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On Corrections Research

FORUM



FEATURE ISSUE

Public Attitudes Toward
Criminal Justice and
Corrections

Management Focus

The Rejuvenation of the
Public Service and the
Mission of the Correctional
Service of Canada: A Time to
Grow

A Profile of Regional
Research Activities



Correctional Service
Canada

Service correctionnel
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FORUM ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH is published quarterly in both English and French for the staff and management of the Correctional Service of Canada.

It reviews applied research related to corrections policy, programming or management issues. It also features original articles contributed by members of the Correctional Service of Canada and other correctional researchers and practitioners.

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The feature articles in this issue of FORUM, as well as the summaries in our International Overview section, examine the issue of public attitudes toward crime, criminal justice and corrections.

We called upon a number of individuals to assist us, principally because of their specialized background and knowledge, but also because we wanted to present a balance of views on the topic.


Mr. Michael Adams, the President of Environics, agreed to summarize some of the findings of recent poll and focus group studies conducted by his firm. Dr. Edward Zamble, of Queen's University in Kingston, presents some of his own research data challenging the view that Canadians are becoming increasingly punitive and retributive. Alex Himelfarb, Director General of Policy, Planning, and Research with the National Parole Board, takes a sober look at what polling of public attitudes can tell us and suggests how these data can be used or misused in the process of developing new policy or programs.

It is curious that despite fairly widespread awareness of the limitations of public opinion polling, poll results continue to grab attention, perhaps serving more to feed into public sentiment than to reflect it. We all have our own views on what the public thinks we should do in corrections. Yet, in our desire to respect the public, we run the risk of misreading, exaggerating or even seriously misinterpreting public expectations. An example worth noting is the question of whether there is continued public support for "rehabilitation" — the provision of quality programs and services to offenders aimed at reintegrating them successfully into the community. Although there is much debate on this point, there is also general acceptance of the view that support is "weakening".

Evidence that public support for rehabilitation is much stronger than we believe, even south of the border, is highlighted in a chapter by Francis T. Cullen and Paul Gendreau in a recent book, *The American Prison: Issues in Research and Policy* (New York: Plenum, 1989). The authors underscore an interesting divergence between what the public actually perceives as the important goals of corrections and what policy makers think the public expects. In one study, for example, only 12% of policy makers saw the public as supporting rehabilitation when in reality nearly two thirds endorsed views supporting treatment as a goal for corrections.

The public in essence is pragmatic. They will support what is explained, what they can understand, and most importantly, what can be shown to work. The constraint is our own level of confidence. The public will believe, and continue to support, commensurate with our patience to explain and inform, our steadfastness to improve our methods, and our courage to be honest about our limitations. This is perhaps worth remembering the next time a neighbour expresses concern about being "too soft on offenders". When our impressionable son or daughter asks what we do, do we respond with pride and commitment or deflect with a joking comment? How seriously does each of us take the challenge to inform the public, to talk to our child's fourth-grade class about our work, to meet with community groups and seek opportunities to explain and inform?

This issue of FORUM is purposely provocative in some respects. We hope it serves to clarify the complex issue of assessing what the public thinks about criminal justice and corrections. Please write to us to tell us what you think.



Frank J. Porporino
Research Branch
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Research is often communicated to other researchers only in professional journals that are typically unread or not understood by the people who must put research findings into action. In this section of the magazine we hope to overcome this rift between the researcher and the practitioner by providing brief descriptions of findings from recently published studies. The section will feature research with implications for the management of correctional staff or the design and delivery of effective programs to offenders, and other issues that impinge on correctional policy and practice. More information about the research reported in this section can be obtained by contacting the Research Branch or by consulting the references provided for particular studies.

We welcome contributions from researchers in the field who wish to have their research findings profiled in the Research in Brief section.

