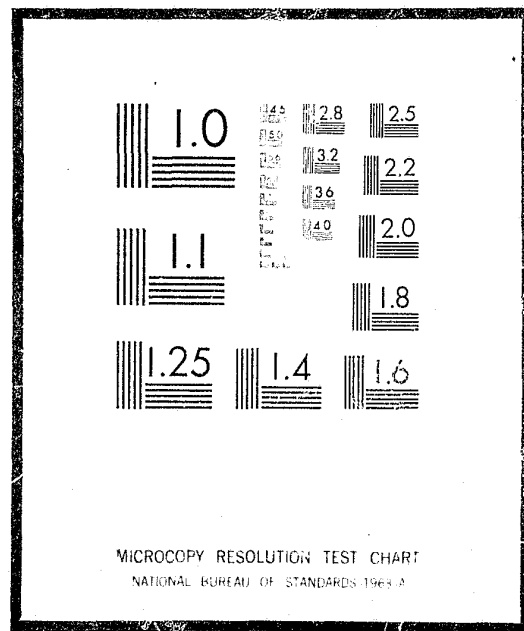# NCJRS

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The Philadelphia Aftercare Survey

A Summary Report

31010

The Pennsylvania Prison Society

THE PHILADELPHIA AFTERCARE SURVEY

A SUMMARY REPORT

BY

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THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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Peter C. Buffum, Ph.D.
Project Director

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Philadelphia, Pa.

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I. THE PHILADELPHIA AFTERCARE SURVEY

"Aftercare" is not a household word in the United States. To the American ear, the term has a quaint ring to it with overtones of some European or English program. Moreover, "aftercare" has a connotation which is vaguely medical and the term itself is often associated with treatment, a concept under much current attack. Thus, the use of "aftercare" as a key term in this study demands some explanation. Its use here does not imply a preference for any particular philosophy or style of correction. Rather, its use springs from the more rudimentary connotation of "caring", of "focusing attention upon" the person who is released from jail.

For several centuries governmental organizations and private citizens have been "caring" for ex-prisoners through the provision of organized services. Fashioned initially as humanitarian gestures and later imbued with the trappings of rehabilitation, these services have been variously designed to render the ex-prisoner whole again. Some of these services have traditionally been provided only to persons released on parole; other services have been offered only to other sub-categories of prisoners: the adjudicated, the homeless, the worthy, etc. In its most generic use, however, aftercare is directed at all persons released from imprisonment.

Nor can aftercare be reduced to a simple list of services. Although organized programs are at the heart of the concept, aftercare is more properly an institution, a whole cluster of related statuses and roles which cut across concepts as diverse as parole, gate money, job-training, income maintenance, and strategies of empowerment for ex-offenders.

Project Background

Five years ago, the Pennsylvania Prison Society turned its attention to the field of aftercare. Founded in 1787 as a prisoner aid agency, the Society had long maintained an active program of help for ex-offenders. In recent years, over 1,000 ex-offenders annually had come through its doors to receive brief counseling and referral services, as well as emergency cash supplements. In the late 1960's, it became apparent that this program was losing its uniqueness. Under the impetus of the Safe Streets Act, there was a sudden surge of interest in matters pertaining to corrections. Projects, programs, and whole new agencies rapidly materialized. Some of the stimuli came from the top, as the local probation and parole department expanded dramatically: setting up pre-release planning in the prisons, specialized units of supervision in the streets, and residential facilities in the community. Some of the ferment thrust upwards from the community. In several instances, ex-prisoners banded together to form self-help agencies.

Impressed by the rapid proliferation of aftercare services, the Society decided to review not only its own position in the aftercare network but also the structure and functions of the entire aftercare system. To be thorough and impartial, this review had to be empirically based. We needed to know something about ex-offenders in Philadelphia, about their problems and needs as they get out of prison, and about any use which they might make of organized sources of help after release. Although much of this information could be obtained from agency sources, certain key data could only be gathered from ex-offenders themselves. It appeared that if our questions were to be answered fully, it would require that we conduct surveys of both agencies and ex-offenders. In January, 1974, a research proposal to this effect was submitted to the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice under its

Innovative Research program. In September, 1974, grant approval was received and the project, thereafter known as the Philadelphia Aftercare Survey, became operational immediately.

The project was organized around a full-time staff of five persons: the project director, two research associates, an interviewer supervisor, and the project secretary. On different occasions, and on a less permanent basis, there were several college and graduate field placement students, a research assistant, and as many as twenty-six field interviewers. The interviewers were drawn heavily from the ranks of persons who had themselves experienced prior difficulty with the law.

Over an eighteen-month period, the project amassed voluminous data on aftercare practices in Philadelphia. The major sources of data were twin surveys: a survey of ex-prisoners based on a panel of 296 men and women released from the Philadelphia Prisons and a survey of agencies engaged in aftercare services. Related projects included a historical review of aftercare in Philadelphia, a longitudinal study of client demand at one particular agency, and a sociometric study of inter-agency relationships.

In May, 1976, a 329-page final report was submitted to the National Institute of Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement. The present report is intended to summarize the longer report and to highlight key findings.

II. EX-PRISONERS IN PHILADELPHIA

Pennsylvania is characterized by a two-tiered system of prisons and jails. The Commonwealth maintains a state prison system organized through a central Bureau of Correction. These facilities accept sentenced prisoners, when the maximum sentence is two years or more. In addition, many of the 67 counties also operate local prisons or jails which are used primarily for pre-trial detentioners as well as for persons with sentences of under two years. Philadelphia maintains such a county system comprised of three separate facilities with an average daily population of approximately 2400 persons. This population constitutes the major pool of potential clients for those organizations which make up the Philadelphia aftercare system.

