

HOW TYPES OF CRIME, EDUCATION, COMMUNITY REENTRY,
AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IMPACT THE RATES OF
RECIDIVISM

By

Raymond Louis Cutts

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

Master's of Science in Criminal Justice

Florida Metropolitan University

2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Chapters

I Introduction

A. Research Problem

B. How and Why it was selected

C. In theoretical context the terms addressed should be defined and discussed in details for examination and understanding

D. Assumptions and Hypotheses posed

II Review of Literature

III Research Methodology

IV Research Design

V Secondary Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis

VI Summary and Conclusions

VII Bibliographical List

VIII Appendices Listed for support of hypotheses and analysis of data

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This research began through the identification of a problem occurring on an irregular basis anywhere from two weeks through and up to a period of five years. The Criminal Justice system and prisons have become a revolving door in the life of offenders that return to the community. The problem is what to do to eliminate or at least reduce this issue that effects all areas of the community. This problem was observed over many years and through many positions in the Department of Corrections such as Correctional Officer, Recreation Therapy Manager, Wellness Program Officer, Food Service Officer, and as a Recreation Officer. I have also observed this phenomenon as a Rehabilitation Therapist at another state facility and due to the opportunities for offenders to interact with the public there I observed and interacted with these offenders. I have built a kind of respect and rapport with these men in order to learn more about their backgrounds and later check their criminal backgrounds to determine the types of crimes committed and develop a statistical table from the variables as defined in the research. There are several concepts that need to be defined: Recidivism—Is the result of an offender leaving prison, returning to the community, and committing another crime. It can be through probation or a new crime altogether and returning to the criminal justice system and prison .

Community Re-Entry—This is the offender being released from prison with some vocational skills, and education for employment that would assist the

offender in becoming a law-abiding and functional member of society.

Contributing to society instead of taking things away.in defining the crimes that lead to a higher recidivism rate. Homicide, Drug offenses, Property crimes, and Violent crimes of heinous nature Types of Crimes—This is a list of the most prevalent crimes as researched by this writer .These are the four categories identified in this research for comparative analysis and descriptive statistical analysis.

Vocational Programs—These are defined as the opportunities for offenders in prison to acquire the skills to become more productive member of society. They include woodcraft, facility maintenance, independent studies, Commercial Driving License training, Computer operations, Desktop publishing, Life Skills I-IV. Rehabilitation

Programs—These are programs which are designed to address the many issues of offenders that become incarcerated in prison and have mental health, substance abuse, sexual predator issues, and other adjustment issues to adapting to the world of the correctional environment. Professional counseling is also available to offenders dealing with violent tendencies, suicidal thoughts and ideations, etc.

The issue that we are researching is a real issue that is causing increases in budgetary requirements, increase in the building of more prisons to house the continuous flow of offenders into the system each year, and increase of staff needed to operate these prisons, and replace the retirees that leave throughout the year. The hypothesis that I was posing to the researcher is “How does the types of crimes committed, vocational training, education, and rehabilitation programs impact the rates of

recidivism for offenders in the community reentry program”. The efforts to define and reduce recidivism are of utmost importance and would help reduce the operational budget of the Department of Corrections and the overall State Budget in the future. This would also see benefits in the community by reducing costs of supervision and developing previous offenders into law-abiding citizen’s and a contributing member of society.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review will address the literature involved in the research of recidivism within the Corrections system and how it defines inmates efforts to avoid returning to prison after community re-entry. This literature review is beginning with an evaluation of Restorative Justice programs as defined by five members of the Senate led by Co-Chairperson, (Carole A. Roessler) 2004 and five members of the Assembly led by (Suzanne Jeskewitz) 2004 Co-Chairperson. Together they formed the Joint Legislative Audit Committee for the State of Wisconsin and a focus on programs and recidivism studies from Milwaukee and Outagamie counties. (Janice Mueller) 2004, State Auditor drafted a letter to Senator Carole Roessler and Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz reporting the completion of the evaluation of Restorative Justice programs in Milwaukee and Outagamie counties as required by the 2001 Wisconsin Act 16. In Fiscal Year 2002-03, \$100,600 in

state and federal funding was spent on these programs. The two counties number of participant offenders increased 461 in 2002 to 520 in 2003. In one program of Milwaukee County it was found that 8.8% of participating offenders with no prior convictions committed another criminal offense within one year of participation; compared to that of 27.6% of non-participating offenders in a control group. Eleven other counties have restorative justice programs that are funded differently from those in Milwaukee and Outagamie counties. These Restorative Justice Programs involved the victim, offender, and the community in determining how to repair the harm caused by crime. In order to evaluate restorative justice programs we analyzed: A. Program expenditures through April 2004. and

B. Each counties compliance with statutory reporting requirements. C. Oversight by OJA and the State Prosecutors Office, which administers the programs state and Federal funding and D. Eleven restorative Justice programs in other Wisconsin counties operated by nonprofit organizations or county agencies. See Appendix A Table 1. Restorative Justice programs for the seven programs in the review. The Recidivism results by early February 2004; 4.3% of 47 offenders who participated in Milwaukee County's Community Conferencing program from August 2002 through July 2003 were charged with another crime compared to 13.5% of 52 non-participating offenders. The Audit team calculated recidivism rates for offenders and found that 8.8% of participating offenders with no prior convictions were rearrested for or charged with another criminal offense within one year of participation; compared. to 27.6% of non-participating offenders in our control group. In Outagamie County recidivism rates were calculated for two of its restorative justice programs.

It was reported that 8.5% of offenders who had participated in its Domestic Violence

Fastrack Program in 2002, and 24.1% of its 2002 Drug Fastrack program in 2002 program participants were charged with another offense by Mid-January 2004. Comparatively speaking; 32.8% of non-participating offenders were charged with another offense. Problems of the Control Group were identified as: A. The County did not identify a separate control group for each program. B. The Combined Control group included offenders from both 2002 and 2003. The following recommendations were presented: A. Outagamie County to calculate and and compare recidivism rates for participants in its Drunk Driving Impact Panel and a valid control group. B. Milwaukee and Outgame counties use a consistent methodology to calculate recidivism rates comply with statutory reporting requirements and and submit copies of their 2004 Annual reports to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. Tables 5 and 6 show the calculated recidivism rate results in Milwaukee County from August 2002-July 2003 and 2002 Cases. One way to measure effectiveness of programs is the extent to which participating offenders later commit new crimes. Researchers believe that offenders should be recidivists if they are rearrested for any additional offense. For the rates of recidivism to be of value, at least 6 months to (1) one year must pass after an offender participates in a program. In order to make comparisons the control group of nonparticipating offenders should have committed crimes of the same nature as those of the participant offenders. Milwaukee County has regularly reported recidivism rates for offenders in the Community Conferencing program and for offenders who were selected for the program, but who did not participate due to the victims declining to participate in the program. See Table 5 Appendix B attached. A minor

limitation with Milwaukee County's methodology was found when it learned that in order to determine whether individuals had committed a new offense the county searched circuit court records as of early February 2004. The resulting information found that individuals could re-offend from 18 months for individuals who committed their first offense in August 2002 to six (6) months for individuals who committed their first offense in July 2003. It would have been a better method would have been to calculate recidivism rates for a standard time period; such as one year from the date of participation. The researchers independently calculated recidivism rates for 92 offenders, including 45 participants in Milwaukee County's Community Conferencing program in 2002, and 47 offenders in a control group. In order to continue the calculation we analyzed the Department of Justice's electronic arrest records and the circuit court systems electronic records of charges filed against individuals. The researchers calculated the percentage of offenders who were rearrested for or charged with another criminal offense within one year of their participation in the Community Conferencing program, and the percentage rearrested or charged through December 2003. Additionally the researchers calculated separate rates for offenders with no prior criminal convictions and for those with at least one prior conviction in order to determine whether individuals with a criminal history are more likely to re-offend. As seen in Table 6; Appendix C participants in the Community Conferencing program had lower recidivism rates than offenders in the Control group. Offenders with no prior convictions had lower rates than those with a prior conviction. In Outagamie County; the Annual Report for 2003 included recidivism rates for the counties two fast track programs and a control group as

viewed in Table 7; Appendix D. In 2003, Outagamie County reported that the Community Court and the Victim-Offender Conferencing programs each served four victims. The Domestic Violence Fast Track program served approximately 168 adult victims, not including children who may have also been victims of the domestic violence. The County did not report on the number of victims served by its other two programs; the Drug Fast Track program and the Drunk Driving Impact Panel program. See Table 4; Appendix E. This data shows that the number of offenders participating in the five programs increased from 415 in 2002 to 471 in 2003.