Changing Criminal Thinking Patterns: Some Preliminary Findings from the Cognitive Skills Training Pilot

One of the most recent innovations in correctional treatment is the "cognitive" model of rehabilitation. The cognitive approach concentrates on the faulty thinking patterns that seem to propel offenders toward reinvolvement in criminal activities. According to the model, offenders lack a variety of cognitive skills — the capacity to appreciate the perspectives of others, the skills required to approach interpersonal difficulties in a constructive, problem-solving fashion, and the ability to think before acting. Cognitive treatment approaches attempt to equip offenders with the thinking skills that are necessary to avoid making criminal choices. Because the cognitive model directly targets thinking styles that appear to be responsible for sustaining criminal behaviour, it is a very promising development in corrections. Research on the effectiveness of the cognitive model has also been encouraging.

The Cognitive Skills Training Program, based on cognitive principles elaborated by Robert Ross and Elizabeth Fabiano in their book *Time to Think*, was piloted by the Correctional Service of Canada in the Atlantic and Pacific Regions during the first six months of 1989. Initiated by the Education

and Personal Development Branch at National Headquarters, the program was introduced in four sites, including both community (Carleton Centre, Atlantic Region; Hobden House, Pacific Region) and institutional (Mission Institution, Pacific Region; Westmorland Institution, Atlantic Region) settings. Staff who ran the pilot programs completed an extensive ten-day training period delivered by Elizabeth Fabiano, from the Educational and Personal Development Branch.

Each program operated daily for approximately twelve weeks and involved six to eight offenders. Three of the four sites offered the program on two occasions, once in the winter and once in the spring of 1989. Fifty offenders were granted admission to the programs in the four sites. One indicator of the success of the Cognitive Skills Training Program was that only three offenders discontinued their participation before the program was completed.

The program is based on a group-interactive format in which staff lead the offenders through a series of structured training sessions. The sessions allow time for the offenders to evaluate their behavioural patterns and examine what they have learned with other

participants. A number of skill-building exercises are utilized in which the offenders learn to analyse a variety of situations and practise new problem-solving skills.

The pilot project included a study of the effectiveness of Cognitive Skills Training, which was conducted by the Research Branch. Prior to the beginning of the training sessions, all program participants underwent a battery of measures designed to assess their levels of cognitive skills and attitudes toward criminal activity. Following completion of the program, the offenders were reassessed so that changes in their levels of cognitive skills could be measured. In addition, the program participants completed an evaluation questionnaire designed to determine how valuable they considered their Cognitive Skills Training experience.

The preliminary findings of the study were very promising. Results indicated statistically significant increases in skill levels on a number of important cognitive dimensions that were targeted by the program. The test scores suggested that, following completion of Cognitive Skills Training, the participants were better able to appreciate the perspectives of others when they were faced with the task of interpreting social situations. Scores on a conceptual-level test indicated that the offenders demonstrated more complexity in their views about such concepts as authority, rule structures, and critical feedback. In addition, they were able to generate a greater number of behavioural options on tasks that required the resolution of interpersonal conflicts.

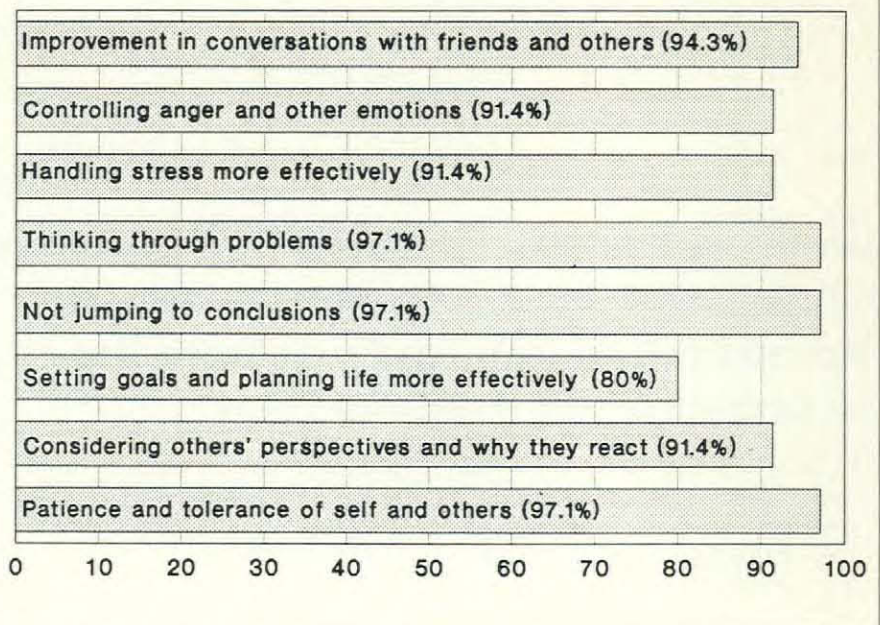
The results from an analysis of attitudinal measures also showed that the offenders made positive changes in the direction of more pro-social thinking. It was found that the participants became less negative toward the law, courts and police after completing the program. In a number of previous