The 1975 Annual Report from the Philadelphia Prisons indicates that there were 21,173 persons released during the preceding twelve-month period. Unfortunately, there was no easy way of determing exactly how many of these releases were persons actually released to the streets. In many cases, a person was "released" on one charge, only to be simultaneously "admitted" on a second charge. By comparing the discharge records for the month of December, 1974, with a detailed analysis of individual caseflow, we were able to determine that persons released to the streets constituted only 68% of all sentenced persons listed as released during that month and only 45% of those listed as detentioners released that month. Applying these sample fractions to the total number of yearly releases, we estimated that there were actually about 10,000 persons released to the streets each year.

Because not much was known about these 10,000 persons, we decided to draw a sample of released prisoners. The sample frame was constructed from the daily admission and discharge sheets kept by the county prisons over a two-month period late in 1974. Each person discharged from prison to the street
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and not re-admitted on the same day was listed. All such persons were then classified by legal status as either detentioner or sentenced. The detentioner group was further classified into three groups according to the length of time the person had been in jail at the time of release. Four groupings or strata were therefore used: sentenced persons, detentioners serving less than one week, detentioners serving more than one week but less than one month, and detentioners serving more than one month. The final sample of 296 persons was drawn systematically but unequally from each of these strata.[1]

The data which we accumulated on each of the sample members came from one or more of three sources. After the sample was drawn, face sheet data from prison records were collected on each subject. One or more field interviews were then completed with 248 persons or 83% of the sample.[2] Finally, we had some supplementary data from structured interviews conducted in prison with a convenience sample of 43 sentenced persons about to be released. It was on the basis of these data that we were able to construct a picture of the ex-prisoner in Philadelphia.

Demographic Characteristics of Ex-Prisoners

The distribution of released prisoners by sex and race, detailed in Table 1, confirms the popular view that the jails are filled predominantly with minority group males. The low proportion of females is also in line with traditional wisdom on the relative absence of women in the penal system. Although there has been recent speculation that women will be increasingly represented as defendants in the criminal justice system (Adler, 1975), an historical review of the Philadelphia County prison population figures did not show any evidence of increased female population.[3]

In addition to being characterized by a disproportionate number of black males, the ex-prisoner population in Philadelphia is for the most part

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young, single, and native-born. Median age hovers just above 25 years old with 70% under 30 years. Sixty-one percent of the sample were single, 12.3% formerly married, and 26.7% currently married.

Nearly four out of five of these ex-prisoners (79%) were born in Philadelphia, 4% were born elsewhere in Pennsylvania, and 13% in the South. Less than 2% are foreign-born.

TABLE 1
Distribution of Ex-Prisoners by Sex and Race

Sex/Race Characteristics	Sample Proportion (Weighted)	Estimated Annual Number (Weighted)
All Males	95.8	9,580
Black Males	79.9	7,990
White Males	13.4	1,340
Spanish-Speaking Males	2.5	250
All Females	4.2	420
Black Females	3.5	350
White Females	0.4	40
Spanish-Speaking Females	0.4	40

The educational records of these ex-prisoners show that the large majority have attended some high school with an 11th grade education being both the median and modal level of grade achievement. Although achievement test scores or other measures of literacy were not routinely recorded on the prison's data collection forms, it was later apparent from the field interviews that the functional level of educational achievement fell short of the relatively high level of grade achievement.

Virtually all of these prisoners have prior criminal justice histories. Sample members themselves reported a lifetime average of four prior incarcerations. Five out of every six members of the group (84%) had been jailed at least once before. Computerized court records covering the period 1968 to present showed an average of 4.6 prior arrests for each sample member during that period.

Like their counterparts in many jails across the country, most Philadelphia prisoners are not serving sentences. Many are held without bail to await preliminary hearing, indictment, or trial. Altogether, 84% of the releases ex-prisoners were detentioners at the time of their release; only the remaining 16% had been serving time in a sentenced capacity. Among detentioners, the duration of imprisonment is generally brief. The modal length of stay is only one day. Within one week, 43% of all detentioners are released and the cumulative proportion of persons discharged within a month rises to 75+%. The average length of imprisonment for sentenced prisoners approximates six months but varies widely among different categories of prisoners. Interestingly, one-third of all time served under sentence is actually served prior to trial and is later credited against the amount of time to be served under sentence.

The Effects of Imprisonment

It is extraordinarily difficult to determine how these often brief terms of imprisonment affect the lives of those who enter the prisons. The overall impact of imprisonment is undoubtedly far-reaching. The present survey did not focus on this question of prison impact and can only report isolated findings which have relevance for the aftercare system.

In brief, it appeared to us that imprisonment was marked by a gradual but generalized process of impoverishment. The limits on contact with family and friends gradually took their effect. Personal resources slipped away.

When affective relationships changed, they generally changed for the worse. This dwindling of resources was not offset by participation in prison programs. Few programs existed and the participation rates were extremely low, particularly among detentioners. Thus, at the time of release, few prisoners were better off than they had been at the time of reception.

The toll of imprisonment was best seen in the loss of jobs. Jobs were lost in direct proportion to the length of imprisonment. This occurred regardless of whether a person was sentenced or was simply being held prior to trial. A person detained for seven days or less had a one-third chance of losing his job. A person held for one to four weeks was as likely to lose his job as he was to retain his job. Longer term detentioners and sentenced persons were even more likely to suffer employment reversals with job losses averaging 75%.

Getting Out

The literature of prison aftercare rarely captures the bewildering intensity of feelings and perceptions of the ex-prisoner on the day of release. When this subject is treated (Irwin, 1970), it conveys a powerful and painful picture of human agony and indecision.

