates of recidivism is that such individuals would not be returned for parole violations since they are not on parole status. Dischargees may only be returned for reason of receiving a new sentence on a new offense.

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## INTRODUCTION

As part of a continuing effort to monitor the behavior of offenders after their release from correctional institutions, the following study analyzes data collected by the Research Division of the Massachusetts Department of Correction relating to rates of recidivism for individuals released from Massachusetts' Adult State Correctional Institutions in the year 1972. The study provides a narrative overview of some of the preliminary findings that have thus far emerged from the data analysis. An additional aspect of the study consists of a series of comparisons between the 1972 material and the recidivism material of former years.

The Adult State Correctional Institutions included in this study are: M.C.I.'s Walpole, Norfolk, Concord, Framingham, and the three Forestry Camps (M.C.I.'s Monroe, Warwick, and Plymouth).<sup>1</sup>

### Definition of Recidivism:

A recidivist was defined as any subject who was returned to a Federal or State correctional institution or to a County House of Correction or Jail for 30 days or more.

### Follow-up Period:

The follow-up period was one year from the date of the subjects' release from prison. Therefore, each releasee included in the study was followed in the community for one full year.

<sup>1</sup> Seven individuals were released from Pre-Release Centers in 1972 but because this number was too small to permit meaningful individual data analysis they were not included in the study. The seven individuals will be included with the releasees from Pre-Release Centers in the forthcoming analysis of recidivism for releasees in the year 1973. Additionally, recidivism rates for releasees from Pre-Release Centers in the years 1972-73 have already been published. See LeClair, Daniel An Analysis of Recidivism Among Residents Released from Boston State and Shirley Pre-Release Centers During 1972-73. Massachusetts Department of Correction Research Publication #100, August, 1975.

Variables Collected:<sup>2</sup>

For the analyses that follow in this report data was collected on institution of commitment; institution of release; date of release; type of release; and sex. If an individual was returned to custody, data was collected on the date of return, the reason for return, the first date the individual was re-released, the total months and days the individual was incarcerated during the first year of release, and the institution that the individual was returned to. For individuals who were returned for the commission of a new offense, the type of offense and the sentence received was recorded. For individuals who were returned for technical violations of their paroles, the specific technical violation was recorded.

Data Analysis:

Data was derived from the computerized data base developed by the Correction and Parole Management Information System and analyzed on the Massachusetts State College Computer Network.<sup>3</sup>

FINDINGS

Number of Releases:

A total of 1,550 individuals were released from Massachusetts State Correctional Institutions during the year 1972. Of these, 1,426 individuals were male and 124 were female. The number of releases in 1972 represents an increase of 40% over the number of releases in 1971 and an increase of 50% over the number of releases in 1966. These figures are summarized in Table I below.

TABLE I

NUMBER OF RELEASES FROM MASSACHUSETTS STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS  
IN THE YEARS 1966, 1971, and 1972

Year	Total Number of Releases
1966	1,036
1971	1,107
1972	1,550

<sup>2</sup> The author would like to acknowledge his appreciation for the careful work that the following individuals provided in the collection and preparation of data to be used in these reports: Cynthia Waldron, Miranda Mucciante, Ira Baline, and other members of the correction and parole information system data collection staff.

<sup>3</sup> Bob Patrician, Senior Programmer, Massachusetts Department of Correction Research Unit, performed the computer processing on this system.

Differential Recidivism Rates by Releasing Institution:

Of the 1,550 individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional institutions in 1972, 1,204 (78%) were not returned to a correctional institution within one year of their release. The remaining 346 individuals (22%) were reincarcerated for at least 30 days within one year of their release. Thus, the overall recidivism rate with a one year follow-up period was 22%.

For MCI-Concord, the institution releasing the largest number of individuals, the recidivism rate was 27%; for MCI-Walpole, the recidivism rate was 21%; for MCI-Framingham, the recidivism rate was 18%; for MCI-Norfolk, the recidivism rate was 15%; and for the Forestry Camps, the combined recidivism rate was 14%. These figures are summarized below in Table II.

TABLE II

DIFFERENTIAL RECIDIVISM RATE BY INSTITUTION FOR 1972 RELEASES

Institution of Release	Number of Releases	Percent of Total Releases	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Concord	800	(52)	27%
MCI-Walpole	182	(12)	21%
MCI-Framingham	124	( 8)	18%
MCI-Norfolk	318	(21)	15%
Forestry Camps	126	( 8)	14%
TOTAL	1,150	(100)	22%

As can be seen from Table II, higher rates of recidivism occurred for individuals released from MCI's Concord and Walpole, and lower rates of recidivism occurred for individuals released from MCI's Framingham, Norfolk, and Forestry Camps.<sup>4</sup> This pattern is consistent with the research findings of prior years

<sup>4</sup> In terms of statistical significance, the recidivism rate for MCI-Concord was significantly higher ( $X^2=24.3$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df) than the total releasee population; and the recidivism rates for MCI-Norfolk and the Forestry Camps were significantly lower than the total releasee population ( $X^2=11.1$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df for MCI-Norfolk;  $X^2=6.2$ ,  $P<.01$ , 1df for Forestry Camps). The difference for MCI's Walpole and Framingham were not statistically significant.

