Voorspellen van recidive. Een onderzoek naar de voorspelbaarheid van herhaling van krimineel gedrag bij ernstige gevallen van kriminaliteit
Nijboer, Jan Adrianus

In this book we have dealt with the predictability of recidivism in cases of serious criminality.

In Chapter I we have presented an introduction to criminological prediction. Besides mentioning a number of objections against the prediction of criminal behaviour we have pointed to specific advantages a prognostic instrument produces. In our opinion these advantages are more substantial than the objections, if certain requirements as validity and reliability are fulfilled.

As a prelimenary purpose we stated in Chapter I: 'Analysing the opportunities to predict criminal behaviour'.

In Chapter II we have given a survey of the literature on the prediction of criminal behaviour. Three areas on which criminological prediction takes place were distinguished.

a. Firstly we mentioned the so-called 'parole prediction' research. The purpose of this type of investigations is to make an estimate of the probability of violation of parole.

b. The second area relates to 'delinquency prediction' research, i.e. making a prognosis for young children regarding the probability of later criminal behaviour.

c. Thirdly we distinguished the construction of predictive instruments for the court and the administration. This in order to help them decide about the question which program of rehabilitation is the most effective for a certain delinquent.

Of each of these three areas the most interesting publications were presented in this Chapter.

The main question and the design of a research that we carried out was described in Chapter III. The purpose of this investigation was defined as: 'Analysing the opportunities to devise a predictive instrument that based on file-data, is able to predict recidivism with a certain reliability'. This formulation of the problem shows that we have worked with file-data, i.e. information from pre-sentence reports, psychiatric

reports and judicial data.

These data concern the following areas: Physical condition; Temperament; Character; Intelligence; Domestic background and education; Schooling record; Job history; Marital status; Leisure activities; Delictsituation; and Criminal career of the subjects.

These data were gathered for a total of 760 serious delinquents, who in the period 1959-1970 were convicted in the district of Rotterdam. This group of 760 subjects was devided in three categories:
namely property-offenders (N = 332), sexual-offenders (N = 365) and a remaining group of aggressive delinquents and delinquents with a heterogeneous criminal record (N = 63).

In Chapter IV we tried to check the usefulness of this classification in groups of delinquents. For that purpose we compared the three categories based on a number of factorscores.

It turned out that there consisted a number of very clear differences especially between the property-offenders and the sexual-offenders. Property-offenders with regard to sexual-offenders are somewhat more intelligent, they have a more severe criminal record, come more frequently from criminal-asocial families, they have a higher social status and are more frequently married. Sexual-offenders are, compared with property-offenders, more active and they react more secondary (Introversion). At last we found a difference in this regard that sexual-offenders more frequently than property-offenders are descended from complete families with good mutual relationships.

The remaining group of offenders stands, with regard to both other groups, somewhere in the middle. In some respects this remaining group resembles more the sexual-offenders (Intelligence, Domestic background; Social status) but in others it looks more like the group of property-offenders (Activity, Secondarity; and Criminal-antisocial families).

On account of these discovered differences we decided to devise separate prognostic-tables for every category of delinquents.

The results of our efforts to devise prognostic-tables is recorded in Chapter V.

The calibration sample of property offenders consisted of 224 subjects. 122 out of 224 subjects relapsed (54%).

It turned out to be possible to devise a table which was accurate in predicting recidivism in 78% of the cases. The relative efficiency amounted to 52%. These results were validated in a validation-sample of 108 property-offenders. We then achieved an accuracy of 59% and a relative efficiency of 26%. The stability of these results thus leaves something to be desired. Though in comparison with other investigations our results are quite satisfactory.

In the group of sexual-offenders we had 245 subjects at our disposal

to set up a prognostic instrument. 28 out of these 245 sexual-offenders relapsed. It appeared impossible to find a (relevant) sub-category in which less than 50% of the persons relapsed. This means that in all cases we should have to predict that the sexual-offenders didn't relapse. The same result however, would have been achieved by regarding only the proportion of recidivists in the total group of sexual-offenders. Therefore we decided to discard predicting recidivism for sexual-offenders.

The remaining group of offenders (aggressive-offenders and delinquents with a heterogeneous criminal record) consisted of 63 subjects: 24 persons (37.5%) in this group did relapse.

In this category we were able to draft a table that could very well distinguish recidivists and non-recidivists. The accuracy of this table amounted to 75% and the relative efficiency was 33%. It was impossible however to validate this result because of the smaller number of subjects in this remaining (heterogeneous) group.

In Chapter VI we analysed the correlation between the file-data we used and recidivism. It turned out that there existed a considerable connection between these data and recidivism. In other words, the data from pre-sentence reports, psychiatric reports and judicial-data gave a great amount of information about recidivism.

At the same time we wanted to know which data would show the strongest relationship with recidivism. For that purpose we first carried out a number of factor-analyses. Next we determined the relations between the discovered factors and recidivism. In the group of property-offenders we found indications that emotional people relapse less frequently.

Moreover it turned out that a severe criminal record increases the probability of recidivism (a well-known fact in the criminological literature). Further we found that a good education and good family-relations go with less recidivism. Finally it appeared that there existed a correlation between the marital status and recidivism.

In the remaining (heterogeneous) group of offenders we found that only one factor showed a clear connection with recidivism. This was the factor 'Marital status'. This result is in accordance with the criminological literature in which also has been pointed to the fact that married delinquents, show lower recidivism-rates.

In the epilogue we have developed some theoretical lines of reasoning about the predicting of recidivism. We concluded that a prognosis of recidivism can only bear fruit if at the same time it can be shown how recidivism can be prevented. According to our opinion, prediction-research should be directed especially to this last aspect.