Irwin singles out three emotional states common to prisoners experiencing re-entry:

> "First, the strangeness of the sensory experience unsettles him in a very subtle manner...Second, he is disorganized because of his lack of interpretive knowledge of the every-day, taken-for-granted outside world... Third, he is ill-prepared to function smoothly in interaction with out-siders in the outside world because he has lost the vast repertoire of taken-for-granted, automatic responses and actions." [4]

In the present sample, the short length of imprisonment mitigates against finding such emotional states. We found little evidence in prisoners' retro-

spective reports of the kind of sensory overload described by Irwin. Nor did we note any loss of necessary behavioral repertoires. This is not to say that the sample exhibited an adequate range of social repertoires; in most cases the opposite was true. Still, it was generally a matter of never learning certain skills, rather than of losing such skills while in prison.

Release from jail still constitutes a shock to most prisoners even if the disruption is not as great as that described by Irwin. A fifth of the prisoners left the jail with no money. The median amount of cash on hand at release ranged from $8.25 for sentenced prisoners over 25 years old to $3.27 for detentioners under 25 years of age.

Certainty in the knowledge of release date enabled prisoners to plan for release, to notify relatives or friends, and to arrange for transportation from the prisons or the courtroom. Unfortunately, only one quarter of the sample were released when they expected to be. Nearly one-third (31%) were released earlier than they had expected, while the remainder (44%) got out later than expected.

Individual Outcomes

The project sought to interview each member of the sample three months, and again, nine months following release. A principal and perhaps unexpected finding was that we actually found most members of the sample. Relying upon the home address listed in the prison records and the names, addresses, and occasionally phone numbers of family or next of kin, the field interviewers patiently traced the whereabouts of this difficult-to-find sample. In approximately 10% of the cases, the given addresses were non-existent or not valid. In an additional 30% of the cases, the address was legitimate but the subject had moved. Friends, neighbors, parole officers, even neighborhood tap room

proprietors were questioned. Occasionally, sample members knew the whereabouts of other sample members. A weekly check of the three county prison facilities also proved to be an effective means of locating people.

Although some of the interviews had been set up by prior appointment, most of them were conducted on the spot. The location of interviews was generally in the home of the respondent or one of his relatives, less frequently at the county jail, and only occasionally in such other locations as outdoor parks, bars, and the Prison Society offices.

Seventy-five percent of the sample were located and interviewed during this first wave of interviewing. Two percent were located but refused to be interviewed. Six months later, the response rate was again more than seventy percent. An additional two percent of the sample refused to be interviewed at this time.

A statistical comparison of the characteristics of persons interviewed with those not interviewed at the three-month mark yielded few differences. As might be expected, we were able to complete a slightly higher proportion of interviews among sentenced persons (78.2%) than among detentioners (73.7%), among native-born Philadelphians (78.0%) than among those not native-born (67.2%). While we were successful in obtaining interviews with over three quarters of male respondents, we were able to interview only 64% of the females. Lack of residential stability appeared to be the biggest factor in this discrepancy.

The most striking substantive finding regarding the ex-prisoners who were interviewed did not show up on the structured interview forms; rather, it dealt with the demeanor of the respondent. Time and again the interviewers reported that the sample members acted resigned, withdrawn, even timid. It was felt that these former prisoners were acting depressed and were responding with blunted affect. There was comparatively little anger or desperation. Nor was there much

evidence of happiness or self-satisfaction. For many, the home appeared to be a sheltered retreat out of which the ex-prisoner rarely emerged. It is notable, in this respect, that 43% of the sample still lived with one or both of their parents, the far most frequent situation being a male ex-prisoner living at home with his mother and perhaps other siblings.

The next most important finding was the extent to which these ex-prisoners failed to be actively and consistently integrated into society's legal, religious, and economic structures. They remain outsiders: often unpropertied, disenfranchised, and alienated.

On the positive side, 84% reported holding social security cards and 39% had voters' registration cards. Twenty-eight percent (28%) reported church membership and a similar number claimed to have driver's licenses (although only 14% had cars!). Nineteen percent (19%) reported belonging to one or more "social, religious, or neighborhood groups or gangs".

On more stringent indicators of economic integration, it was found that only 7% had savings accounts with more than $100, 5% held credit cards, 4% owned real property (land or dwelling), and 3% had checking accounts with a balance of more than $100.

Most unexpectedly, 46% reported owning some form of life insurance and 24% claimed to have at least some health insurance.

In the first three months following release those who regained jobs held prior to imprisonment made out better than those who sought new jobs. Among the latter, only one out of eight persons was able to land a job within three months, and only one out of twelve was able to land and hold a job. Thus, the unemployment rate of this prisoner cohort, which had stood at 57% prior to arrest, rose to 84% at the time of release, and then recovered to approximately 76% at the time of the first interview. Six months later, the unemployment rate

was down to 67%, still marginally above the lower figure existing prior to arrest.

A similar pattern applies to school enrollment. At the time of incarceration, 10% of the sample was in school. Three months following release, the figure has slipped to 6%, split fairly evenly between trade school, community college, and adult high school.

When sample members were asked about any problems they had experienced since release, it was not surprising, in view of their high unemployment rate, to find that "getting a job" was listed as a problem by 73%. (Note that although 76% were unemployed at the time of the interview, only 48% considered themselves to have "current" job-related problems at that time.)

Secondary to the problems of employment are a host of other and often related problems. Adequate spending money is a problem for nearly two out of five persons and repayment of debts a continuing problem for one out of five. Problems with "police harassment" also remained a problem for a significant minority (21%) of the sample.

TABLE 2

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED BY EX-OFFENDERS DURING
THE FIRST THREE MONTHS AFTER RELEASE

	Cited as "Currently" a Problem	Cited as "Formerly" a Problem
Getting a Job	48%	25%
Spending Money	38%	17%
Police Harassment	21%	16%
Repaying Debts	20%	10%
New Clothes	17%	16%
Family	13%	9%
Running Buddies	9%	4%
Place to Live	9%	5%
Drugs	8%	13%
Women	6%	5%

In a follow-up study of youthful male offenders, Lewis (1974)[5] found the two most common interpersonal problems were related to the efforts to avoid one's former male associates and to re-establish contact with one's female acquaintances. Both of these problems by definition appear to have been generated by the imprisonment process itself.