Participation in the two Fast Track programs increased; while it decreased in the other three programs. In analysis of this review; I have determined that it supports my research hypothesis addressing the issue of community re-entry through the community programs available in the 13 counties of Wisconsin. They have addressed the issue of recidivism in the various counties and improve in their efforts to track the various offenders that are released from prison into the community. This research proves that if monitored and directed properly that Community Conferencing programs will help in the efforts and research to reduce the recidivism rates of offenders that are returned into the community. This literature has provided support for my research hypothesis and the fact that the Community Re-entry programs make a unique difference in the recidivism rates of offenders entering the community from prison and compared with non-participants in the community. In the research of recidivism; I was fortunate to find data from several case studies that address recidivism in the community and other options. These cases were documented at the

Center for Restorative Justice and Peacemaking. One case was conducted by Schneider, A. (1986). "Restitution and Recidivism Rates of Juvenile Offenders: Results from Four Experimental Studies," *Criminology* Vol 24, pp. 533-552. This article reports the findings of four experimental studies focusing on restitution programs. A Site in Washington D.C., implemented a victim-offender mediation project as their restitution program. The Youth had to have at least one felony conviction in order to be eligible for the program. Volunteer assistance factored in as an important role in this project. 40% of referred offenders refused to participate, mostly on the advice of their lawyers. Based on this information, three groups were formed: those who were referred and participating in the VOM (143), and those referred, but refusing to participate (131), and those who were assigned directly to probation (137). The typical youth in the study was a full time student, black, male, repeat offender, referred for a felony, and 15.5 years old. Lower recidivism rates were also found for youth participating in VOM compared with those on probation. Participants did better than those referred who chose not to participate. Overall results of the four studies were encouraging regarding restitution impact on recidivism.

Another case study of Recidivism was conducted and researched by Hines, David (2000). *The Woodbury Police Department Restorative Justice Program Recidivism Study*. Woodbury, MN; Inter-faith Ministries. Using a variation of the family group conferencing model, the Woodbury Police Department diverts selected youth from the traditional system. Cases are screened according to seriousness of offense, past record, and offender's and the parent's attitude. The Juvenile must also admit to the offense. Conferencing typically results in agreements among victims, offenders,

family members and affected community members as to how the youth will repair the harm and what strategies may be employed to deal with the causes of the offender's behavior. This recidivism study compared all conferencing cases from 1995 to November 1999 with juvenile cases from 1993, the last full year without a conferencing option. The Conferencing cases are only those resulting in formal conferences conducted by qualified police and community facilitators. There were 281 conferencing cases of which 52.7% were first time offenders. For those youth with prior offenses the average number of priors was 3.8. In the 1993 non-conferencing group there were 494 cases. The Recidivism Rates were calculated as in the following data and the results are as follows: 33.1% of the conferencing youth re-offended compared to 72.2% of the youth processed in 1993. 16.2% of first time offenders who went through conferences re-offended compared with 51.8% of repeat offenders who participated in conferences. The next case is a Case study of the VORP program and the impact on recidivism in the Winnimaki, L. (1997). Victim-Offender Reconciliation Programs: Juvenile Property Offender Recidivism and Severity of Reoffense in Three Tennessee Counties. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. This correlational, study looked at the effects of VORP on property offender Recidivism and severity of offense in three Tennessee Counties. Random Samples were drawn of VORP participants and of non-VORP participants who received traditional sentences during a matched preceding time period. Recidivism was defined as an adjudicated reoffense within one year after the VORP face-to-face mediation. Results of Logistic regression showed that VORP offenders were less likely to offend than those youth who went through the traditional approaches. A 38.4% reduction was associated

with VORP participation. Results did not show a significant main effect on severity of offense at the Bonferroni level; when using the less conservative Fisher's Protected t level, reduction in severity of reoffenses was found. A case Study was conducted at a University in Oregon in the Northwest and this review is based on the Stone, K. (2000). An Evaluation of Recidivism Rates for Resolutions Northwest's Victim Offender Mediation Program. Master's Thesis. Portland, OR: Portland State University. Using Resolutions Northwest's Victim Offender Program and Multnomah County records the author was able to construct a sample of 251 juveniles under the age of 18 who successfully completed VOM between 1996 and 1997. A comparison group was created by using a secondary data source from the Tri-County Juvenile Information database. Cases from this pool were included if individuals committed original offenses which were on the list of RNW youth initial offenses. A total of 4,442 cases met this criteria. However there is an important difference in the distribution of offenses between the two groups. The RNW groups have a higher proportion of felonies (83.7%) than does the comparison group (31.5%). Both groups were followed for a year following mediation or referral to the justice system. Status offenses and traffic violations were excluded from the analysis. It is not clear whether rearrest, or reappearance in court or some other definition is used to define reoffense. 79.7% of youth successfully completing mediation did not reoffend within one year as compared to 58.4% of comparison group not reoffending within one year following intervention. Recidivism in Connecticut is the review of the system and its study of Recidivism rates. Recidivism can be defined as an individual's return to crime following a criminal conviction resulting in another term of incarceration or community supervision. To determine a reasonable estimate of the

overall level of criminal behavior among convicted felons, generally accepted indicators such as arrest, conviction, or incarceration rates, are measured. Recidivism can be defined as an individual's return to crime following a criminal conviction resulting in another term of incarceration or community supervision. To determine a reasonable estimate of the overall level of criminal behavior among convicted felons, generally accepted indicators such as arrest, conviction, or incarceration rates, are measured. Recidivism can be defined as an individual's return to crime following a criminal conviction resulting in another term of incarceration or community supervision. To determine a reasonable estimate of the overall level of criminal behavior among convicted felons, generally accepted indicators such as arrest, conviction, or incarceration rates, are measured. . Recidivism can be defined as an individual's return to crime following a criminal conviction resulting in another term of incarceration or community supervision. To determine a reasonable estimate of the overall level of criminal behavior among convicted felons, generally accepted indicators. The state legislature and the criminal justice system have implemented a variety of strategies to reduce the tendency of offenders to return to criminal behavior after release from prison, probation, or parole. These strategies include crime control measures (e.g., increasing the percentage of time served, imposing longer sentences, and requiring intensive community supervision) and rehabilitation programs (e.g., education, vocational training, counseling, and substance abuse treatment). Recidivism measures should be an important component in developing such strategies and evaluating their effectiveness.

The numbers of convicted adult offenders who return to prison for new crimes and/or

violations of community supervision are high, but recidivism rates in Connecticut are not systematically tracked. A uniform method for measuring recidivism has yet to be developed by the state's criminal justice system.

The numbers of convicted adult offenders who return to prison for new crimes and/or violations of community supervision are high, but recidivism rates in Connecticut are not systematically tracked. A uniform method for measuring recidivism has yet to be developed by the state's criminal justice system.

Area of Focus

A study of recidivism in Connecticut would determine the extent convicted adult felons who are sent to prison or sentenced to probation are subsequently arrested, convicted, and sentenced either to prison, probation, or other alternative sanction for a new crime. The study would also examine the strategies implemented by the state's criminal justice system to reduce recidivism.

Areas of Analysis

- Establish a definition and measurements of recidivism.

Determine the rates of re-arrest, re-conviction, and re-imprisonment or sentence to another sanction (e.g., probation) of convicted adult offenders.

- Identify the types of offenses committed and the point in the system at which
- convicted offenders recidivate, including the length of time after discharge from

-
- prison or sentence to probation before a new crime is committed.

Analyze offender trends and characteristics associated with rates of recidivism.

Describe the crime control measures and rehabilitation programs meant to reduce the tendency of offenders to return to criminal behavior after discharge from prison or a period of community supervision and analyze participation and completion rates.

- Review the development and implementation plan for the Criminal Justice
-
- Information System (CJIS) -- also called the offender-based tracking system –
-

focusing on its capacity for aggregate analysis.

Areas Not Included in Analysis

This study will not evaluate the impact of the plea bargaining process on the rates of convictions or the types of sentences imposed by the court. The effectiveness of specific crime control and rehabilitation strategies will not be evaluated in depth.