studies, positive changes on these attitudinal measures have been linked to reduced chances of future recidivism.

The program participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with Cognitive Skills Training. Seventy-two percent of the program participants who completed the evaluation questionnaire felt that the program "was much better than any other program" to which they had been exposed. An additional 24% perceived the program to be "as good as any other program". Approximately three weeks after completing the program, 97% of the participants admitted that they found themselves using the skills that they had learned. Responses to open-ended questions also revealed that the offenders regarded the content of the program as highly relevant to their lives. Their comments indicated that they had retained many of the concepts that developed in the program, and they identified a number of concrete areas in which they had made improvements as a result of their training. The **figure** shows the high proportion of offenders who perceived positive change in each of the major areas the program addressed.

The research component of the project was also designed to provide an evaluation of whether or not offenders who were selected for Cognitive Skills Training were appropriate candidates. Many programs are criticized because they are offered to offenders who are highly motivated, easy to work with, and not likely to recidivate regardless of their participation in programs. One of the objectives of the Cognitive Skills Training Program was to ensure that the training would be extended to offenders who were most in need of correctional programming. Selection procedures were developed for case management staff so that offenders with high cognitive skill deficits would be referred to the program.

Percentage of Offenders Who Felt They Improved in Eight Areas of Functioning



Results from several analyses suggested that offenders who participated in the program were those who were most in need of programming. Case Management Strategies (CMS) data and scores on the Statistical Information about Recidivism Scale (SIR) indicated that Cognitive Skills Training was being offered to offenders who were at high risk of failing upon release. For example, only 5.6% of the participants were classified as "very good" risks on the SIR. In fact, 61% of the participants were classified in the "fair to poor" or "poor" risk categories on the SIR.

The results of the research have been very encouraging. It appears that the Cognitive Skills Training Program was being extended to appropriate candidates, and that those who participated made significant positive gains on the various cognitive and attitudinal measures. However, one question remains: Is Cognitive Skills Training effective in reducing recidivism?

The answer to this question must await a post-release community follow-up study of those offenders who completed the programs. The Research Branch is pursuing this question by monitoring the success rates of participants who are now on parole or mandatory supervision. It is predicted that the Cognitive Skills Training participants will return to our institutions at lower rates than non-participants who were at similar levels of risk for recidivism at the time of their release. If the Cognitive Skills Training Program does contain effective treatment ingredients, it is also expected that offenders who made the greatest cognitive and attitudinal changes during their training will be more successful in the community than participants who gained less from the program. ■

Stress and Coping in Correctional Settings: Some New Research on Canadian Correctional Workers

Correctional workers have often been characterized as being exposed to particularly high levels of stress. Researchers have become interested in studying the situations that lead to stress in correctional settings and the ways of coping that promote job satisfaction and performance. Research advances in this area can have important implications for correctional officer recruitment, the design of training programs that will help officers cope with stressful situations, and the development of effective management practices to limit the number of stressful events that occur.

An important study completed recently by Gareth Hughes, Psychologist at the District Parole Office in Kingston, Ontario, sheds some light on how Canadian correctional workers define work-related stress and what they do to combat it. Hughes interviewed 109 front-line correctional workers at one medium and two maximum security institutions located in Kingston. The correctional staff who volunteered for the study included correctional officers, educational and shop instructors, and general labour and service workers. All of the participants in the study were engaged in duties that involved working with offenders. The nature of job stress, stress-coping patterns, personality attributes, life and job satisfaction, work performance and health status were among the characteristics that Hughes measured in the study. Health information was collected from family physicians, and job performance data were obtained from personnel files.