Among our group of somewhat older males who had been imprisoned for far shorter periods of time, these twin problems failed to materialize to a large degree. Current problems with "running buddies" were cited by only 9% of the sample and problems with women by only 6%. Family problems were somewhat more evident (13%) than either of the peer problems.

Criminal Behavior

A critical dimension of post-prison functioning was subsequent criminal behavior. Here we had overlapping sources of data. First, there were interview data regarding post-release arrests and convictions. Second, there was a computerized record maintained by the courts of any local criminal history since 1968. Finally, we had some measures of self-reported crime at the nine-month mark.

At the three month mark, one-third of the sample (33.3%) admitted to having been re-arrested since release. A quarter of those arrested had been arrested on more than one occasion. By nine months, almost half of the sample (46.2%) admitted having been re-arrested. These figures dovetail closely with those from court computer which showed 45.7% re-arrested during this period.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY OF SELF-REPORTED CRIME DURING THE NINE MONTHS FOLLOWING RELEASE AMONG 138 EX-PRISONERS

Activity	Percent reporting activity at least once
Forced someone to have sex	2.1%
Pickpocket or purse snatch	5.0%
Burglary	8.6%
Threatened someone	13.7%
Used weapon to threaten someone	15.2%
Sold stolen property	16.6%
Beat up someone	17.2%
Stole from store	19.7%
Hustled or conned someone	25.3%
Some illegal income reported	35.5%

In addition to the arrest histories, we asked each sample member ten questions regarding self-reported criminal activities. Half the group (49.2%) admitted to one or more criminal acts. One might well question the validity of these responses. We found, for example, that different interviewers elicited significantly different amounts of self-reported criminal behavior. Nevertheless, these self reports did have the ring of truth to them. Persons who were unemployed, who had drug problems, and who had been picked up by the police since release all reported committing significantly more criminal activity than others without these characteristics.

The Criminal as Victim

Although previous studies on the adjustment of ex-prisoners have invariably considered the matter of the ex-prisoner as potential recidivist, very rarely has the issue been raised of the ex-prisoner as potential victim.

Victimization studies over the past several years have confirmed that much inner-city crime is directed against young, black males. Criminologists who posit a subculture of violence also point out that victims of crime will often share the same personal characteristics as criminal offenders. In the light of such observations, it becomes reasonable to inquire about the extent to which the ex-prisoners in this sample had fallen victim to criminal acts following their release from jail. Preliminary indications were that nearly one quarter of the sample had been victimized in the first nine months following release. Victimization rates for personal offenses appeared to be higher for this sample than those for the average Philadelphian, while the rates for property victimization may have been somewhat lower than average.

III. PATHWAYS TO AGENCIES

The past two decades have witnessed intense interest in varieties of
help-seeking behavior. A large part of this work, dating from the original
contributions of Hollingshead and Redlich (1958), has focused on the socio-
cultural correlates of those who use various sources of help. Mechanic (1975)
has rightfully classified the underlying process of interest in these studies
as one of <u>social selection</u>, a key process which can be viewed from several
perspectives:

> "In making sense of processes of social selection,
> whatever the subarea of concern, attention is given to
> the particular characteristics of the individuals and
> groups involved that make them different in one way or
> another from others in the community. Attention is al-
> so given to the processes by which they interact with
> others exchanging information about their social charac-
> teristics, skills, disabilities, and personal inclina-
> tions. Efforts must also be made to understand the
> underlying opportunity structure that makes differential
> choice possible and that either facilitates or retards
> certain possibilities. In short, selection problems
> have personal, interactional, and structural dimensions."[6]

The present investigation ultimately focused on all three dimensions of
the selection process, although the initial analysis started with the personal
dimension. The question with which we began was: What are the personal charac-
teristics of those who know about and eventually enter the aftercare system?

At the time of the first field interview, all sample members were read a
list of names of some of the more prominent aftercare agencies. They were asked
to identify whether they had heard of the agency, whether they had ever used
the agency, and whether they used the agency since their most recent release
from jail. To prevent the figures for the Pennsylvania Prison Society being
biased by the data collection process, the interviewers identified themselves
as being affiliated only with the Philadelphia Aftercare Survey. The percentage

of persons hearing of each of the organizations is given in Table 4. It is
notable that only three agencies are known to a substantial majority of ex-
prisoners. These agencies are also among the largest, the oldest, and the
most differentiated in structure. One may presume that a large number of
ex-prisoners are familiar with the Probation Department because they have
been formally placed on probation or parole. It can further be noted that
both the Department of Public Assistance and the Salvation Army are far bet-
ter known for their general activities than for their specialized services
to ex-prisoners.

TABLE 4

PROPORTION OF EX-PRISONERS HAVING KNOWLEDGE OF, EVER USING, OR USING SINCE RELEASE, SELECTED AFTERCARE AGENCIES

Agency	Having Knowledge Of	Ever Used	Used Since Release
1. County Board of Assistance	94.8%	55.9%	45.9%
2. Philadelphia Probation Department	94.4%	71.4%	64.7%
3. Salvation Army	88.9%	5.6%	0.5%
4. Pennsylvania Prison Society	52.5%	8.6%	4.4%
5. Community Legal Services	47.4%	7.0%	2.2%
6. Prisoner's Rights Council	29.1%	2.6%	1.1%
7. TASC (Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime)	28.3%	6.8%	4.4%
8. Phil-Court (a pretrial diversion program)	24.2%	2.6%	2.1%
9. Episcopal Community Services	21.6%	2.0%	1.1%
10. Ghetto Action People (GAP)	15.6%	1.0%	0.0%
11. Jewish Family Services	14.8%	2.1%	2.1%
12. Pennsylvania Prisoner's Alliance*	12.0%	1.5%	0.5%
13. Community Assistance for Prisoners (CAP)	10.2%	1.0%	0.5%
14. Methodical External Program	6.1%	1.0%	0.0%

*This is a fictitious agency used as a control item in the field questionnaire.