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with the exception of MCI-Framingham. Traditionally, the recidivism rate from MCI-Framingham has been relatively high. For example, in 1966 the recidivism rate was 32% for a one year follow-up period and in 1971 the recidivism rate was 29% for a one year follow-up period. A separate study, therefore, will be carried out in the near future to investigate possible explanations for MCI-Framingham releasees' sharp reduction in recidivism in the year 1972.

The comparative recidivism rates for separate releasing institutions for the years 1966 and 1971 are presented below in Tables III and IV. As can be seen from these tables, the 1972 recidivism rates by institution of release, though uniformly lower, follow the same patterns as previous years with the single exception of MCI-Framingham as discussed above.

TABLE III

RECIDIVISM RATE BY RELEASING INSTITUTION FOR 1971 RELEASES

Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Framingham	92	( 8)	29%
MCI-Concord	522	(47)	28%
MCI-Walpole	155	(14)	27%
MCI-Norfolk	234	(21)	18%
Forestry Camps	104	( 9)	14%
TOTAL	1,107	(100)	25%

5 See Callahan, Edward F., Statistical Tables Describing the Characteristics and Recidivism Rates of Men Released During 1966 from MCI's Norfolk, Walpole, Concord and the Massachusetts Forestry Camps, Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication No. 43 January 1, 1971; Graves, David S., Analysis of Recidivism Among Men Released from MCI's Concord, Walpole, and Norfolk During 1966 (3 vols.), Massachusetts Department of Correction Publication, Numbers 54-56, August, 1972; LeClair, Daniel P. An Analysis of Recidivism Among Residents Released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1971, Massachusetts Department of Correction Research Publication #98, May, 1975.

TABLE IV

RECIDIVISM RATE BY RELEASING INSTITUTION FOR 1966 RELEASES

Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Framingham	118	(11)	32%
MCI-Concord	306	(30)	30%
MCI-Walpole	194	(19)	33%
MCI-Norfolk	298	(29)	28%
Forestry Camps	120	(12)	27%
TOTAL	1,036	(100)	30%

When the overall recidivism rate for releases in the year 1972 is compared to the rates in previous years, one finds a significant drop in recidivism. For example, the recidivism rate for releases from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions in the year 1966 was 30% with the same follow-up period of one year. Similarly, for the releases in the year 1971, the recidivism rate was 25% with the same follow-up period of one year. Thus the recidivism rates for the releases in the years 1966, 1971, and 1972 follow a downward trend with respective rates of 30%, 25%, and 22%.<sup>6</sup> This material is summarized in Table V below.

TABLE V

COMPARATIVE RECIDIVISM RATES FOR YEARS 1966, 1971, and 1972

	Concord	Walpole	Norfolk	Prison Camps	Framingham	Total
1966	30%	33%	28%	27%	32%	30%
1971	28%	27%	18%	14%	29%	25%
1972	27%	21%	15%	14%	18%	22%

<sup>6</sup> The difference between the recidivism rate of the releases in the year 1972 and the recidivism rate of the releases in the year 1971 was not a statistically significant difference ( $\chi^2=1.83$ ,  $P > .05$ , 1df). However, the difference between the recidivism rate of the releases in the year 1972 and the releases in 1966 was statistically significant ( $\chi^2=15.47$ ,  $P < .001$ , 1df).



The recidivism figures for MCI-Concord are particularly important in view of the fact that it was in the year 1972 that an unusually high number of individuals were released from MCI-Concord. The larger number of individuals released from MCI-Concord in this year was mainly due to the planned closing of the east wing of institution thus reducing the total number of available beds. However, despite the fact that the number of individuals released from MCI-Concord was 44% higher in the year 1972 than the previous year, the recidivism rate did not increase. In fact, there was a slight decrease. In the year 1971, a total of 522 individuals were released from MCI-Concord with a resultant one year follow-up recidivism rate of 28%; whereas in the year 1972, a total of 800 individuals were released from MCI-Concord with a resultant recidivism rate of 27%.

These total numbers of individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions during the years 1966, 1971, and 1972 are presented in Table VI below.

TABLE VI

COMPARATIVE NUMBER OF RELEASEES FOR YEARS 1966, 1971, and 1972

	Concord	Walpole	Norfolk	Prison Camps	Framingham	Total
1966	306	194	298	120	118	1,036
1971	522	155	234	104	92	1,107
1972	800	182	318	126	124	1,550

The particular pattern of the resultant recidivism rates for MCI-Concord in view of the large number of releases from that institution during the year 1972 will be re-examined after material on recidivism rates, broken down by specific month of release, have been presented.