Introduction

During the 2001 legislative session, there was considerable discussion about the state's persistent problem of prison overcrowding despite a steady, 10-year decline in arrest and crime rates. The prison system, which recently completed an extensive \$1 billion facility expansion project, struggled to meet the demands of the growing pre-trial and sentenced offender population.

One identifiable factor contributing to prison overcrowding is the high number of offenders who repeatedly commit crimes or violate the release conditions of probation or parole supervision and are reincarcerated -- often referred to as the "revolving door" of the prison.¹ This trend is recidivism.

There is a significant body of research literature on the subject of recidivism but almost no information about repeat criminal activity among Connecticut offenders. No single state agency tracks the rate of recidivism among released inmates or the large group of convicted felons placed on probation rather than incarcerated in prison.

Scope. The Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee voted in March 2001 to study recidivism among Connecticut felons. The data analysis and results focused on five questions.

- To what extent are Connecticut felons arrested for new criminal activity, convicted of those offenses, and sentenced to either imprisonment or other supervision sanction?
-
- How do recidivism rates differ between released inmates and probationers?
-
- How do recidivism rates vary among different categories of offenders (i.e., violent, property, and drug offenders or males and females)?
-
- What type of new offenses do repeat offenders commit?
-
- Is recidivism related to offenders' criminal history, demographics, program participation, or other factors?

The program review committee's analysis of recidivism rates provides the foundation for continued research of the state's offender population, crime rates, and sentencing patterns.

This report does not, however, attempt to explain all causes of recidivism, which typically are the result of complex societal issues and include factors that are difficult to

quantify.

Definition and methods. In its broadest sense, recidivism can be defined as a public safety failure rate. More specifically and for the purposes of this study, recidivism is new criminal activity by a person after a criminal conviction that resulted in either imprisonment or another sanction (i.e., probation, diversionary sentence, or fine).

How recidivism is defined has an important impact on its rate, and there is no universally accepted method of measuring it. Therefore, the program review committee used multiple measurements in its analysis rather than relying on a single method. Each measurement has strengths and weaknesses, but when combined they offer the most comprehensive and accurate measure available to establish the rate of recidivism in Connecticut.

The three defining measurements tracked for the recidivism rate are:

- rearrest for a new misdemeanor or felony offense;

reconviction on those new charges; and

reimprisonment or sentence to another court-imposed sanction such as probation, a diversionary program, or a fine.

The program review committee examined rearrest, reconviction, and sentencing data for all convicted felons discharged from prison or sentenced to probation in 1997. The committee tracked criminal activity from the date of the offender's last discharge or sentencing in 1997 through December 31, 2000. This is known as the release threshold, which is the period of time the offender is in the community and "at risk" of repeat criminal activity. Program participation data for a randomly selected sample from each

group of inmates and probationers was also examined.

The program review committee's research methodologies and sampling process are explained in detail in Chapter One.

Report organization. The report is organized into five chapters. Chapter One contains a detailed description of the definitions, research methodologies, and sampling process used in this study. Chapter Two contains a summary of recidivism research and literature pertaining to patterns and trends among repeat offenders. Chapter Three provides a profile analysis of the inmate and probationer groups selected for review in this study. The detailed analysis of recidivism rates among Connecticut felons is set forth in Chapter Four, and the program review committee's findings and recommendations are in the final chapter.

Agency response. It is the policy of the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee to provide agencies subject to review with an opportunity to comment on recommendations in writing prior to the publication of the committee's final report. A written response to the report was solicited from the Department of Public Safety's Division of State Police, Department of Correction, the Board of Parole, and the judicial branch. Appendix E contains the response from the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Correction, the Board of Parole, and the judicial branch did not submit responses.

Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee report, *Factors Impacting Prison Overcrowding*, December 2000.

Chapter Two

Summary of Recidivism Research

Unfortunately, there is no way to know for certain whether Connecticut felons are more or less predisposed to reoffend than felons in other states or nationally. Recidivism rates cannot be compared because of the lack of standardized definitions or measurement. In fact, many states have yet to begin tracking recidivism. However, there are some consistent findings throughout research literature.

This chapter will summarize what is known about the criminal patterns of repeat offenders based on recent, relevant national literature and research. The information provides a context for the program review committee's subsequent analysis and findings on whether the rates of recidivism among Connecticut felons are similar to those patterns and trends.

Patterns and Trends in Recidivism

Many of the same factors that cause a person to initially commit crime are common to repeat offenders. Although the research varies on which specific demographic or crime characteristics are the best predictors of recidivism, there is consensus that some factors have significant correlations to repeat criminal activity. They are summarized below. (A selected bibliography of key sources is contained in Appendix D.)

Age. The younger an offender is at first arrest as an adult, the more likely he or she is to become a repeat offender. Younger criminals in general are more likely to recidivate than older offenders. Most studies agree that such early, established patterns of criminal activity are among the most important predictors of recidivism. Even so, it is important to note that some older offenders can be just as likely to recidivate as younger offenders.

Gender. There is consensus in the literature that a significant proportion of the nation's

male population (some studies cited 25 to 35 percent of urban males) are arrested for a serious crime at some time during their lives. Males are about three to five times more likely than females to be arrested for a crime.

Race. Recidivism studies have found certain minority groups (e.g., African Americans and Hispanics) tend to have higher rates of rearrest. African American males are two to three times more likely than Caucasian males to be arrested for a crime in their lives. This trend is consistent throughout the research. Studies further conclude, however, that substance abuse, socio-economic status, age, and prior criminal record are stronger predictors of recidivism than race.

History of substance abuse. In most studies, many of the offenders who repeatedly committed crimes had a history of drug use. However, the more chronic and serious the substance abuse problem, the more likely the person was to reoffend and to have an extensive criminal record. The research also showed drug offenders were more likely to be rearrested for property crimes than drug sale or possession offenses.

Lack of education or employment. Researchers have concluded a lack of educational attainment and/or work experience has made reintegration into the community after prison and complying with parole or probation requirements difficult for many offenders. Without such skills, offenders have trouble attaining steady, gainful employment, and studies suggest these offenders will return to criminal activity either to earn a living or because they believe they have no other alternative lifestyle choice. Rearrest rates for those without a high-school diploma or job training have been shown to be much higher than for individuals with more experience or success in the job market.

Criminal history. Offenders with multiple prior arrests and convictions, especially if concentrated in a short time span, are frequently rearrested. Many researchers found offenders who commit property crimes such as burglary and larceny have the highest rates of recidivism and reoffend in less time than other types of criminals. This trend has been partially attributed to the increasing number of offenders with a substance abuse problem. Many times property crimes are committed for financial gain to obtain the money necessary to support an offender's drug habit. Property offenders are also likely to commit these crimes while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

There is conflicting evidence about whether or not repeat offenders "specialize" in one type of crime, that is they commit the same type of crime over and over. Although some studies observed a tendency for recidivators to commit the same types of offenses as they had when first sentenced, others found offenders to be "opportunistic" in their criminal activity (i.e., taking advantage of circumstances and committing a variety of crimes).

Research on persistent criminal behavior generally indicates crime is not a life-long activity for many offenders. Most offenders were found to have ended their criminal "careers" during early adulthood (about 26 to 30 years old), and those who continued committing crime were not typically arrested for the last time until at least the age of 40.

Studies have suggested the average period of time between first and final arrest was approximately five years, and property offenders have shorter than average periods of criminality and violent offenders longer periods. Research further indicates a relatively small group of repeat offenders are responsible for a disproportionately large number of serious crimes.

It is complicated to interpret criminal history data because many crimes in the United States go unreported or unsolved and do not result in an arrest. Some first-time offenders, therefore, may actually be repeat offenders with undocumented criminal histories and may have begun their criminal activity at young ages.

Probationers. The research indicates rearrest rates for probationers as a group are slightly less than the rates for released inmates as a group, but probationers and inmates with similar criminal histories -- in terms of the number of prior arrests -- had similar rates of recidivism. Probationers convicted of property (e.g., robbery and burglary) and drug offenses have the highest rates of recidivism.

Studies found, however, no differences in the rearrest rates of probationers under intensive supervision and in "regular" probation supervision programs. They also did not identify a relationship between recidivism and the amount of contact probation officers had with offenders.

Parole and probation violations. Researchers have found repeat offenders often commit technical violations either on parole or probation. A technical violation is misbehavior by an offender under supervision that is not by itself a criminal offense and generally does not result in an arrest (e.g., failing to report to a parole or probation officer for a scheduled office visit, missing a curfew, lack of employment or attendance at school, testing positive for drug or alcohol use, or contacting a victim or co-defendant). However, serious technical violations (e.g., escape or repeated failure to report, violent crime) or a pattern of misbehavior while on parole or probation can result in reimprisonment.