Apart from these three somewhat special cases, there is not much recognition accorded to these selected aftercare agencies. Two groups with prison programs, the Pennsylvania Prison Society and Community Legal Services, are known to approximately half the sample. There is then a decided drop down to some half-dozen agencies which have a recognition factor of between fifteen and thirty percent.

A fictitious agency inserted for control purposes is "recognized" by ten percent of the sample, thereby giving us a very rough measure of respondent confusion or error.

Two small grass-roots organizations designed primarily for ex-offenders receive even less recognition than the fictitious control item. Preliminary analysis indicated that those ex-prisoners with above-average knowledge of aftercare agencies:

> ---were more likely to have a social security card
> ---were more likely to have a voters registration card
> ---were more likely to have a private attorney
> ---were more likely to have had problems in obtaining spending money
> ---were more likely to have served a larger period of time in jail during their most recent incarceration

The following characteristics were not related to breadth of agency knowledge: race, sex, marital status, and current employment. Also unrelated were most of the problem areas apart from the problem of getting money: i. e., problems with new clothing, problems finding a place to live, problems finding a job, and problems with family.

From these findings, one might cautiously infer that there are at least three general factors associated with extent of agency recognition. First, persons who are well integrated into the economic and social structures of society tend to have higher levels of agency recognition. Second, persons who are most directly exposed to agency communications have greater knowledge of such agency operations. Finally, persons who perceive themselves to have problems which are amenable to the kinds of intervention and expertise possessed by aftercare agencies tend to have greater knowledge of such agencies. It should be emphasized at this point, however, that these are correlates of

generalized agency knowledge and not correlates of some generalized predisposition to use agencies.

Rates and Correlates of Agency Use

Table 4 also provides information on the proportion of ex-prisoners who used particular agencies. The figures are dramatically low. A majority of ex-prisoners have used the Probation Department and the Welfare offices, but no other agency had ever been used by more than 10% of the ex-prisoners. Following release, nearly half the group used the Board of Assistance, but usage rates at the major private agencies did not exceed 1-5%. Regression analysis of the attributes of persons using the different agencies did not reveal any single clear picture of agency users. Instead, each agency studied yielded a characteristically different client profile.

Although there was a moderate relationship between agency use and problem status, subjectively-perceived problems did not invariably lead to agency use. Fifty percent of those who did not use agencies nevertheless felt they had spending money problems following release and sixty-two percent claimed job problems. Yet these ex-prisoners did not go to aftercare agencies. Conversely, up to one-third of those who did use agencies denied any post-release problems. Thus, although aftercare use and problem perception are related, the nature of the relationship is far from simple.

Indeed, rather than arguing that problems lead to agency use, it might be argued that agency use itself helps the user to define certain states as problematic. The agency experience may serve to channel, distill, and refine scattered feelings, needs, wants, and expressions. One outcome of agency use may therefore be the realization that certain states constitute a problem. One role of the agency is thus to serve as a mechanism for defining and validating the status of the ex-offender as someone in need of certain kinds of help. To the extent that such definitions are unappealing or that such statuses are unwanted, ex-offenders may avoid contact with agencies altogether. The differential use of agencies therefore reflects a rather complex interaction between agency selectivity and individual differences.

The Process of Agency Use

Because aftercare agencies do not generally clarify what they mean by the ex-offender role (i. e., what they expect of their clients as ex-offenders), there remains a lot of ambiguity which must be dealt with not only by ex-prisoners who have the option of becoming involved with the aftercare system, but also by workers within the system. It is probable that this lack of clarity contributes to the relatively low incidence of aftercare use.

How this ambiguity affects rates of use can best be gauged by examining the process by which persons get drawn into the agency. This process invariably begins with the ex-prisoner interacting with members of a social circle consisting of immediate family and friends. As needs and wants are thwarted, the ex-prisoner turns for help or advice to those closest to him. For most ex-offenders, the first person is a female relative, usually the mother, but occasionally she is the wife, sister, or grandmother. Often, these closest kin and friends define the situation as one in which they are both able and willing to help. Often, too, they can provide accomodations and frequently they do loan the ex-offender money. Short-term assistance is, in fact, rather readily granted, although there does appear to be an implicit bargain: help is rendered but only because it is agreed that it will be a short-term, time-limited or one-time phenomenon. More permanent forms of assistance are less likely to occur except in those cases in which young offenders are re-united with their families and resume regular pre-prison familial roles.

When those closest to the ex-offender defined his problems as not of a type amenable to their personal intervention, the ex-offender was thrust out into ever-widening circles in search of solutions. Sometimes, solutions were provided by peers: a friend offering a job, an associate willing to lend twenty dollars, or a running buddy with an offer too good to resist. Other times, what emerged was a series of referrals, each symbolically drawing the ex-offender closer to the core of the aftercare network.

A very similar process has been identified with respect to medical diagnosis and the paths of medical care (Freidson, 1964).[7] An illuminating difference is that in the medical context, uncertainty of prognosis tends to propel persons into the system. With respect to the more diffuse aftercare system, uncertainty with respect to the efficacy of treatment agents and modalities seems to be more critical and appears to have an inhibiting effect on client flow. There are no clear definitions of what constitute critical problems (i. e., problems of such magnitude as to require organized forms of help), nor an easy way of characterizing what might happen to a person and his problems at an organization.