Breakdown by Month of Release:

In Table VII, presented below, the recidivism figures for releases in the year 1972 are provided according to the specific month of release. From this table one is able to determine the exact number of releases for each month in the year 1972 as well as determine the specific recidivism rate for the releases in any one particular month.

In Table VIII, also presented below, data is provided on the average monthly population for the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions included in this study.

TABLE VII

RECIDIVISM RATES OF RELEASES FROM  
MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN 1972, BY MONTH OF RELEASE

MONTH	WALPOLE			CONCORD			FRAMINGHAM			NORFOLK			FORESTRY			TOTAL		
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>
January	16	( 9)	31%	36	( 5)	33%	1	( 1)	0%	11	( 3)	9%	7	( 6)	0%	71	( 5)	25%
February	8	( 4)	38%	48	( 6)	27%	12	(10)	8%	15	( 5)	33%	7	( 6)	0%	90	( 6)	23%
March	24	(13)	13%	57	( 7)	25%	15	(12)	7%	31	(10)	13%	12	(10)	0%	139	( 9)	16%
April	20	(11)	30%	54	( 7)	24%	13	(10)	23%	19	( 6)	21%	12	(10)	25%	118	( 8)	25%
May	17	( 9)	24%	51	( 6)	33%	10	( 8)	10%	35	(11)	20%	10	( 8)	20%	123	( 8)	24%
June	17	( 9)	24%	72	( 9)	31%	14	(11)	21%	31	(10)	6%	10	( 8)	10%	144	( 9)	22%
July	17	( 9)	29%	53	( 7)	25%	6	( 5)	17%	31	(10)	23%	8	( 6)	0%	115	( 7)	23%
August	12	( 7)	8%	82	(10)	35%	12	(10)	8%	31	(10)	6%	7	( 6)	29%	144	( 9)	24%
September	11	( 6)	27%	65	( 8)	26%	15	(12)	33%	29	( 9)	14%	10	( 8)	20%	130	( 8)	24%
October	10	( 6)	20%	99	(12)	20%	13	(10)	23%	28	( 9)	21%	14	(11)	7%	164	(11)	19%
November	11	( 6)	0%	75	( 9)	25%	7	( 6)	14%	29	( 9)	14%	9	( 7)	22%	131	( 8)	20%
December	19	(10)	16%	108	(14)	28%	6	( 5)	33%	28	( 9)	11%	20	(16)	20%	181	(12)	23%
TOTAL	182	(100)	21%	800	(100)	28%	124	(100)	18%	318	(100)	15%	126	(100)	14%	1,550	(100)	22%

N = Number

% = Percent for that month

RR = Recidivism Rate

TABLE VIII

AVERAGE MONTHLY POPULATION

MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS, 1972

MONTH	Walpole	Norfolk	Concord	Forestry Camps	Framingham	Total
January	601	727	636	128	132	2,224
February	617	723	657	126	132	2,255
March	619	734	669	139	123	2,284
April	578	732	673	144	118	2,245
May	588	709	679	137	124	2,237
June	615	705	683	136	127	2,266
July	605	733	689	133	122	2,282
August	577	692	649	141	119	2,178
September	575	654	621	138	110	2,098
October	575	631	589	128	108	2,031
November	591	612	541	126	100	1,970
December	594	622	441	130	92	1,879

In reference to the issue of the large number of releases in 1972 from MCI-Concord, material presented in Tables VII and VIII above may be used to evaluate the consequences of releasing larger numbers of individuals in terms of resultant recidivism rates. This is further clarified by Table IX below. In Table IX, the number of releases from MCI-Concord in 1972 is broken down by month and includes the specific recidivism rate for the releases for each respective month. In addition, the Table provides the average monthly population for MCI-Concord during the same time period. As can be seen from this data, the number of individuals released from MCI-Concord during 1972 increased as the year progressed. The largest number of individuals were released during the second half of the year. This pattern points to the depopulation of MCI-Concord during the latter half of the year 1972, as part of a process of preparing for the eventual closing of the East Wing, and thus reducing the number of beds available at the institution. This process did occur and is illustrated in Table IX when one looks at the average monthly population levels at MCI-Concord during various months of the year 1972. The average population at MCI-Concord drops correspondingly with the increase in the number of individuals released.

