

# APPLICATION OF THE MEGARGEE MMPI TYPOLOGY TO A POPULATION OF DEFENDANTS REFERRED FOR PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION

THOMAS A. WROBEL

*University of Michigan—Flint*

PAUL K. CALOVINI

THOMAS O. MARTIN

*University of Dayton*

---

---

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) profiles of 449 male and 111 female defendants referred for presentence psychiatric evaluation were classified using the system developed by Megargee and Bohn in 1977. The distribution of groups for each sex was compared with the results obtained by Megargee and Bohn and other researchers as well as with each other. The male groups differed on variables of age and type of referral. Female group distribution differed in all cases. Results are discussed in terms of the more prevalent violent groups among the male sample and higher prevalence of more benign types among the females.

---

---

**T**he Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)-based criminal classification system of Megargee and Bohn (1977, 1979) with its 10 profile types has since its development demonstrated adequate usefulness when employed with prison populations. According to Megargee and Bohn (1977; also see Megargee & Dorhout, 1977), the least elevated types are Item, with all MMPI scales under

---

**AUTHORS' NOTE:** *The authors would like to thank Nancy Howells Wrobel and Kevin Lauer for their assistance with this project. Correspondence should be addressed to Thomas A. Wrobel, Department of Psychology, University of Michigan—Flint, Flint, MI 48502-2186.*

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND BEHAVIOR, Vol. 18 No. 4, December 1991 397-405  
© 1991 American Association for Correctional Psychology

70 *T*, and described as outgoing, friendly, and nonaggressive; and Easy, a group with all scales below 80 *T*, a slope to the right, and relatively good interpersonal adjustment. More moderately elevated groups include Baker, described as a neurotic delinquent group with frequent elevations on Scales 2 and 4; Able, with elevations on Scales 4 and 9 and described as daring and amoral; and George, with elevations on Scales 1, 2, and 3, suggesting a relatively well-adjusted individual under situational stress. Types even more elevated are Delta, characterized by a spike on Scale 4 suggestive of impulsivity, and Jupiter, with elevations frequent on Scales 7, 8, and 9 and a tendency to be low in violence but under internal conflict. The most elevated groups are Foxtrot, with 4, 8, and 9 as the top scales and tending toward interpersonal maladjustment; Charlie, an acting-out aggressive group with several scales including 4, 6, and 8 above 70 *T*; and the most elevated group, How, which is highest in interpersonal problems and criminal behavior. Zager (1988) reviewed the system's development, interrater reliability, test-retest reliability, and validity. According to Zager, the profiles types are reliably scored, and the descriptions of groups obtained in well-designed studies are generally consistent with expectations.

Although originally developed at the Tallahassee Federal Correctional Institution, the existence of the types has been replicated using state inmates (Booth & Howell, 1980; Carey, Garske, & Ginsberg, 1986; Wright, 1988) and with prisoners in a military correctional setting (Walters, 1986). Mrad, Kabacoff, and Duckro (1983), in an attempted replication of the system in a halfway house population, found all but types Baker, Easy, and Jupiter in their sample. Among the few studies using the Megargee system with female prisoners, Edinger (1979) found that significant differences occurred in proportions of types and *T*-score elevations between males and females in an Alabama state prison sample. Shaffer, Pettigrew, Blouin, and Edwards (1983) were able to replicate 6 of the 10 Megargee types within even a rather small sample. Smith, Silber, and Karp (1988) found the typology to be of limited predictive and concurrent validity in their sample of female inmates in a state prison.

The Megargee typology has also been found to be useful with more disturbed populations. Edinger, Reutefors, and Logue (1982) used

samples drawn from an FCI (federal correctional institution) mental health unit and a group of violent prisoners housed in a research unit to replicate the typology. Although their distributions did not differ significantly from that of Megargee and Dorhout's (1977), their two groups did differ significantly from one another, with the research unit prisoners having a greater proportion of Able profiles and the mental health sample having a larger sample of How inmates. Using a population of offenders housed in a state forensic mental health facility, Wrobel, Wrobel, and McIntosh (1988) found a lower proportion of type Able and higher proportions of Charlie and How groups compared to the results of Megargee and Bohn (1977). A majority of the forensic psychiatric subjects were present in the more disturbed groups of Delta, Jupiter, Foxtrot, Charlie, and How.