Because of this lack of specific knowledge about agencies, there appear to have arisen several agency stereotypes which serve the function of helping the ex-prisoner and his associates sort out possible answers to pressing problems. The County Board of Assistance provides cash solutions but often entails extensive questioning and moderate delays before one receives cash payments. The prisoner-aid agencies are lumped together as friends of the ex-prisoner, although there is far less consensus on the substantive features of their programs. It is often erroneously assumed, for example, that most of these agencies will help the ex-prisoner find a job. In fact, most of these agencies will refer such requests to the State Employment Office.

IV. AGENCY IMPACT

One of the major goals of the Philadelphia Aftercare Survey was to come to grips with the issue of agency impact. Because the principal problem experienced by the ex-prisoner cohort was in securing adequate employment, the job placement process emerged as a key indicator of potential agency impact.

During the first field interview, all respondents were asked to indicate whether they used any of several popular methods of looking for jobs. More than half the sample had used organizational sources of help in trying to locate a job. Although 12% of those who used these agency resources (parole, welfare and employment agencies combined) succeeded in getting jobs, the figures were virtually identical for all other methods as well.

Because many ex-prisoners used more than one method, the preceding comparisons can only be suggestive. To refine these results, a follow-up question was asked during the second interview: "How did you get your job"? When ex-offenders were asked this question, a different pattern emerged. The use of family and friends was accorded by far the most significance. Over half of all job placements were attributed to friends; nearly a quarter to family members. Individual employers, employment agencies and other social agencies were all mentioned only infrequently.

On the basis of these data, one must tentatively question whether the aftercare system in Philadelphia has made a significant impact on the placement of ex-offenders.[8]

TABLE 5

METHODS USED BY EX-OFFENDERS TO FIND JOBS

Method	% Using Method*	% Successful of Those Using Method*	% Attributing Job Found To This Method**
Employment Agency	50%	13%	6%
Parole	44%	8%	6%
Prison Social Worker	12%	13%	N/A
Family	36%	12%	21%
Friends	45%	13%	53%
Old Boss	16%	10%	6%
Ads	41%	10%	3%
Other	17%	13%	7%

*based on data collected on the first field interview, n=188
**based on data collected during the second field interview, n=72

A second indicator of agency impact lay in the extent to which agencies were able to solve the financial problems of ex-prisoners. While "getting a job" had been the principal complaint of ex-prisoners, problems in obtaining spending money ranked a close second. The field interviews did not yield any good behavioral measures which would indicate temporal changes in financial condition. Accordingly, reliance was placed on the respondent's definition of "having a problem in obtaining spending money".

A high proportion (72.5%) of those who used agencies reported having had such spending money problems at one time or another following release. By the time of second field interview, approximately half this group had solved its problems. Among persons who did not go to agencies, only 50% experienced spending money problems. Approximately half of this group had also solved its problems

by the time of the second interview. While these findings do not rule out the possibility of substantial agency impact, they do tend to undercut the likelihood that agency use is substantially more effective than non-use in reducing problems of spending money.

A third measure of agency impact lay in the possible reduction of recidivism. Although the theoretical basis for any such reduction is tenuous, there is at least some empirical evidence to illuminate this possibility (Lipton, Martinson, Wilks: 1975).

> Evidence indicates that to the degree that casework and individual counselling provided to offenders in the community is directed toward their immediate problems, it may be associated with reductions in recidivism rates.[9]

This same study, however, goes on to add an important qualification which becomes particularly salient in the light of the present findings regarding jobs and spending money.

> Unless this counselling leads to solution of problems such as housing, finances, jobs, or illness which have high priority for offenders, it is unlikely to have any impact upon future criminal behavior.[10]

The present evidence suggests that problems of employment and finances tend to persist with or without intervention from the aftercare network. The clear implication is that recidivism is likely to persist as well.

In the present research, both arrest-history following release and self-reported criminal activity were used as measures of recidivism. The number of agencies used in the first three months following release was employed as an indicator of agency use. The key question was whether, after controlling for prior criminal history, increased agency use would lead either to a reduction in the proportion of those arrested or to a reduction in self-reported

crime. Based on 143 cases, the zero order relationship between agency use and re-arrest was insignificant (r = -.02) despite the fact that there was a weak positive relationship between prior criminal behavior and agency use (r = +.12, p= .07) and a moderate relationship between prior criminal behavior and subsequent re-arrest (r = .22, p =.01). The effect of controlling for prior criminal background was to increase slightly the negative correlation agency use and re-arrest (r = -.05, p. 25); this partial correlation, however, was still not significant

The Pearsonian correlations between agency use and self-reported criminal activity ranged from + .06 to +.31 for ten different offense types. Past criminal history was also positively related to agency use, although the strength of the relationship was weak and uncertain (r = .15, p = .15). After the effects of this relationship are partialled out, the relationships between agency use and self-reported crime do become smaller but the shrinkage is minimal. Significant positive relationships are maintained for the majority of the offense types.

These findings call for further discussion, but at this point, it can be said with some assurance that increased agency use does not significantly reduce post-release arrests or self-reported criminal behavior.

No study of agency impact can afford to overlook the responses of its clients. Although behavioral responses are generally the more valid and meaningful indicators of outcome, attitudinal responses should not be dismissed out of hand. Client ratings can be important indicators of agency effectiveness.

Each member of the present sample was asked during the first field interview if he had visited any agencies since release. When the answer was affirmative, the interviewer would then ask, for each agency, four additional questions concerning the reason for the visit, the appointment process, the length of waiting time (if any) and the degree to which the agency was able to help the respondent with his problem. Finally, the respondent was asked to give an overall rating of the agency and to indicate the extent to which he agreed or disagreed with ten different adjectival characterizations of the agency. When asked why they had gone to a given agency, the overwhelming response (42%) was that they were under court order to do so. Thus, we are alerted to the fact that participation in the aftercare system is largely involuntary. The next most common reason (34%) was to secure money. Apart from these two compelling reasons, there was no other single reason which accounted for more than fifteen percent of the total agency visits. The next most prevalent reason given was to help find a job (11%), followed by "to help with a school problem", a response made only thirteen times or somewhat under 5% of the total.