National research attributes the unprecedented growth in the nation's prison population to

the reincarceration of parole and probation violators.

Some technical violators receive no sanctions and others may have their conditions modified to respond to the misbehavior, yet continue to be supervised in the community rather than being reincarcerated. Overall, most studies agree technical violators often pose little or no threat to public safety and can be safely managed in the community.

Program participation. There are a wide range of prison and community-based programs developed to rehabilitate, supervise, and treat offenders. They were designed to address the known causes and risk factors of crime, but there has not been systematic or scientific evaluation of the programs. Therefore, the existing research shows mixed results.

There is considerable debate among researchers about the effectiveness of prison- and community-based treatment and rehabilitative programs and their impact on rates of recidivism. Some studies contend there is clear evidence selected programs reduce the likelihood of repeat criminal activity by offenders, but others find the results are inconclusive or show that programs have little impact.

Overall, the research suggests programs can have a modest impact on reducing recidivism, and it is overly pessimistic to assume treatment and rehabilitation do not work. There is general agreement among researchers interventions for repeat offenders should combine a variety of components such as education, work training, counseling, and other services, be intensive, and be tailored to offender subgroups (i.e., sex offenders, women, gang members, mentally ill, etc). However, programs that have been proven to reduce recidivism in one setting or among a certain type of offender are not always

replicated successfully in another venue or with other offenders.

It is important to note there are also other measures of a program's success besides rates of recidivism. For example, prison-based programs keep inmates occupied and may be used as incentives for good behavior thereby reducing disruptions and assaults on staff or other inmates. Community-based programs keep offenders busy and provide a structured routine, especially for those who are not employed or attending school. The programs can also serve a public relations function by easing a community's concern that unsupervised offenders are residing in the area.

Findings and Recommendations

As policymakers and criminal justice administrators develop and implement policies that attempt to reduce crime and balance public safety with costs and proportional punishment for convicted offenders, they will need accurate information to make decisions and monitor outcomes. The program review committee analysis presented in this report can be used as the foundation for continued research into the state's offender population, crime rates, and sentencing patterns. The findings presented can provide policymakers and criminal justice administrators with information to review crime and sentencing policy, develop better models to predict inmate population and probation and parole caseloads, set budgetary priorities, and assess the classification and evaluation processes used by criminal justice agencies to manage the offender population. Ideally these data, in combination with other indicators developed over time, can assist in the evaluation of the efficacy of criminal sanctions and treatment and rehabilitation programs.

The program review committee study did not attempt to understand and explain all

causes of recidivism, which typically are the result of complex societal issues. While the committee acknowledges offenders must certainly be accountable for their own behavior, repeat criminal activity is often rooted in problems within the family, school, or community and failures of rehabilitative and social service systems. It may be difficult for the criminal justice system, which does not have the primary responsibility for addressing most of these societal issues, to change well-established criminal behaviors of many serious and chronic offenders. However, the criminal justice system must still strive to protect public safety and rehabilitate offenders.

The recidivism rate data included here should be interpreted with caution. Recidivism is only one measure of the criminal justice system's performance. Further, responsibility for the rate of recidivism cannot be assigned to one agency within the criminal justice system. There are many examples of ways in which policy, resource allocation, or agency procedures affect the process or caseload of another criminal justice agency. For example sentencing laws, the speed of the court process, sentencing practices of judges, law enforcement activities, and probation and parole supervision procedures can increase or decrease admissions to prison. These factors are beyond the control of the Department of Correction, which manages the inmate population.

It is also important to note, this study relied on official records of criminal activity and, therefore, only measured offenses that were reported to or observed by the police and resulted in arrests. Many crimes go unreported or remain unsolved and, therefore, do not result in an arrest. The recidivism rate based on rearrest may underestimate repeat

criminal activity by convicted felons. There is no way to accurately count the number of unreported crimes.

As stated, this study was the first step in measuring the rate of recidivism. While able to compile the data required to measure recidivism, ultimately many more questions were raised than answered by the analysis. This fact highlights the need to establish an on-going process to track and report on the rate of recidivism among Connecticut offenders. The following section sets forth the committee's recommendation to require the criminal justice system to provide the legislature with reliable and comprehensive recidivism data. In addition, a discussion of the key policy and budgetary issues for which the recidivism analysis may be useful is set forth.

Recidivism Reporting Requirement

Tracking the trends and patterns within the offender population is necessary to develop and implement effective and cost-efficient policies and programs that attempt to reduce crime and protect the public's safety. A key component of that information is an analysis of the new crimes committed by repeat offenders in the state. As this study showed more than half of the felony offenders committed new crimes after being discharged from prison or sentenced to probation. Therefore, tracking the rate of recidivism is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of crime. *The program review committee found it is feasible to use existing automated criminal history data to calculate recidivism rates and to analyze the trends and patterns of reoffending among a large group of offenders.*

Therefore, the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee

recommended the Division of State Police, within the Department of Public Safety, begin to track and analyze the rates of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of felony and misdemeanor offenders on a yearly basis. The division shall:

- analyze criminal history data currently stored in its Bureau of Identification
- repository and the statewide offender-based tracking system data
- repository¹⁰ to examine and report on the patterns and trends among
- offenders who repeatedly commit new crimes;
- define recidivism, for the purposes of this analysis, as new criminal activity
- by a person after a prior criminal conviction that resulted in either
- imprisonment or another sanction, and shall include both inmates and
- probationers; use multiple measures of recidivism -- rearrest, reconviction,
- and
- reincarceration -- in conducting the analysis; and
- beginning in 2003, include the recidivism analysis and findings in the annual
- *Crime in Connecticut* report, which shall be submitted to the General
- Assembly, all executive and judicial branch criminal justice agencies, and the
- Prison and Jail Overcrowding Commission.

The program review committee recommended the Division of State Police is given the new responsibility of tracking the rate of recidivism for several reasons. First, the Division of State Police maintains all historical and current criminal record information. Its Bureau of Identification administers a repository of arrests, convictions, and sentencing information on all offenders arrested in Connecticut. To ensure the repository has current information, the bureau receives data from the courts and the Department of

Correction on a regular basis.

The state police disseminate offender information -- usually in the form of a "rap sheet" -- to other law enforcement agencies, the state criminal justice system, the federal government, and other entities with the authority to request and receive such information (e.g., criminal background checks for licenses or employment). Under the planned OBTS structure, the state police will continue to be the "keepers" of automated criminal record information. (A summary of the offender-based tracking system and project development status are contained in Appendix B.)

Second, since 1977, the Division of State Police produced an annual report on statewide crime trends -- the *Crime in Connecticut* report. It is the only on-going analysis of crime data done by the state's criminal justice system. This report is published as part of the division's responsibility to provide information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. The UCR program measures crime in the United States based on the number of violent and property offenses committed in each state. One objective of the UCR program is to produce reliable crime statistics for local law enforcement administration, operation, management, and research.

Third, the state police have 25 years of experience in conducting analysis and reporting on aggregate offender and crime data. It also has the staff, technical abilities, and equipment to process a large database. As previously stated, the division currently maintains the state repository of all criminal records.

Fourth, the state police have a good working relationship with the other executive and judicial branch criminal justice agencies as well as local law enforcement agencies. The

state police have maintained the criminal offender data in accordance with all confidentiality requirements. There appears to be no issues surrounding the transfer of data to the division from other agencies.

Finally, the division supported the program review committee study and expressed an interest in continuing the research on recidivism among Connecticut offenders. In order to carry out this function, the division would need a modest increase in resources.