When we look at the effect of releasing a larger number of individuals from an institution (in effect granting earlier paroles) in terms of resultant recidivism rates, Table IX presents material that illustrates recidivism rates did not increase with the increase in the number of releases. In fact, some of the lowest monthly recidivism rates occurred in the months with the larger number of releases (see the months October, November, and December). Conversely, some of the higher monthly recidivism rates occurred for the months with the lower number of releases (see the months January and May).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The Pearson correlation statistic was run on this data with a resultant  $r$  equal to  $-.237$ , and a significance value of  $P < .23$ . Therefore, though a negative correlational with number of releases and recidivism rates did exist, the relationship was not statistically significant at the  $.05$  significance level. We conclude that the increase in the number of releases did not result in an increase in the recidivism rate. To some extent evidence exists that, in fact, the exact opposite occurred. That is, as the number of releases increased the recidivism rate decreased. However, this relationship was not found to be statistically significant.

TABLE IX

MONTHLY BREAKDOWN OF RECIDIVISM FIGURES FOR MCI-CONCORD, 1972 RELEASES

Month of Release	Average Institutional Monthly Population	Number of Releases	Percent of Total Releases	Recidivism Rate
January	636	36	( 5)	33%
February	657	48	( 6)	27%
March	669	57	( 7)	25%
April	673	54	( 7)	24%
May	679	51	( 6)	33%
June	683	72	( 9)	31%
July	689	53	( 7)	25%
August	649	82	(10)	35%
September	621	65	( 8)	26%
October	589	99	(12)	20%
November	541	75	( 9)	25%
December	441	108	(14)	28%
TOTAL	7,527	800	(100)	28%

We conclude from these figures that the increased numbers of individuals paroled and discharged as part of an effort to enable the planned reduction in bed space at MCI-Concord had no significant effect on the recidivism rates for those released during that period.

Specific Category of Recidivism for Releases in the Year 1972:

It is important to examine separately the specific categories under the general heading of the term recidivism. For example, it is important to note that 76 (22%) of the 346 recidivists (5% of the total sample) were re-incarcerated for technical infractions of their parole conditions. They did not have a new arrest associated with their parole violation. One hundred and ninety (55%) of the 346 recidivists (12% of the total sample) were re-incarcerated because a new arrest was associated

with their parole violation, although at the time of their re-incarceration they had not been tried for this new arrest. Thus, 77% of the recidivists were returned as parole violators. Only 80 (23%) of the 346 recidivists (and only 5% of the total sample) were re-incarcerated as a result of a new conviction, receiving a new sentence from the court. These figures are summarized in Table X below:

TABLE X

BREAKDOWN OF RECIDIVISM FOR RELEASES IN 1972 BY CATEGORY OF RETURN

Institution	Parole Violation Technical		Parole Violation New Arrest		New Commitments		Total	
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
MCI-Concord	38	(17)	132	(60)	49	(22)	219	(100)
MCI-Walpole	12	(30)	15	(39)	12	(31)	39	(100)
MCI-Framingham	11	(50)	5	(23)	6	(27)	22	(100)
MCI-Norfolk	11	(22)	27	(55)	11	(22)	49	(100)
Forestry Camps	4	(24)	11	(65)	2	(12)	17	(100)
TOTAL	76	(22)	190	(55)	80	(23)	346	(100)

Of the 346 recidivists, 316 (91%) were parolees and 30 (9%) were discharges. When we exclude the discharges, the tabulation of reason of return is as follows:

TABLE XI

BREAKDOWN OF RECIDIVISM FOR RELEASES IN 1972  
BY CATEGORY OF RETURN, PAROLEES ONLY

	Number	Percent
Parole Violators, Technical	76	(24)
Parole Violators, New Arrest	190	(60)
Returned on New Commitment	50	(16)
TOTAL	316	(100)

When we compare these figures presented in Table X and XI above with the outcomes in previous years a noticeable change appears. For example, when we compare the category of return for the releases in 1972 with the category of return for releases in 1971 the following occurs:

- (1) A lower proportion of returns for reason of a technical violation of their parole conditions occurred for the 1972 cohort. Whereas 22% of the recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort were returned for reason a technical violation of parole, 43% of the 1971 releasee cohort were returned for this reason;<sup>8</sup>
- (2) A higher proportion of returns for reason of a new arrest associated with their parole revocation occurred for 1972 releasee cohort. Whereas 55% of the recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort were returned for reason of a new arrest associated with their parole revocation, 47% of the 1971 releasee cohort were returned for this reason;<sup>9</sup>
- (3) A higher proportion of returns for reason of receiving a new commitment from the courts occurred for the 1972 releasee cohort. Whereas 23% of the recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort were returned on a new commitment from the courts, 10% of the 1971 releasee cohort were returned for this reason.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The number of recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort who were returned for a technical violation of their parole conditions was statistically significantly lower than both the 1971 and 1966 releasee cohorts (for 1972 vs. the 1971 cohorts,  $\chi^2=32.4$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df; for the 1972 vs. 1966 cohorts,  $\chi^2=11.9$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df). Additionally, in terms of returns for technical parole violations, the 1971 releasee cohort was statistically significantly lower than the 1966 releasee cohort ( $\chi^2=4.6$ ,  $P<.01$ , 1df).