The present study examined whether the Megargee typology when applied to a sample of defendants referred by the court system for psychological or psychiatric evaluation prior to sentencing can classify a large proportion of the profiles encountered. The examination of such a population might also help explain the distribution of the 10 types found in imprisoned samples. In addition, the present study investigated both males and females to further assess whether the typology could classify the profiles of a large portion of female defendants in a meaningful manner.

## METHOD

### SUBJECTS

The subjects were 560 clients (449 males, 111 females) who were referred by the court systems within an 11-county region in Ohio to the Dayton Area Forensic Psychiatric Services for outpatient forensic evaluation. Of those referred, 64 (11.4%) were referred for evaluation of competency to stand trial, 34 (6.1%) for evaluation of criminal responsibility, 43 (7.7%) for joint competency and responsibility, and 419 (74.8%) for presentence investigation. All clients who had been administered the MMPI between 1973 and 1983 were included.

The sample consisted of 403 White and 157 Black subjects ranging in age from 17 to 61 years, with a mean of 27.1 years ( $SD = 8.3$ ). Employment as categorized using Wechsler's (1981) categories was distributed as professionals, 15.9%; laborers, 44.6%; and not employed, 39.5%. Years of education for the sample ranged from 1 to 17, with a mean of 11 years. The offenses committed by the sample were assaults, 11.0%; robberies, thefts, and burglaries, 41.2%; vandalism, 15.1%; sexual offenses, 13.7%; murder, 7.6%; and drug offenses, 11.3%.

#### PROCEDURE

Data were collected from the offender's records, including standard MMPI scales and demographic data (age, marital status, race, sex, referral reason, education, history of psychiatric treatment, and occupation) as well as offense record. The MMPI profiles were classified into one of the 10 Megargee types or into invalid ( $F > 100 T$ ) or unclassified groups using the decision rules presented in Megargee and Bohn (1979). Unclassified profiles were examined by two raters and assigned to the best-fitting Megargee type if both raters familiar with the system agreed on their assignment. The remaining profiles were left as unclassified. In addition to comparisons within the sample by sex, the distribution for the present sample was compared to those obtained by Megargee and Bohn's (1977) general FCI sample, Edinger et al.'s (1982) FCI mental health unit sample, and Wrobel et al.'s (1988) inpatient forensic sample.

#### RESULTS

Of the 560 profiles, 31 (5.5%) were eliminated as invalid and 44 (7.9%) were unclassifiable, which is consistent with the proportions reported in Megargee and Dorhout (1977) and Edinger et al. (1982). The distribution of the remaining profiles by Megargee type and sex are presented in Table 1, along with the distribution of types in three other samples. The proportion of types indicates a significantly different distribution of the Megargee types between the males and fe-

males,  $\chi^2(9, N = 485) = 24.64, p < .01$ . The male sample contained a significantly higher proportion of types Foxtrot ( $Z = 2.27, p < .05$ ) and How ( $Z = 2.17, p < .05$ ). The females had a significantly higher proportion of types Able ( $Z = -2.27, p < .05$ ) and Item ( $Z = -3.19, p < .05$ ).

For the male subjects, the distribution of types differed significantly from Megargee and Bohn's (1979) FCI sample,  $\chi^2(9, N = 1,550) = 45.09, p < .01$ , with a higher proportion of subjects in group How ( $Z = 5.97, p < .05$ ) in the present sample, a higher proportion of groups Able ( $Z = -3.57, p < .05$ ), Foxtrot ( $Z = -2.14, p < .05$ ), and George ( $Z = -2.30, p < .05$ ) in the FCI sample, and a roughly equal distribution among the remaining groups. Compared to Edinger et al.'s (1982) sample, the distribution of types did not significantly differ,  $\chi^2(9, N = 485) = 1.90$ , with groups How, Charlie, and Item in order being the most prevalent types in both samples and with groups Baker and Jupiter least represented. Similarly, no significant difference was found compared with the distribution of types in Wrobel et al.'s (1988) inpatient sample,  $\chi^2(9, N = 568) = 8.94$ .