Research Methodology and Design

The research methodology and design were chosen through a process of acquiring secondary data and guided by the design of the researcher's studies. Determination of the appropriate design for the research question asked in the thesis established the many variables both dependent and independent that would identify this research. After determination of a design such as Case Studies and some longitudinal studies it provided guidance for evaluating and analyzing the data appropriate for the research question of "How Types of Crimes, Education, Community reentry, and Rehabilitation Programs Impact the Rates of Recidivism" for offenders. This relationship between the design and question set up proper identification of secondary data which focused on the "Types of Crimes" committed prior to release and as a result of violation of probation or a completely new charge. The "Types of Crimes" were divided into four categories defined as A.) Violent offenses—such as assault and battery, battery on a LEO, rape,

assault or battery with a deadly weapon to include firearms, and other such weapons; etc., robbery with a weapon, etc. and B.) Property Crimes ---such as breaking and entering, grand theft auto, carjacking, and petty theft and general theft of identity and other white collar crimes. C.) Drug Offenses—Manufacturing, Possession, Sales of controlled and illegal substances such as marijuana, cocaine, crack(rock), Heroin, Black beauties, PCP and Hashish, etc. D.) Sex crimes—lewd and lascivious conduct, sexual battery on a minor, statutory rape, public sex acts, sexually exposing yourself to others or in public. These would be dependent variables identified under the independent variable of “offenses”. Another variable identified was “Educational” level and willingness to learn and be taught. Inmates incarcerated have been known to be less than eager to learn or either have failed to be motivated enough to learn a skill, get a better education or do anything positive with their lives while in prison for the time they have to complete their sentences. Some inmates wait until the last 2-3 years of their sentences to try to get skills, education, or any type of educational achievement. This procrastination and wait-until-the-last-minute” attitude will have many repercussions as a result of this behavior. When “Joe E. Inmate” is released at the end of his sentence or probation he will have a difficult time adjusting to the “Computerized/Information” society of the new Millenium. If he returns to his previous life without any coping skills he will probably survive no more than six months before he either violates probation or commits a new offense. He will reenter the criminal justice system in the courts and probably become what is now a recidivist statistic and reenter the prison system. This lack of “Educational” level such as the GED or some college level classes will leave “Joe E. Inmate” running in and out of the “revolving” door to prison. My interest was peaked as a researcher who works on a

daily basis with the inmates in various areas such as Correctional Officer assigned to the housing areas from Confinement to Open Bay dormitories, to two man cells in the T-Wings in and around the institutions; depending on where you are assigned. Enhancing my ability to gain experience with this population is working as a Food Service Supervisor and Recreation Officer and as a Wellness Program Officer at several major institutions in the State of Florida. This researcher also had the opportunity to increase my managerial skills as the Department Head for the Recreation/Wellness facility at Sumter Correctional Institution. I supervised up to 54 inmates assigned to the facility which was supervised by a staff of six correctional officers and others as assigned during evening activities. As a researcher I learned the inmate behaviors in their one-on-one daily contacts and their inmate "Code". Group behaviors were observed anytime they would team together in activities, work, or play. This also applied when officers deal with an inmate in their environment such as the dormitory areas where they are being observed by their peers. This interaction in the daily activities of the offenders creates a very unique educational opportunity to observe their behaviors in gangs, other inmates, and with other officers also known as "5-0", which is inmate jargon for police are in the area. As a corrections professional, you develop a rapport with or earn their respect through the way you conduct your business with the offenders. As a staff member in corrections or a civilian you are observed everyday and minute that you are working and they analyze your demeanor, attitude, dress, grooming, and the way you conduct business with officers and inmates. If a rule is violated and you make a decision it had better be appropriate for the offense and the inmate involved. If you can't decide what to do, don't run to the "Sergeant" all the time. You can let the inmate with a verbal warning and

maintain your credibility on both sides of the situation. You have told the inmate he got a break this time, and not to do it again. This is a valid decision for your level of experience. During this period of interaction with inmates and while taking classes I wondered what I could do to help ensure that these inmates didn't return to prison. As a researcher I had talked to many of the offenders; but it was hard for them to understand that without making changes in their lives they would probably become a recidivist statistic study in one of these studies. The case and longitudinal studies selected for the secondary data consists of federal, state, and other studies concerning recidivism and development of programs in Wisconsin and three counties as they addressed the rates of recidivism. New programs have been started in eleven other counties of Wisconsin under the new law on the books.

The Florida Department of Corrections website provided an "Analysis of the Impact of Rehabilitation Programs on Rates of Recidivism". This report comes complete with data for a Five Year study (1999-2004). There is also a Florida State University study concerning recidivism and dependent variables of a number of constants. The Statistical analysis will compare dependent variables against the median rate of recidivism and evaluate the significance of the highest dependent variable rate of recidivism against the other three rates of recidivism for significant change in the rates of recidivism of the other dependent variables. The preferred method of researching this data would have been through observation, questionnaires, survey, personal interviews, and direct compilation of primary data as a result of an indepth observation and interviews with inmates, corrections professionals, and surveys of data that exhibits opinions and a questionnaire that would provide a critical analysis of where and how inmates and ex-

convicts see themselves prior to and after release from prison. The variables used in this research are nominal in nature, but may need a Univariate and Bivariate analysis due to having four variables, possibly some interrelated. The only obvious problem encountered was the use of Juveniles, instead of Adults in the majority of the case studies and other reports. The variables changed somewhat throughout the literature, but there were strong correlations in support of my hypothesis and research question. The variables were consistent and valid as the research continued through the thesis. The design of using case studies and the longitudinal studies provided for excellent secondary data to support the research hypothesis and question posed for by the thesis and researcher's goals of providing informative, accurate, and up to date support for the question.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Statistical Analysis for this research examines the secondary data collected by researchers in the various case studies and longitudinal research. These studies were derived from research of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, various State Departments of Corrections, Community Probation and Parole Centers, and secondary data from a 10 year longitudinal study of federal offenders being released from prison from (1986-1997) By the Bureau of Justice Statistics. The most obvious method of statistical analysis for this research style would seem to begin with Descriptive statistics with the researcher analyzing the secondary data collected. Examination of this data implementing this

method could lead to an inferential statistical analysis based on the variables used and how control was maintained and derived. The researcher would also examine the dependent and independent variables and their application to the study being conducted. The research question of “How types of crimes, education, community reentry, and rehabilitation programs” impact the rates of recidivism would allow for statistical examination of a massive amount of secondary data and opportunities to reanalyze and formulate new conclusions about how the data effects the rates of recidivism even within it’s own parameters of variables and its own secondary data. An example would be like the comparison of recidivism rates for each type of crime, educational levels comparing those without GED or college classes to those who have courses completed. You could develop comparison’s between offenders on probation against offenders who completed all their time and were released to their homes. I am sure that the statistics would prove to be very educational and may even change the hypothesis; but that is highly unlikely. The final area of the question would be to compare the offenders who completed rehabilitation programs and not returned to the previous lifestyle; against offenders who have not finished any rehabilitation programs such as N.A., A.A., Tier I-IV, and Recreation and Wellness programs. If an offender is released without any rehabilitation efforts then the statistics are good that he or she will become a recidivism statistic with the Bureau of Justice Statistics with the federal government. Statistically, comparisons could be drawn between recidivism rates for types of crimes to demonstrate any major significance between property, violence, drug, and other offenses listed in this research paper. Comparing rates of recidivism between educational programs like GED against vocational programs such as CDL training, computer operations class, woodcraft class,

Desktop publishing, Life skills and other types of educational programs yield interesting data for analysis and research in future endeavors. Some other statistical options would be comparing the number of offenders on probation against number of offenders not on probation or any kind of community supervision. The final areas of comparison in the research of this thesis would compare the rates of recidivism from offenders in the NA, AA, Tier I-IV, and other therapeutic community type activities against other offenders in each program to provide a deeper analysis and comparison of data in the rates of recidivism. This research requires a Univariate analysis, and descriptive statistical evaluation of the secondary data to be able to break down the data into more variables and produce a more defined and detailed statistical values for evaluation and analysis. Due to time and economic restraints, the researched data is secondary and requires both univariate and multivariate analysis for evaluation. A descriptive statistical analysis of the secondary data will yield a comprehensive evaluation of the variables defined in the research of the thesis topic. After the Descriptive Analysis of the data, the researcher will have a comprehensive statistical evaluation that will provide both univariate and multivariate complete statistical analysis.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research was compiled together as a Thesis which answered the research question; “How types of crimes, education, community reentry, and rehabilitation programs impact the rates of recidivism?”. Through the mass of secondary data, case studies, and longitudinal reports the data

proved to be very supportive in favor of my hypothesis. In reviewing all the literature that I have presented and conducted a descriptive statistical analysis of the secondary data you will find that the large majority of the data supports my research question, and rejects the null hypothesis that “How types of crimes, education, community reentry, and rehabilitation programs do not have an Impact on the rates of recidivism”. The Case studies and longitudinal reports are comprehensive in nature and well documented by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, States of Wisconsin, Connecticut, and Florida with case presentations by Texas, Ohio, and Maryland. Florida State University and the University of Washington both conducted research of the rates of recidivism in State and Private prisons in Florida and how educational and rehabilitation programs impact the rates of recidivism when inmates are released from prison and go home on probation, or halfway houses within the community. The Case Study from Florida was educational, statistically accurate, and well researched with the World Wide Web demonstrating its technological advances and strengths through the Florida Department of Corrections website which has won many awards for a well constructed and user friendly point of contact. The Corrections website in Florida has a link to Publications and Statistics which provides researched information on corrections in Florida. It contains Annual Reports, Programs in Corrections, Recidivism research and case studies, and Admission and Escape data to provide the researchers with up to date research for current applications as a professional in the Criminal Justice field.