The sample reported that two-thirds of their visits had been by prior appointment, with the remainder being unscheduled. Waiting time was generally short. Twenty-eight percent were seen right away. An additional twenty-six percent were seen within thirty minutes. There was, however, a sizeable minority (20%) who recounted having to wait for more than one hour before seeing an agency staff member. When those who had gone to an organization were asked whether the organization had helped them, sixty percent reported that the organization had been of at least partial help.

The respondents were also asked for an overall rating of each agency. Forty-three percent of these responses fell into the categories of "good" or "excellent", thirty-eight percent were classified as "fair", and the remaining nineteen percent were categorized as "poor". Subsequent analysis revealed that these overall ratings were closely associated with perceived effectiveness.

In summary, it might be pointed out that although aftercare agencies receive widely differing reviews from their clients, a common feature of such

evaluation is the low level of intensity which accompanies such commentary. Agencies can be rated as being effective or ineffective, but in neither case do they appear to occupy a central role in the respondent's life. Although many respondents freely expressed their inner feelings, hopes and fears, it was nevertheless apparent that many of them felt far removed from the system which had been set up to aid in their readjustment. In response to a question about possible re-entry problems, one respondent made the following incisive observation:

> "There are no problems for us out there because
> we don't live by any of the rules you do."

The utterance had the semblance of truth to it; the young man speaking had been arrested eight times.

A second and related aspect was the feeling that the system and its programs were not able to comprehend or to understand the vast differences separating the agencies from their clients. Some clients perceived (and rightly so) that the agencies looked to themselves and to other professional and educational associations as reference groups when contemplating program changes. Agencies did not value client input as critical to the decision-making process. As one man lamented, "Listen to what I have to say as a person. Many people look at what we look like and don't hear what we have to say. People in agencies only think Ph.D.'s can give them any information."

Alternative Sources of Help

It would appear that aftercare agencies are not having a major impact on most ex-prisoners. A natural question which then arises is whether ex-offenders turn instead to alternative sources of help.

Our principal finding is that the ex-prisoner relies, first and foremost,

on family and friends. The use of friends and relatives was most dramatically seen in the earlier discussion of how people found jobs following imprisonment, but the same finding applies equally to spending money problems.

A second major source of help, particularly for those without family and friends, is related to formal membership in secondary groups. During the first nine months following release, the proportion of prisoners who identified themselves as Muslims rose sharply from 8% to 17%. No other religious group could claim such net increases in affiliation. It is probable that membership in such ethnically solidary groups provides a functional equivalent to the aftercare system for some people.

V.   TYPES OF AFTERCARE AGENCIES

From the outset, the project staff realized that there were limits to using the individual ex-offender as the only conceptual unit of analysis. Aftercare was more than many individuals seeking solutions to pressing needs. It was also a network of agencies seeking to fulfill client needs as well as other organizational goals.

To describe this organizational system, the project first developed a list of ninety-one Philadelphia agencies known to provide services to ex-offenders. In the fall of 1975, interviews were completed with seventy-four of these agencies, although interview quality and relevance later cut the number of useable interviews to sixty-two.

The attempt at analyzing organizational dynamics began with the construction of a typology of aftercare agencies. Earlier, historical analysis had revealed two trends in aftercare development: increased public sector involvement and increased specialization. The initial typology incorporated these twin trends by classifying agencies on two axes: degree of specialization and sector of origin. The former dimension included three categories:

agencies entirely devoted to the ex-offender, agencies not entirely focused on the ex-offender but with an identifiable ex-offender program, and general-purpose agencies which might serve the ex-offender _inter alia_. The sector of origin axis distinguished between governmental and private programs.

The resulting typology indicated that there were twenty-eight agencies either entirely or partly devoted to ex-offenders. All but six of these organizations were privately-run.

In examining the agencies which were exclusively devoted to ex-offenders, an interesting anomaly became apparent. The governmental agencies were without exception large and highly differentiated. The private agencies were nearly uniformly small and undifferentiated. Thus, it appeared that quite apart from historical trends, two very different types of aftercare organizations were prevalent: the first emphasizing division of labor, the second embodying solidarity.

In pursuit of this idea, the project developed Guttman scales to measure the extent of agency differentiation and agency solidarity.[11] These scale scores were highly correlated with other structural features of the agencies, such as number of employees, size of budget and number of volunteers. The agencies, with high scores on differentiation, provided a wide range of direct services to clients and were often equipped with the resources to provide comprehensive care. Small solidary agencies lacked this capability. On the other hand, many of the smaller agencies were marked by the extent they were able to dramatize the problems of the ex-offenders, by their ability to impress upon the community a particular definition of the role of the ex-prisoner.

The major functions of the two different kinds of agencies were thus seen to be different: the one emphasizing direct service, the other involved in a more symbolic educational role. Both kinds of groups were felt to be essential.

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Centrality in the Aftercare Network

Although it was sensed that the highly differentiated service agencies were more central to the aftercare network, the project lacked the descriptive tools with which to document this observation. To overcome this difficulty, we invited the various aftercare agencies to describe their relationships with one another and subjected the resulting data to sociometric analysis.

On the basis of whether a given pair of agencies had heard of one another, had made client referrals to one another, and had staff communications with one another, professional distance scores were calculated for each pair of agencies in the Philadelphia aftercare system.[12] These distance scores were subjected to a Smallest Space Analysis which revealed that the agency network was dominated by four large highly differentiated agencies (the State and County Probation Offices, the Welfare Department, and the Bureau of Employment Security). Less central but tightly clustered together were a large group of small private solidary organizations. Other distinctive clusters included diagnostic and testing agencies, residential and drug facilities, and vocational training programs. Organizations providing comprehensive care were located toward the center of the system, while groups focusing on public education tended to do more peripheral.