As groups Baker and Jupiter together constituted only 4.5% of the sample, these groups were not used in the remaining data analysis. The distribution of the eight types differed significantly by age with group Item the oldest of the groups ( $\bar{X} = 29.5$  years,  $SD = 10.5$ ) which was significantly older than Charlie ( $\bar{X} = 24.2$  years,  $SD = 6.4$ ), Foxtrot ( $\bar{X} = 24.8$  years,  $SD = 5.0$ ), Able ( $\bar{X} = 25.9$  years,  $SD = 6.9$ ), and How ( $\bar{X} = 26.7$  years,  $SD = 8.5$ ),  $F(7, 366) = 2.36, p < .05$ . The mean ages for groups Charlie, Foxtrot, Able, How, Delta, and Easy did not differ at a statistically significant level.

A significant difference was found among the eight groups with regard to type of referral,  $\chi^2(7, N = 366) = 17.57, p < .05$ , with the majority of subjects (74.6%) referred for posttrial assessment and 25.4% referred for pretrial assessments. The two groups with the highest proportion of pretrial assessments were Charlie (40.5%) and How (35.1%), with the highest proportion of subjects referred for posttrial evaluation being Able (85.4%), Item (84.3%), and George (83.3%).

No significant difference was found among the groups for the variables of race, age, marital status, occupational status, psychiatric history, prior offenses, or offense category.

**TABLE 1: Frequency and Percentage of Megargee Types Observed in Three Previous Studies and the Current Sample of Defendants Referred for Psychological Evaluation**

<i>Megargee Type</i>	<i>Previous Studies</i>			<i>Defendants</i>	
	<i>FCI<sup>a</sup></i> ( <i>n</i> = 1,164)	<i>FCI-MHU<sup>b</sup></i> ( <i>n</i> = 99)	<i>IPF<sup>c</sup></i> ( <i>n</i> = 100)	<i>Male</i> ( <i>n</i> = 386)	<i>Female</i> ( <i>n</i> = 99)
<b>Able</b>					
Frequency	204	11	5	41	20
%	17	11	05	10	20
<b>Baker</b>					
Frequency	51	3	3	12	5
%	04	03	03	03	05
<b>Charlie</b>					
Frequency	103	12	18	42	7
%	08	12	18	10	07
<b>Delta</b>					
Frequency	120	9	6	41	7
%	10	09	06	10	07
<b>Easy</b>					
Frequency	84	6	5	22	5
%	07	06	05	05	05
<b>Foxtrot</b>					
Frequency	100	6	6	22	0
%	08	06	06	05	0
<b>George</b>					
Frequency	85	5	5	18	4
%	07	05	05	04	04
<b>How</b>					
Frequency	155	29	23	97	15
%	13	29	23	25	15
<b>Item</b>					
Frequency	225	16	26	83	36
%	19	16	26	21	36
<b>Jupiter</b>					
Frequency	37	2	3	8	0
%	03	02	03	02	0

a. Federal Correctional Institute sample of Megargee and Bohn (1979).

b. Federal Correctional Institute Mental Health Unit sample of Edinger et al. (1982).

c. Inpatient Forensic Psychiatric sample of Wrobel et al. (1988).

For the female sample, the distribution of classifiable profiles in the Megargee types differed from the Megargee and Bohn (1979) FCI,  $\chi^2(9, N = 1,263) = 28.33, p < .01$ , Edinger et al. (1982),  $\chi^2(9, N = 198) = 24.94, p < .01$ , and Wrobel et al. (1988),  $\chi^2(9, N = 199) = 26.21, p < .01$  samples. The majority (71%) of the females were classified into three groups: Item (36%), Able (20%), and How (15%), with Baker representing 5% of the sample and the remaining six types together accounting for only 28% of the classified female profiles.