How correctional education is structured and offered in each state may differ, but the underlying rationale and benefits of correctional education are the same nationwide. As recidivism studies illustrate, correctional education lowers the likelihood of reincarceration and, in turn, protects the public from future crimes, as well as additional fiscal and social costs. Despite these benefits, correctional education has not received the federal and state investment it deserves. Today, the percentage of prisoners being served by state correctional education programs is lower than in years past, resulting in an inmate

population less prepared to return to society. There is no question that more research on correctional education is needed, specifically on how correctional education helps to reduce recidivism and how it can be improved in order to further reduce recidivism. In the meantime, the correctional population is growing, and the communities and children left behind by incarcerated adults are suffering the consequences. Lowering recidivism may not be the only benefit to correctional education, but showing a link between reductions in recidivism and correctional education will help to convince policymakers, corrections officials, and the public as to the fiscal, social, and public safety benefits of correctional education. Simply attracting more federal and state funding is not the only answer. First and foremost, correctional education programs need to be held accountable for their results, meaning programs need to improve communication between the various correctional components, as well as maintain better education records of their program participants. Well-maintained education records are particularly important today in light of the decision not to include incarcerated adults in the 2002 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL).

In addition to meeting a higher accountability standard, a stronger relationship between correctional education and other adult education programs needs to be built. The challenges faced by correctional education programs, including an inmate population with low literacy levels and a high rate of learning, emotional, and behavioral disorders, are not unique; they are similar to the challenges faced by other adult education programs. What is unique, however, is that correctional education programs have the ability to positively and significantly impact a large concentration of adults, in a structured environment, who lack the education and basic skills necessary to succeed in society. Correctional education programs are limited, though, in that they can assist adults only while they are incarcerated; therefore, having a strong relationship with adult education programs outside of the corrections system will help to ensure that ex-offenders, once they return to society, continue to improve upon the education and skills necessary to achieve success in the workplace, family, and community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When researching in the field of Criminal Justice, I recommend that a longer look be taken into the Recidivism rates of inmates in Correctional Rehabilitation programs and the need for a more Indepth study of the reasons for recidivism and modification of future programming in rehabilitation for offenders in the penal system. After some case studies of select inmates it may allow for interviewing of the offender to learn more about their socioeconomic backgrounds and what it would require for change in the desire to break the law and show more respect for the law enforcement community. Increase of family counseling and involvement in the offenders life would demonstrate the caring and nurturing attitude that would be evident to the offender and open the doors of communication to help break the desire to return to the institutional system of corrections. In the future I recommend team research for this type of issue so that a more thorough understanding and data can be developed. There is a need to develop primary data for this research, due to the new directions of understanding the issue of Recidivism and Rehabilitation programming.

As policymakers and criminal justice administrators develop and implement policies that attempt to reduce crime and balance public safety with costs and proportional punishment for convicted offenders, they will need accurate information to make decisions and monitor outcomes. The program review committee analysis presented in this report can be used as the foundation for continued research into the state's offender population, crime rates, and sentencing patterns. The findings presented can provide policymakers and criminal justice administrators with information to review crime and sentencing policy, develop better models to predict inmate population and probation and parole caseloads, set budgetary priorities, and assess the

classification and evaluation processes used by criminal justice agencies to manage the offender population. Ideally these data, in combination with other indicators developed over time, can assist in the evaluation of the efficacy of criminal sanctions and treatment and rehabilitation programs.

The program review committee study did not attempt to understand and explain all causes of recidivism, which typically are the result of complex societal issues. While the committee acknowledges offenders must certainly be accountable for their own behavior, repeat criminal activity is often rooted in problems within the family, school, or community and failures of rehabilitative and social service systems. It may be difficult for the criminal justice system, which does not have the primary responsibility for addressing most of these societal issues, to change well-established criminal behaviors of many serious and chronic offenders. However, the criminal justice system must still strive to protect public safety and rehabilitate offenders.

The recidivism rate data included here should be interpreted with caution. Recidivism is only one measure of the criminal justice system's performance. Further, responsibility for the rate of recidivism cannot be assigned to one agency within the criminal justice system. There are many examples of ways in which policy, resource allocation, or agency procedures affect the process or caseload of another criminal justice agency. For example sentencing laws, the speed of the court process, sentencing practices of judges, law enforcement activities, and probation and parole supervision procedures can increase or decrease admissions to prison. These factors are beyond the control of the Department of Correction, which manages the inmate population.

It is also important to note, this study relied on official records of criminal activity and, therefore, only measured offenses that were reported to or observed by the police and resulted in arrests.

Many crimes go unreported or remain unsolved and, therefore, do not result in an arrest. The recidivism rate based on rearrest may underestimate repeat criminal activity by convicted felons. There is no way to accurately count the number of unreported crimes.

As stated, this study was the first step in measuring the rate of recidivism. While able to compile the data required to measure recidivism, ultimately many more questions were raised than answered by the analysis. This fact highlights the need to establish an on-going process to track and report on the rate of recidivism among Connecticut offenders. The following section sets forth the committee's recommendation to require the criminal justice system to provide the legislature with reliable and comprehensive recidivism data. In addition, a discussion of the key policy and budgetary issues for which the recidivism analysis may be useful is set forth.

Recidivism Reporting Requirement

Tracking the trends and patterns within the offender population is necessary to develop and implement effective and cost-efficient policies and programs that attempt to reduce crime and protect the public's safety. A key component of that information is an analysis of the new crimes committed by repeat offenders in the state. As this study showed more than half of the felony offenders committed new crimes after being discharged from prison or sentenced to probation. Therefore, tracking the rate of recidivism is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of crime.

The program review committee found it is feasible to use existing automated criminal history data to calculate recidivism rates and to analyze the trends and patterns of reoffending among a large group of offenders.

Therefore, the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee recommended the Division of State Police, within the Department of Public Safety, begin to track and analyze the rates of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of felony and misdemeanor offenders on a yearly basis. The division shall:

- **analyze criminal history data currently stored in its Bureau of Identification**
- **repository and the statewide offender-based tracking system data repository¹⁰ to**
- **examine and report on the patterns and trends among offenders who repeatedly**
- **commit new crimes;**
- **define recidivism, for the purposes of this analysis, as new criminal activity person**
- **after a prior criminal conviction that resulted in either imprisonment or another**
- **sanction, and shall include both inmates and probationers;**
- **use multiple measures of recidivism -- rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration --**
- **in conducting the analysis; and**
- **beginning in 2003, include the recidivism analysis and findings in the annual *Crime in Connecticut* report, which shall be submitted to the General Assembly, all executive and judicial branch criminal justice agencies, and the Prison and Jail Overcrowding Commission.**

The program review committee recommended the Division of State Police is given the new responsibility of tracking the rate of recidivism for several reasons. First, the Division of State Police maintains all historical and current criminal record information. Its Bureau of Identification administers a repository of arrests, convictions, and sentencing information on all offenders arrested in Connecticut. To ensure the repository has current information, the bureau receives data from the courts and the Department of Correction on a regular basis.

The state police disseminate offender information -- usually in the form of a "rap sheet" -- to other law enforcement agencies, the state criminal justice system, the federal government, and other entities with the authority to request and receive such information (e.g., criminal background checks for licenses or employment). Under the planned OBTS structure, the state

police will continue to be the "keepers" of automated criminal record information. (A summary of the offender-based tracking system and project development status are contained in Appendix B.) Second, since 1977, the Division of State Police produced an annual report on statewide crime trends -- the *Crime in Connecticut* report. It is the only on-going analysis of crime data done by the state's criminal justice system. This report is published as part of the division's responsibility to provide information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program. The UCR program measures crime in the United States based on the number of violent and property offenses committed in each state. One objective of the UCR program is to produce reliable crime statistics for local law enforcement administration, operation, management, and research.

