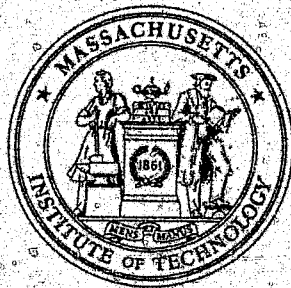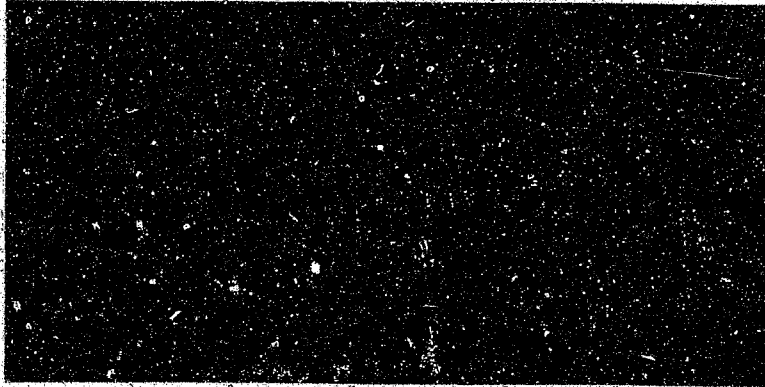61383

OPERATIONS RESEARCH CENTER

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE
OF TECHNOLOGY

SIXTH QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

April 1, 1979 - June 30, 1979

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF METHODS USED
IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE EVALUATIONS

by

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Introduction:

During this quarter we began the second phase of our research on our sample of 200 criminal justice program evaluations. We have sent out over 200 manager, funder and evaluator questionnaires thus far, and are continuing to do so while initiating follow-up procedures to ensure a higher response rate. In addition, we have begun work on a computer program with which to analyze the responses. Finally, one Operations Research Center Technical Report based on work done for this project was published, and one has been prepared for publication. The final version of our Interim Report was published and distributed during this quarter as well.

Survey:

Finding complete and current address information for the evaluators, managers and funders of the programs in our sample has proven to be quite difficult. The principal difficulty stems from the fact that many of the evaluations were conducted several years ago and thus program personnel and administrative offices have moved, programs have been discontinued and consulting firms have disappeared. Addresses obtained through NCJRS are thus frequently inadequate or incorrect, necessitating a good deal of detective work on our part, which takes up time. In addition, in conducting this detective work we frequently must work through State Offices of Criminal Justice Planning, whose record keeping has proven to be uneven and not designed for use by persons outside the particular state. Despite these difficulties, we anticipate being able

to contact about two-thirds of the persons involved. Our response rate thus far has ranged from 20 - 30 percent, but we expect it to improve once the vacation season has passed. Follow-up telephone calls have been very effective.

Computer Program:

We have begun work on a computer program with which to analyze responses to the questionnaires. While some manual categorization of responses as per our Data Analysis Packet will have to be done, we expect that the bulk of the analysis may be accomplished on an interactive SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. Work on the program should be completed shortly.

Publications and Presentations:

The final version of our "Interim Analysis of 200 Evaluations on Criminal Justice" was published and copies were sent to LEAA during this quarter. Ed Kaplan, a graduate assistant on the project, received a Master of City Planning and an S.M. in Operations Research in May, and in doing so published an Operations Research Center Technical Report entitled "Models for the Evaluation of Treatment-Release Corrections Programs." The report presents a discussion of methods available for conducting model-based evaluations of treatment-release corrections programs. A general model of rearrest patterns over time is described along with a numerical example illustrating model behavior under alternative assumptions. Classical and Bayesian methods for the estamation of model parameters are reviewed, as are complementary

model-based evaluation procedures.

Vicki Bier, another graduate assistant, has completed work on her Technical Report entltled "Markov Analysis of an Alternative to Pure Random Assignment" and it is ready for publication.

On June 21, Professor Larson presented a paper entitled "Model-Based Evaluations" at the Annual Meeting of The Institute of Management Sciences (TIMS) in Honolulu, Hawaii. The insights developed in the paper stem from the theoretical (or "vertical") part of this project.

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