To avoid violation of the assumptions for the chi-square statistic, analysis of the criterion data was restricted to use of types Able, How, and Item. No significant differences were found between the three female types for the variables of race, age, marital status, employment, reason for referral, psychiatric history, or offense type.

## DISCUSSION

Given that the male and female samples were drawn from the same court system referrals to the same agency, interesting differences exist between the distribution of types. The females tended to have a relatively greater proportion of the more benign types (Able and Item), whereas the males had a greater proportion of the more disturbed groups (Foxtrot and How).

Similarly, the present sample of males tended to have a higher proportion of the more seriously disturbed How group than within the Megargee and Bohn (1979) FCI sample but not significantly different from Edinger et al.'s (1982) more disturbed sample. Interestingly, the present sample of males also consisted of a large number of Item profiles, although not to a statistically greater degree than in the FCI population.

The differences in the distribution of female profiles as compared to other samples of males is mainly due to the higher proportion of the more benign types of Able and Item. However, even the female defendant sample contained a fair number of How profiles. The fact that so few groups classified such a large proportion of the profiles is consistent with other studies in which the Megargee typology was

applied to female samples. Edinger (1979), for example, found that 78% of his sample of females fell within types Able, Easy, and Item, accounting for fully 51% of the profiles. These results may point to the fact that a further delineation of the common female profile types may be in order.

In general, the distribution of profile types obtained in male outpatient defendants appears similar to that obtained in forensic inpatient and incarcerated mental health samples but not similar to undisturbed prison populations. The MMPI appears to be sensitive to the presence of pathology in different settings with the settings differing in the degree of pathology present. For the females in the present sample, the distribution of profile types does not seem to parallel any of the male samples. The female profiles may require their own classification system in order to form meaningful clusters.

## REFERENCES

- Booth, R. J., & Howell, R. J. (1980). Classification of prison inmates with the MMPI: An extension and validation of the Megargee typology. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 7, 407-422.
- Carey, R. J., Garske, J. P., & Ginsberg, J. (1986). The prediction of adjustment to prison by means of an MMPI-based classification system. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 13, 347-365.
- Edinger, J. D. (1979). Cross-validation of the Megargee typology for prisoners. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 47, 234-242.
- Edinger, J. D., Reuterfors, D., & Logue, P. E. (1982). Cross-validation of the Megargee MMPI typology: A study of specialized inmate populations. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 9, 184-203.
- Megargee, E. I., & Bohn, M. J., Jr. (1977). Empirically determined characteristics of the ten types. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 4, 149-210.
- Megargee, E. I., & Bohn, M. J., Jr. (1979). *Classifying criminal offenders: A new system based on the MMPI*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Megargee, E. I., & Dorhout, B. A. (1977). A new classification system for criminal offenders: Revision and refinement of classification rules. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 4, 125-148.
- Mrad, D. F., Kabacoff, R., & Duckro, P. (1983). Validation of the Megargee typology in a halfway house setting. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 10, 252-262.
- Shaffer, C. E., Pettigrew, C. G., Blouin, D., & Edwards, D. W. (1983). Multivariate classification of female MMPI profiles. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 6, 57-66.
- Smith, L. B., Silber, D. E., & Karp, S. A. (1988). Validity of the Megargee-Bohn MMPI typology with women incarcerated in a state prison. *Psychological Reports*, 62, 107-113.
- Walters, G. D. (1986). Correlates of the Megargee criminal classification system: A military correctional setting. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 13, 19-32.



- Wright, K. N. (1988). The relationship of risk, needs, and personality classification systems and prison adjustment. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 15*, 454-471.
- Wrobel, N. H., Wrobel, T. A., & McIntosh, J. W. (1988). Application of the Megargee MMPI typology to a forensic psychiatric population. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 15*, 247-254.
- Zager, L. D. (1988). The MMPI-based criminal classification system: A review, current status, and future directions. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 15*, 39-57.