Third, the state police have 25 years of experience in conducting analysis and reporting on aggregate offender and crime data. It also has the staff, technical abilities, and equipment to process a large database. As previously stated, the division currently maintains the state repository of all criminal records.

Fourth, the state police have a good working relationship with the other executive and judicial branch criminal justice agencies as well as local law enforcement agencies. The state police have maintained the criminal offender data in accordance with all confidentiality requirements. There appears to be no issues surrounding the transfer of data to the division from other agencies.

Finally, the division supported the program review committee study and expressed an interest in continuing the research on recidivism among Connecticut offenders. In order to carry out this function, the division would need a modest increase in resources.

Policy Implications of Recidivism Data

Good quality recidivism data can be used by policymakers and criminal justice administrators to develop or evaluate various policy alternatives relating to budgeting priorities, crime and sentencing laws, administration of the criminal justice system, management of the offender population, and evaluation of state-funded programs and services. The policy implications of recidivism data in several critical areas identified through the program review committee research are discussed below. The committee, however, did not present specific recommendations.

Criminal justice administration. Consistently, only about one-quarter of convicted offenders are incarcerated. The vast majority plus most pre-trial defendants remain in the community, but not all are under active supervision. *The program review committee found more than half of the convicted felony inmates and probationers who were released to the community repeatedly committed new crimes. Furthermore, offenders were rearrested on average two times during the three-year release threshold under review.*

For the state's crime policy to be effective, it must address the cumulative impact of the thousands of offenders that return to or remain in their communities after conviction. The criminal behavior of these offenders must be curbed before any real reduction in the rate of recidivism can be achieved. While data show inmates in general have a high rate of recidivism, those in prison present less of an immediate concern in terms of repeat criminal activity than those in the community.

In general, there are two primary options to address recidivism. First, the state may incarcerate more convicted offenders and/or require inmates to serve longer periods of time in prison. Second, the state may redefine and reinvest in agencies that provide community-based

supervision, treatment, and rehabilitation of sentenced offenders in an effort to reduce or prevent repeat criminal activity among the majority of offenders who are not incarcerated.

The recidivism data showed offenders who spent longer periods of time in prison had lower rates of rearrest. This option, however, is extremely expensive and may be contrary to other criminal justice goals such as making the punishment proportional to the severity of the crime.

It costs about \$96 per day to house an inmate, and the Department of Correction's annual budget is currently over \$500 million. In the short term, since most inmates are serving on average less than three years in prison, increased incarceration rates may merely postpone recidivism without reducing the total amount of repeat criminal activity over time.

The recidivism data also showed inmates and probationers who were under some form of community supervision (i.e., parole, probation, or DOC halfway house) after discharging from prison were less likely to be rearrested. Although the number of new crimes committed by the inmate and probationer cohort groups were high, overall the crimes were non-violent and consisted of less serious property and drug offenses and crimes such as disorderly conduct and motor vehicle infractions. The alternative option, therefore, is to use incarceration more selectively and cost effectively by investing in community-based supervision agencies and rehabilitation and service programs.

While this is a less costly model, it presents some risk to the public's safety and property because convicted offenders remain in or return to the community. It is typically viewed as the "soft on crime" approach and often lacks the political support necessary to receive appropriate funding to be implemented as intended. This model attempts to reduce the rate of recidivism by curbing the criminal behavior of those offenders in the community. The basic elements of this model are

already in place in Connecticut.

The pressing policy implication of the program review committee's analysis is whether to incarcerate more offenders for longer periods of time and at great expense or re-examine and efficiently use limited prison resources by reinvesting in agencies and programs that attempt to control or improve offenders' behavior while they remain in the community. Policymakers must balance the need to reduce crime and protect public safety with limited financial resources and appropriate punishment for convicted offenders.

Sentencing laws. Sentencing law and policy is often developed to address the serious and violent offender in an effort to prevent future violence. Over the past five years, the legislature has enacted a series of "truth in sentencing" reforms aimed at increasing penalties and reducing the discrepancy between the court-imposed sentence and the actual time served by an inmate. For example, violent offenders are required to serve at least 85 percent of their court-imposed sentence to be eligible for parole, while all other inmates must serve at least 50 percent of their sentence. In addition, state law establishes mandatory minimum sentences for certain violent crimes. The current sentencing policies allow the criminal justice system to take a more conservative approach with *all* offenders including those who commit non-violent and less serious crimes.

As this study points out, some amount of repeat criminal activity is going to occur, but in general the new crimes are nonviolent. Violent offenders represented a small percentage of the total offender population. Violent offenders had the lowest rates of recidivism and were the least likely to be rearrested for another violent crime. Property offenders were rearrested at significantly higher rates and were more likely to re-commit another property offense.

The policy implication centers on the "tough on crime" debate¹¹ and whether a more punitive approach should be taken against *all* offenders or be more specifically focused on a certain type of offender. As sentencing requirements are increased for the small percentage of serious and violent offenders, sanctions against all other types of offenders typically increase or toughen. In Connecticut this has resulted in an influx of many less serious offenders being incarcerated. The parole board's conservative approach has caused offenders to serve longer periods in prison than originally intended by state law, and the overloaded adult probation system cannot provide adequate supervision of offenders in the community. Together these factors have overwhelmed the criminal justice system.

Resource allocation. While there is no clear consensus on how to prevent recidivism, there is agreement that the economic, social, and political costs of crime are overwhelming. During 2000, the average daily offender population included almost 18,000 inmates in state prisons and over 60,000 convicted offenders in the community under probation or parole supervision or another community-based sanction. As previously stated, more than half were rearrested for new crimes. These numbers are alarming considering the direct and indirect costs offenders impose each time they are rearrested, prosecuted, evaluated and treated, and reincarcerated or sentenced to an alternative sanction.

Executive and judicial branch criminal justice agencies do not calculate the costs of the arrest process or disposition of a criminal court case. Nor is there national data on these costs.

The criminal justice system does calculate the average daily costs of incarceration and community supervision (e.g., parole and probation). In Connecticut, it costs \$35,000 per year to incarcerate an inmate (\$96 per day), about \$4,000 per parolee per year (\$11 per day), and \$833

per probationer per year (\$2 per day).

Since the cost information is incomplete, however, the program review committee was unable to determine the cost of repeat criminal activity. *To calculate the costs of recidivism, the program review committee found a method to determine the cost of each step in the criminal justice process must be developed.* Eventually, this information along with the recidivism data can be used to calculate the economic costs of repeat criminal activity.

Currently, what can be calculated are the annual expenditures for the state's criminal justice system. In fiscal year 2000, almost \$912 million was appropriated to seven criminal justice agencies including the judicial branch, the Departments of Correction and Public Safety, the Board of Parole, state's attorneys and public defenders, and the Office of the Victims Advocate. (A summary of the state expenditures for criminal justice agencies is contained in Appendix C.)

Resource planning. Each year, less than one-quarter of convicted offenders are sent to prison. The majority of offenders receive a community-based supervision sanction such as probation. The recidivism data showed 22 percent of the inmate group and 11 percent of the probationer group were reincarcerated as a result of a reconviction for a new crime. Most received probation or another alternative sanction.

Each year since 1989, the Department of Correction has built new facilities or added new beds through expansion and renovation projects. It has spent over \$1 billion to add about 9,000 prison beds. The addition of new prison beds is continuing. During the past two fiscal years, DOC received \$35 million -- in addition to its \$500 million annual operating budget -- to add 600 new

prison beds and convert 500 existing dormitory beds into a Community Justice Program to assist inmates returning to the community.

Also, in fiscal year 2000, the DOC budget included \$12 million to contract for 500 beds in two Virginia prisons. Due to overcrowding, the department has been sending Connecticut inmates out-of-state for the past two years.

The correction department and the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) do separate projections of the inmate population. The current methods for projecting growth of the inmate population have proved to be inaccurate. Both agencies track the trend by calculating growth based on past increases. They do not calculate other factors that impact the inmate population such as trends in the population within their crime-prone years, arrests and prosecution rates, sentence lengths and time-served percentages, or other influences such as policy changes, increases or decreases in funding or resources, and the capacity of community-based supervision programs. Furthermore, they have not analyzed the rates of recidivism, which have a significant impact on the growth of the prison population.