<sup>9</sup> The number of recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort who were returned for reason of a parole violation because of a new arrest was statistically significantly higher than both the 1971 and the 1966 releasee cohorts (for 1972 vs. the 1971 cohorts,  $\chi^2=3.8$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df; for the 1972 vs. the 1966 cohorts,  $\chi^2=22.8$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df). Additionally, in terms of returns for parole violation being associated with a new arrest, the 1971 releasee cohort was statistically significantly higher than the 1966 releasee cohort ( $\chi^2=5.2$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df).

<sup>10</sup> The number of recidivists in the 1972 releasee cohort who were returned on a new court commitment, rather than as a parole violator, was statistically significantly higher than the 1971 releasee cohort ( $\chi^2=19.7$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df), but significantly lower than the 1966 releasee cohort ( $\chi^2=3.8$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df). The 1971 releasee cohort was statistically significantly lower than the 1966 releasee cohort on this item ( $\chi^2=35.7$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df).

What this means is that individuals returned to prison in the 1972 cohort were less apt to be returned for reason of technical violation of their parole. Instead, the reason of return was more apt to be for reason of a new arrest or because they received a new court commitment.

The same pattern, though less pronounced, occurs when we compare the 1972 releasee cohort with the 1966 releasee cohort. These comparative figures for the years 1972, 1971 and 1966 are summarized below in Table XII, below.

TABLE XII

BREAKDOWN OF RECIDIVISM BY CATEGORY OF RETURN  
FOR YEARS 1966, 1971 and 1972

Year of Release	Parole Violation Technical		Parole Violation New Arrest		New Commitments		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1972	76	(22)	190	(55)	80	(23)	346	(100)
1971	118	(43)	128	(47)	26	(10)	272	(100)
1966*	93	(34)	96	(36)	81	(30)	270	(100)

The implication of the above finding is that fewer individuals who have been paroled from adult State Correctional Institutions in Massachusetts are being returned to prison for the single reason of a technical violation of parole rules. Instead, for the releases in the year 1972, when a parole is revoked it is more apt to be for reason of a new arrest.

A possible explanation for this occurrence is that the effects of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision are now being felt in Massachusetts. In June of 1972, the United States Supreme Court handed down the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision which required that certain changes be made in the parole revocation process. Specifically, the decision meant that two parole revocation hearings had to be held before a final revocation action could be taken. The purpose of the first hearing was to determine whether there was probable cause to remove the parolee from the street; the purpose of the second hearing was to determine whether there was justification to revoke his parole.

The decision took effect in the State of Massachusetts on October 16, 1972. Since the 1972 releases were followed in the community for one full year, all parolees in the sample were on parole status for at least a portion of time subsequent to the new policy taking effect. It would therefore be

\*The 1966 figures do not include returns for MCI-Framingham. For MCI-Framingham, data was not available for this category.



safe to assume that the decrease in the number of revokes for reason of a technical infraction of parole rules may be interwoven with the effects of the application of Morrissey vs. Brewer decision in Massachusetts. As due process was applied to the parole revocation process, it is possible that many of the less serious technical violation infractions no longer led to a full revocation and return. In addition, the effects to the overall reduction in recidivism for the releases in the year 1972 as pointed out earlier in this report. However, it must be stressed that the possible effects of the Morrissey vs. Brewer decision on the changes in either the number of technical parole violations or on the overall recidivism rates for releases in the year 1972 are, in fact, speculative at this point. Further research is needed before a definite statement can be made.

Recidivism Rates by Committing Institution:

In the Massachusetts criminal justice system, the courts make direct commitments to three institutions. Women are committed to MCI-Framingham, and men are committed to either MCI-Concord, or MCI-Walpole. In the case of men sentenced to MCI-Concord, the judge does not fix a specific term. The individual is sentenced to the authority of the superintendent without a minimum sentence and the maximum sentence is established by statute. Traditionally, Concord sentences are for individuals with less lengthy criminal histories and, therefore, tend to be younger offenders. In the case of men sentenced to MCI-Walpole, the judge must fix both a minimum and a maximum term (except for life sentences and sentences for habitual offenders). The minimum must not be for less than two and a half years; the maximum not more than that established by statute.

Men are not committed to either MCI-Norfolk or Forestry Camps directly by the courts. Instead, they are received on transfer from MCI's Walpole and Concord after having been carefully screened as suitable for a medium security status.