The Need For Services

Nominally, there is no great need for additional services. The number of agencies claiming to provide certain kinds of services is large. Fifty-two groups claim a short-term counselling capability, thirty-four claim a vocational placement or referral component. It is evident, however, that the quality and delivery of these services is still in need of improvement. While greater

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collaboration and coordination between agencies is clearly needed, there is yet room for organizations which adhere to a competitive model under which they strive to attract clients on the basis of better service.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The "aftercare" network in Philadelphia is both an evolving institution as well as the end result of emergent social processes organized around the maintenance of the community's moral boundaries. This cluster of roles, values, and interrelationships known as "aftercare" has tried various mechanisms through the years in an effort to increase the quality and quantity of refurbished persons. The methods have evolved from themes which have variously emphasized the importance of morals, of material need, of psychological drives and most recently of broad spectrum services.

It is observed that the current system is not particularly effective in solving individual problems. This failure should not be judged too harshly, for it must be weighed in the context of the monumental societal task to which the aftercare system addresses itself.

Recommendations

While the major function of this research was to define the problems of the ex-offender and to describe the network of agencies, it was also expected that some very general suggestions regarding policy implications would flow from the analysis. These will be discussed, but a word of warning must be introduced.

Social organization of any kind is a frail and tenuous business at best, and those who might expect, armed with fresh data and rationales for action, that they can proceed to change the system had best check their enthusiasm.

Social change is possible, but the lessons of history teach us that it is more difficult than we are willing to believe.

With this observation in mind, there are several areas where alternatives may be suggested:

It might be preliminarily suggested that agencies be more tolerant of each other. When it is recognized that there is room for more than one type of agency and that each type, despite the flaws of individual groups, has a place and a function in the system, then communication between parts of the system will be improved.

Large, complex groups, particularly governmental units, should be ever alert to finding ways to incorporate the needs of divergent and numerically minor segments of their clientele. One way an organization can become more attentive to all types of clients is to make better distinctions between the clients who appeal for help. It was quite evident throughout the survey that not more than a handful of agencies could give realistic descriptions of their clients. Record keeping, if done at all, seems to be a function of funding or grantsmanship, and is not done for internal monitoring or self-evaluation.

Many of the immediate problems facing ex-offenders can be solved prior to release. There is no justification for placing a man without cash, a residence, clothing, or a job loose on the streets, especially if he has solved similar problems in the past by resorting to crime. Exit interviews, as part of a process of pre-release counselling, can help to register the man without cash with the Welfare Department, can place him in a temporary residence such as the Salvation Army and can provide him with a directory of agencies he can go to for help in job placement and training.

Workshops, seminars, or preferably, membership in voluntary associations of line workers should be encouraged for personnel in all agencies. These activities help not only to inform workers of changes in the availability of resources but also to develop norms these workers can appeal to when their agencies attempt to initiate policies that are retrogressive or harmful.

The annual monitoring of programs and agencies to

determine additions and deletions of service, changes
in procedures, is an important aspect of system ef-
fectiveness. This kind of updating requires a con-
siderable investment of time and personnel, both of
which are scarce in the smaller agencies. The lar-
ger, more central agencies should take the lead in
helping to develop such program monitoring.

FOOTNOTES

1. In retrospect, the sample design was not worth the trouble it created.
Although most of the variables of interest were related to legal status
and length of time served, the strength of these relationships were not
sufficient to permit us to use a typology of prisoners based on these
factors. As a result, the weighted figures often closely approximate
the unweighted statistics. Accordingly, for purposes of simplification
in this report, except where noted, all figures used will be unweighted
estimates. This means that the results should be read as sample-specific.
Further work aimed at drawing out the implications of length of imprison-
ment is currently in process.

2. The first wave of data collection netted 225 interviews, eight of which
were later found not to be useable. The second wave added 213 interviews,
31 of which were with persons not previously interviewed.

3. The Arch Street Jail housed 103 women in 1828; its modern counterpart cur-
rently holds fewer than 90 women. Cf. Freda Adler, Sisters in Crime. New
York: McGraw-Hill, 1975.

4. John Irwin, The Felon, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1970,
p. 114.

5. Morgan Lewis, Prison Education and Rehabilitation: Illusion or Reality,
Institute for Research on Human Resources: Pennsylvania State Univer-
sity, 1973.

6. David Mechanic, "Sociocultural and Social-Psychological Factors Offering
Personal Responses to Psychological Disorder", Journal of Health and
Social Behavior, Vol. 16 (December, 1975), 393-403. See also August Hol-
lingshead and Robert C. Redlich, Social Class and Mental Illness. New
York: John Wiley, 1958.

7. Eliot Freidson, Patients' View of Medical Practices, New York: Russell
Sage Foundation, 1961.

8. A preliminary summary of this project's findings on unemployment is con-
tained in Peter C. Buffum, "Employment of the Ex-Offender in Philadelphia",
paper presented to the Governor's Conference on Ex-Offender Employment,
Philadelphia, December 15, 1975. Cf. George Pownall, Employment Problem
of the Released Prisoner, College Park, Md.: University of Maryland, 1969.

9. Lipton, Douglas, Robert Martinson and Judith Wilks. The Effectiveness of
Correctional Treatment, New York: Praeger, 1975, p. 572.

10. Ibid.

11. The concept of professional distance has its historical roots in the ear-
lier use of social distance scores. Its use in the present project, par-
ticularly in conjunction with Smallest Space Analysis, was prompted by
Edward O. Laumann and Franz Urban Pappi, "New Directions in the Study of
Community Elites", American Sociological Review, Volume 38, Number 2
(April, 1973) Pp. 212-230.