Recidivism data can provide information not only on the potential number of repeat offenders who will be reincarcerated, but on the types of offenders and their supervision, rehabilitation, and service needs. These data can be used to more accurately determine the number of new beds needed as well as the security level of the facility and the type of programming space required. Over time, these data can provide a more precise analysis of the increases and decreases in the prison population.

During the past five years, budgetary shortfalls and continued growth in the number of offenders under community supervision (e.g., probation and parole) have resulted in larger caseloads, but

fewer services and programs. The inequities in state expenditures for prison and community supervision staff and programs have stalled the development, operation, and effectiveness of community corrections agencies. An unintended result of a disproportionate share of the total budget being allocated to prison services is a high rate of recidivism among inmates and probationers under community supervision.

As importantly, recidivism data can be used to project the growth and future needs of the vast majority of the offender population that are in the community. Any effort to reduce recidivism must focus on those offenders living in the community who pose the most immediate risk to public safety.

Program and service planning. While there is conflicting research about the effectiveness of rehabilitation, treatment, and service programs for offenders, the research suggests programs can have a modest impact on reducing recidivism if they combine a variety of components such as education, work training, and counseling and are intensive and tailored to offender subgroups such as women, sex offenders, or the mentally ill.

The program review committee found prison and community-based programs did not reduce the rates of rearrest among the inmate and probationer samples. In fact, offenders who participated in certain programs (e.g., administrative segregation and disciplinary, mental health, alternative incarceration, and 12-step substance abuse) had a higher rate of recidivism than those who did not participate. The only programs that significantly reduced the likelihood of rearrest were the DOC prison industries program for inmates and the judicial branch's day incarceration probationers.

The analysis provided some indication certain groups of offenders may warrant special attention in the development of rehabilitation and service programs. For example, younger offenders, those in a minority group, offenders with serious substance abuse problems, and those with extensive criminal histories require programs tailored to their specific needs.

Despite inconclusive evidence programs are effective, the criminal justice system relies heavily on these services, especially those based in the community. The courts, correction department, and parole board continue to place thousands of offenders each day in residential and nonresidential programs.

With a limited understanding of program effectiveness, Connecticut is inefficiently spending a significant amount of money. The policy implication centers on determining the cost benefit and efficacy of rehabilitation, treatment, and service programs for offenders. The recidivism data can be used to more wisely and effectively allocate the limited resources, and better identify the appropriate offenders for each program.

The data may also be useful in developing outcome measures, benchmarks, and targets to evaluate the effects of the rehabilitative, treatment, and supervision programs on reducing recidivism. However, as used in this study, the data alone are insufficient to conclude whether a specific program is effective in reducing recidivism. *To enable more definitive conclusion, the program review committee found the criminal justice system must conduct periodic evaluations to compare the rates of rearrest, reconviction, and reincarceration of offenders participating in programs with those of similar groups who do not participate in programs.*

In addition, the data may be used to determine the most effective sanction for dealing with

misbehavior that is not necessarily criminal, but is a technical violation of probation or parole.

The criminal justice system can evaluate whether the practice of reincarcerating offenders with technical violations reduces future criminal behavior, or if it is more effective to place them in alternative, less costly, community-based sanctions.

Inadequacies of offender records. Program participation data for the inmate and probationer samples are not automated. The program review committee staff conducted a review of Department of Correction, Board of Parole, and judicial branch probation case files. The committee staff found information in the files to be missing, inconsistent, often times inaccurate, and insufficient to fully identify the programs offenders had participated in and completed. The lack of data impedes the evaluation of the impact these programs have on the rate of recidivism and contributes to the difficulties in holding service providers accountable.

To provide complete and reliable information to evaluate the efficacy of prison and community-based programs and to effectively allocate limited resources, the program review committee found the criminal justice agencies need to improve their record keeping and case management practices. Agencies should be able to immediately and accurately identify offenders who have obtained GEDs, participated in a work training program, received substance abuse or mental health treatment, or who have participated in various programs that may reduce recidivism.

The program review committee acknowledges improvements in data collection have been thwarted by budget cuts and a lack of staff. It is understandable certain administrative functions such as record keeping become less of a priority as probation and parole supervision caseload requirements and the inmate population increase. The daily management of offenders obviously takes precedent.

Policymakers need to be aware the system will continue to be unable to provide certain information as long as the data systems are inadequate. Until an investment is made in developing quality information, policy and budgetary decisions will continue to be based on estimates, anecdotes, and imprecise analysis.

¹⁰The offender-based tracking system (OBTS) is a statewide, multi-agency, automated tracking system, which is scheduled to come on-line in 2003. The OBTS will allow for immediate access to an offender's current and historical criminal information, including a current report on his or her status and custody.

¹¹Refer to the Legislative Program Review and Investigations Committee report on *Factors Impacting Prison Overcrowding* (December 2000).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blumstein, Alfred and Joel Wallman (Eds). *The Crime Drop in America*. Cambridge University Press. 2000.

Clear, Todd R., Rose, Dina R & Judith A. Ryder. *Incarceration and the Community: The Problem of Removing and Returning Offenders*. *Crime & Delinquency*. Vol 47, No. 3., July 2001.

Columbia University. *Behind Bars: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population*. January 1998.

Florida Department of Corrections. Bureau of Research and Data Analysis. *Recidivism Report: Inmates Released from Florida Prisons*. December 1999.

Florida Department of Corrections. Bureau of Research and Data Analysis. *Recidivism Report: Inmates Released from Florida Prisons*. May 2001.

Harer, Miles D., *Recidivism Among Federal Prisoners Released in 1987*. *Journal of Correctional Education*. Vol. 46, No. 2., September 1995.

Harrison, Lana D., *The Revolving Prison Door for Drug-Involved Offenders: Challenges and Opportunities*. *Crime & Delinquency*. Vol. 47, No. 3., July 2001.

Lipton, Douglas S., *CDATE: Updating the Effectiveness of Correctional Treatment 25 Years Later*. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. Vol. 22(1/2), 1995.

National Institute of Justice Research in Brief. *National Process Evaluation of Operation Weed and Seed*. October 1996.

National Institute of Justice. *Job Placement for Offenders: A Promising Approach to Reducing Recidivism and Correctional Costs*. *National Institute of Justice Journal*. Peter Finn. July 1999.

Office of Legislative Auditor. State of Minnesota. *Recidivism of Adult Felons*. January 1997.

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. State of Florida. *Policy Review of Reincarceration in Florida's Prisons Administered by the Department of Corrections*. September 18, 1995.

Peterson, Marilyn and Karen Firestone. The Michigan House and Senate Fiscal Agencies. *A Summary of Trends Affecting the Use of Prison*. November 1999.

Richie, Beth E., *Challenges Incarcerated Women Face as They Return to their Communities: Findings from Life History Interviews*. *Crime & Delinquency*. Vol. 47 No., 3, July 2001.

Travis, Jeremy and Joan Petersilia., *Reentry Reconsidered: A New Look at an Old Question*. *Crime & Delinquency*. Vol. 47, No. 3., July 2001.

Ulmer, Jeffery T., *Intermediate Sanctions: A Comparative Analysis of the Probability and Severity of Recidivism*. *Sociological Inquiry*. Vol. 71, No. 2., Spring 2001.

United States General Accounting Office. *Prisoner Releases: Reintegration of Offenders Into Communities*. Laurie E. Ekstrand. GAO-01-966T. July 2001.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics Technical Report. *Linking Uniform Crime Reporting Data to Other Datasets*. Sue A. Lindgren and Marianne W. Zawitz. May 2001.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Correctional Populations in the United States, 1997*. November 2000.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. *Sentencing and Corrections: Papers from the Executive Sessions on Sentencing and Corrections No.7. But They All Come Back: Rethinking Prisoner Re-entry*. Travis, Jeremy. May 2000.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics Technical Report. *Truth in Sentencing in State Prisons*. Paula M. Ditton and Doris James Wilson. January 1999.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. *Survey of State Prison Inmates, 1991. Probation and Parole Violators in State Prison, 1991*. Robyn L. Cohen. August 1995.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. National Institute of Justice. *The Effectiveness of Treatment for Drug Abusers Under Criminal Justice Supervision*. Travis, Jeremy. November 1995.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics. The Office of National Drug Control and Policy Drugs & Crime Clearinghouse. *Drugs and Crime Facts, 1994*. Anita Timrots. June 1995.

U.S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. *Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1983*. Allen J. Beck, Ph.D. and Bernard E. Shipley. April 1989.