The 1972 releasee sample was analyzed in terms of the institution that each individual was originally committed. Of the 1,550 releases, 124 (8%) individuals had been originally committed to MCI-Framingham and had a recidivism rate of 18%; 768 (50%) had been originally committed to MCI-Concord and had a recidivism rate of 28%; and 658 (42%) had been originally committed to MCI-Walpole and had a recidivism rate of 17%. These results are summarized in Table XIII below:

TABLE XIII

RECIDIVISM RATE BY COMMITTING INSTITUTION FOR 1972 RELEASEES

Committing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Framingham	124	( 8)	18%
MCI-Concord	768	(50)	28%
MCI-Walpole	658	(42)	17%
TOTAL	1,550	(100)	22%

When the results, as presented in Table XIII above, are compared to previous years (see Tables XIV and XV below) we see that traditionally MCI-Concord commitments have higher recidivism rates and that MCI-Walpole commitments have lower recidivism rates.<sup>11</sup> However, the 1972 commitments to Framingham exhibited a change in recidivistic behavior. (This has been discussed above on page 4.)

<sup>11</sup> In terms of statistical significance, the recidivism rate for individuals committed to MCI-Concord was significantly higher ( $X^2=18.5$ ,  $P < .001$ , 1df) than the total sample; and the recidivism rate for those committed to MCI-Walpole was significantly lower ( $X^2=24.49$ ,  $P < .001$ , 1df) than the total sample. The recidivism rate for those committed to MCI-Framingham (women) was not statistically significant when compared to the total sample (largely due to the small N)  $X^2=1.63$ ,  $P > .05$ , 1df.

TABLE XIV

RECIDIVISM RATE BY COMMITTING INSTITUTION FOR 1971 RELEASEES

Committing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Framingham	92	( 8)	29%
MCI-Concord	531	(48)	29%
MCI-Walpole	484	(44)	19%
TOTAL	1,107	(100)	25%

TABLE XV

RECIDIVISM RATE BY COMMITTING INSTITUTION FOR 1966 RELEASEES

Committing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Framingham	118	(11)	32%
MCI-Concord	293	(28)	35%
MCI-Walpole	590	(57)	27%
House of Correction	35	( 3)	23%
TOTAL	1,036	(100)	30%

As part of an evaluation of rates of recidivism for releases from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions in 1971, a report was issued in May of 1975 which documented an interesting trend concerning Walpole commitments.<sup>12</sup> It was reported that when the 1971 releasee population was analyzed in terms of the sample members original commitment institution crosstabed by his institution of release, a particular pattern existed for Walpole commitments. Specifically, analyses revealed that for individuals

<sup>12</sup> LeClair, Daniel P., op.cit., May, 1975.

originally committed to MCI-Walpole, differential rates of recidivism occurred in accordance with the particular institution from which they were released. Walpole commitments who were transferred to and subsequently released from other Massachusetts Correctional Institutions had significantly lower rates of recidivism than those who remained at MCI-Walpole (or those who were transferred from MCI-Walpole but who were subsequently returned and released from MCI-Walpole).

The author of the report hypothesized that the differential rates of recidivism for the MCI-Walpole commitments by institution of release might be accounted for by either of two explanations: (1) low recidivist risks may have been selected for transfer to the lower custody institutions; or (2) there is a reintegrative or rehabilitative quality in the movement from maximum to medium and to minimum security levels as opposed to an abrupt release directly from a maximum security institution to the street.

In order to test the above hypotheses, the Massachusetts Department of Correction's Research Unit conducted a separate study that attempted to determine if either of the two explanations was, in fact, correct.<sup>13</sup> In this study, Base Expectancy Tables were developed and applied to the portion of the MCI-Walpole commitments in the sample that were transferred to and released from MCI's Norfolk, and Forestry Camps to determine whether or not lower recidivist risks groups were selected disproportionately.

To test the possibility of selection factors accounting for the lower rates of recidivism for MCI-Walpole commitments released from medium and minimum security institutions as opposed to those released directly from MCI-Walpole, the study compared the actual rate of recidivism for Walpole releasees with the expected rate for each of the MCI Norfolk and Forestry Camp releasee populations. While comparisons between the recidivism rate of MCI-Walpole releases and the expected recidivism rates of the MCI's Norfolk and Forestry Camps show a basic difference, when the Chi Square Goodness of Fit test was applied the difference were found not to be statistically significant. The comparative figures and the results of the statistical tests of significance are presented in Table XIII, below:

<sup>13</sup> Landolfi, Joe An Analysis of Differential Rates of Recidivism for MCI-Walpole Commitments by Institution of Release, forthcoming Massachusetts Department of Correction Research publication.

TABLE XIII

Comparisons Between Rates of Recidivism for  
Walpole Commitments Released from Walpole  
and Expected Rates of Recidivism for Walpole  
Commitments Released from MCI's Norfolk and  
Forestry Camps

	Walpole Releases' Rate of <u>Recidivism</u>	Expected Rate of <u>Recidivism</u>	Chi Square Test and <u>Probability Level</u>
Walpole Commitments Released from MCI-Norfolk	27%	23.3%	$x^2 = 1.50, P > .05, 1df$
Walpole Commitments Released from MCI Forestry Camps	27%	19.9%	$x^2 = 2.43, P > .05, 1df$
Total Walpole Commitments Released from Lower Security Institutions	27%	22.3%	$x^2 = 3.48, P > .05, 1df$

From these results, the author concluded that no evidence exists in support of the contention that low recidivist risks were chosen for transfer to lower custody institution. This finding leads to additional support to the possibility of the existence of a reintegrative or rehabili quality in the movement from maximum to medium and to minimum security levels as opposed to an abrupt release directly from a maximum security institution.

In spite of the fact that no statistically significant differences were found to exist between the samples, inspection of the figures (see Table XIII) shows that the expected recidivism rate for Norfolk and Forestry Camp releases is well below the actual recidivism rate of the Walpole releases. Since the difference approaches statistical significance for the combined Norfolk/Forestry sample, the total rejection of the existence of a selection process cannot be made. Therefore, in testing the second hypothesis selective factors were held constant. In this way the Expected Rate was used to control for selective factors to the extent that they exist.

In order to test the second hypothesis, the author of the study compared the Expected Recidivism Rates for the MCI's Norfolk and Forestry Camps releasee populations with their Actual Rate of Recidivism. It was found that while the MCI-Walpole commitments released from MCI-Norfolk had an expected recidivism rate of 23.3% their actual recidivism rate was 17.6%, and that while the MCI-Walpole commitments released from MCI-Forestry Camps had an expected recidivism rate of 19.9% their actual recidivism rate was 12.6%.<sup>14</sup> These results are summarized in Table XIV, below:

TABLE XIV

Walpole Commitments Who Were Transferred To and Released  
From Lower Security Institutions, For Releasees In the Year 1971

	Expected Recidivism Rate	Actual Recidivism Rate	Chi Square & Probability Level
Walpole Commitments Released from MCI-Norfolk	23.3%	17.6%	$x^2 = 3.94$ , $P < .05$ , 1df
Walpole Commitments Released from MCI-Forestry Camps	19.9%	12.6%	$x^2 = 3.16$ , $P > .05$ , 1df
Total Walpole Commitments Released from Lower Security Institutions	22.3%	16.1%	$x^2 = 6.95$ , $P < .05$ , 1df

<sup>14</sup> In terms of statistical significance, when the researcher used the Chi Square goodness of fit test it was determined that the differences between the expected and the actual rates of recidivism were significant for the Norfolk releasee sample and for the combined Norfolk and Forestry Camp samples. However, the differences for the Forestry Camp sample were not statistically significant. The Chi Squares and significance levels are presented in Table XIV.

The author concludes that evidence supports the hypothesis that there is a reintegrative or rehabilitative quality in the movement from maximum to medium and to minimum security levels as opposed to an abrupt release directly from a maximum security institution.

To test whether or not the differential recidivism rate pattern found for MCI-Walpole commitments in the 1971 releasee population continues to occur, the 1972 releasee population was analyzed in the same manner. It was discovered that whereas the rate of recidivism for individuals committed to MCI-Walpole and released directly from MCI-Walpole was 21%, the rate of recidivism for individuals committed to MCI-Walpole but release from MCI-Norfolk was 15%, and the rate of recidivism for individuals committed to MCI-Walpole but released from Forestry Camps was 12%. Thus, in terms of the three institutions mentioned above, the pattern found in 1971 releases continued to occur in the 1972 releasee population. However, for individuals committed to MCI-Walpole and subsequently released from MCI-Concord, the releases in the year 1972 had a higher rate of recidivism (24%) than the rate of recidivism of releases directly from MCI-Walpole (21%). The exact opposite trend occurred for the releases in the year 1971. However, since MCI-Concord is not a lower security level institution than MCI-Walpole, the finding concerning the trend of movement from maximum to medium and minimum security levels is not affected.<sup>15</sup>

A summary of these results is presented in Table XV below.

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15 In terms of statistical significance, when we add the MCI-Norfolk and MCI-Forestry sample together as medium and minimum security institutions and compare them with MCI-Concord and MCI-Walpole releases added together, a statistically significant difference occurs ( $\chi^2=5.31$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df). Rates for MCI-Walpole commitments when released from medium or minimum security institutions are significantly lower than when released from maximum security institutions. No statistical difference exists between MCI-Walpole commitments released from MCI-Concord and those released from MCI-Walpole ( $\chi^2=0.22$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df). When MCI-Norfolk and MCI-Forestry Camps releases are treated separately, they do not reach statistical difference when compared with releases directly from Walpole, though they closely approach a statistically significant difference ( $\chi^2=2.31$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df and  $\chi^2=3.60$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df, respectively).

TABLE XV

RECIDIVISM RATES OF WALPOLE COMMITMENTS  
BY INSTITUTION OF RELEASE, 1972 POPULATION

Releasing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Concord	59	( 9)	24%
MCI-Walpole	178	(27)	21%
MCI-Norfolk	306	(47)	15%
MCI-Forestry	115	(17)	12%
Total Walpole Commitment Sample	658	(100)	17%



A breakdown of MCI-Concord commitments by institution of release is presented in Table XVI below. Since the greater number (97%) of MCI-Concord commitments remained at Concord, differences in recidivism rates by releasing institutions cannot be considered significant.

TABLE XVI  
RECIDIVISM RATE OF CONCORD COMMITMENTS  
BY INSTITUTION OF RELEASE 1972 POPULATION

Releasing Institution	Number	Percent	Recidivism Rate
MCI-Concord	741	(97)	28%
MCI-Norfolk	12	( 2)	17%
MCI-Walpole	4	( 1)	50%
MCI-Forestry Camps	11	( 1)	27%
TOTAL	768	(100)	28%

Recidivism Rates by Type of Release:

The 1972 releasee cohort was next analyzed in terms of differential recidivism rates by category of type of release. The sample was sub-divided into the two categories of release: (1) parole, and (2) discharge. From Table XVI, below, it can be seen that for all releasing institutions individuals who were released on parole had significantly higher rates of recidivism than individuals who were released on discharge.<sup>16</sup>

One clear reason why it would be expected for individuals receiving a discharge would have lower rates of recidivism is that such individuals would not be returned for parole violations since they are not on parole status. Dischargees may only be returned for reason of receiving a new sentence on a new offense.

<sup>16</sup> For the total sample, dischargees had statistically significantly lower rates of recidivism than parolees ( $X^2=4.99$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df). For individual institutions, only MCI-Concord's difference was statistically significant ( $X^2=4.42$ ,  $P<.05$ , 1df). For the MCI-Walpole sample,  $X^2=0.26$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df; for the MCI-Norfolk sample,  $X^2=1.14$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df; for the Forestry Camps sample,  $X^2=0.54$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df; and for the Framingham sample,  $X^2=1.11$ ,  $P>.05$ , 1df.

TABLE XVII

RECIDIVISM RATE OF THE 1972 RELEASEE POPULATION BY TYPE OF RELEASE

Releasing Institution	Parolees			Dischargees			Total Sample		
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>
MCI-Concord	742	(54)	28%	58	(31)	16%	800	(52)	27%
MCI-Walpole	144	(11)	22%	38	(20)	18%	182	(12)	21%
MCI-Framingham	78	( 6)	21%	46	(24)	13%	124	( 8)	18%
MCI-Norfolk	286	(21)	15%	32	(17)	22%	318	(21)	15%
Forestry Camps	112	( 8)	14%	14	( 7)	7%	126	( 8)	14%
TOTAL	1,362	(100)	23%	188	(100)	16%	1,550	(100)	22%

This same pattern has existed in prior years. For example, Table XVIII below summarizes the same data for the 1971 releasee population.<sup>17</sup>

TABLE XVIII

RECIDIVISM RATE OF 1971 RELEASEES BY TYPE OF RELEASE

Releasing Institution	Parolees			Dischargees			Total Sample		
	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>RR</u>
MCI-Walpole	104	(67)	33%	51	(33)	16%	155	(100)	27%
MCI-Norfolk	198	(85)	19%	36	(15)	11%	234	(100)	18%
MCI-Concord	435	(83)	31%	87	(17)	15%	502	(100)	28%
Forestry Camps	92	(88)	16%	12	(12)	0	104	(100)	14%
MCI-Framingham	70	(76)	37%	22	(24)	5%	92	(100)	29%
TOTAL	899	(81)	28%	208	(19)	13%	1,107	(100)	25%

<sup>17</sup> Dischargees who were released from MCI's Walpole, Concord and Framingham had statistically significantly lower rates of recidivism than the parolees of these same institutions ( $X^2=5.01$ ,  $P<.02$ , 1df;  $X^2=9.02$ ,  $P<.01$ , 1df: and  $X^2=8.57$ ,  $P<.01$ , 1df for the three institutions respectively). For the total sample, dischargees had statistically significantly lower rates of recidivism than parolees ( $X^2=20.14$ ,  $P<.001$ , 1df).

The preceding narrative overview of patterns emerging from the data analyses of the 1972 redicidism rates is intended as a beginning in a much broader interpretative effort.

The implications of many of the findings cited do not answer specific questions but rather suggest a need for further research and interpretation. The Department of Correction Research Unit will continue to pursue many of the trends uncovered here in separate research reports and will continue to monitor these trends through recidivism analysis of releases in subsequent years. For example, data collection on the rates of recidivism for releases in the year 1973 is currently nearing the completion stage. This cohort will be analyzed both as a one year follow-up and as a two year follow-up. As is the case of the present study, the 1973 releasee population will be analyzed in terms of trends in previous years and in terms of new trends that may have emerged.