The correctional workers in Hughes' sample averaged 41 years of age and had been employed by the Correctional Service of Canada

for an average of 12 years. As a group, they exhibited a high degree of domestic stability, with 84% indicating that they were married or living common law and 82% reporting that they owned their homes. The level of educational achievement of the group was also judged to be high: 95% had completed grade 10 or above, 34% had completed some college education, and 6% held university degrees. Forty-six percent of the workers were smokers, and for the most part their alcohol consumption patterns were moderate.

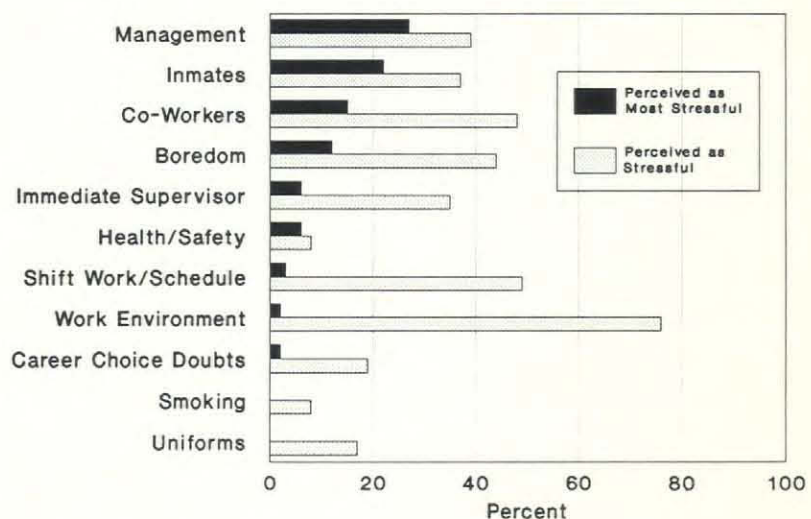
Two questions were posed to each of the participants in the study: What are the sources of stress in the work environment? Which of these stressors is most stressful?

Although more than 75% of the sample mentioned that their physical work environments resulted

in stress, only 2% admitted that the environment caused them the most stress. Similarly, about half of the sample reported shift work and schedules to be stressful, but only 3% regarded these problems as a major source of stress.

The situations correctional workers found most stressful were primarily interpersonal. For example, as the figure shows, management problems (e.g., inconsistency and lack of support) were rated as the single most serious source of stress by the largest number of staff. Although only 39% of the staff viewed managers as a source of stress, 27% suggested that managers were the most significant source of stress they encountered on the job. It is interesting to note that while only about 40% of staff viewed management as a source of stress, the majority of workers who did check this category perceived management as the most stressful feature of their work environment. The next most serious sources of stress were related to dealings with inmates and co-workers. Boredom was also mentioned as the greatest source of stress by a substantial

Perceived Sources of Stress Among Correctional Line Staff



number of correctional workers.

In terms of the relationship between stress and other areas of functioning, close to one third of the respondents said that work-related stress caused them serious family problems.

The most frequently reported method of coping with stressful situations at work was "distancing". According to Hughes, distancing involves rationalizing a situation or endorsing the view that nothing can be done about it. "Planful problem solving", which implies an ability to take an objective approach to solving the problem in a series of steps, was the next most common technique adopted in the face of stressful occurrences at work. Many workers also sought practical or emotional support to help them deal with stressful situations.

Hughes rated all the workers on their overall coping effectiveness, based on their answers to the various questions. Generally, the sample showed a healthy capacity to cope with stress, with 14% obtaining the maximum score on the coping effectiveness ratings. The best copers were those correctional workers who used planned solutions to their work problems and sought the support of others. They rarely reacted to immediate situations and usually applied foresight in attempting to understand a problem. In comparison to poor copers, the most effective copers were less likely to blame others for the stress they experienced at work. Poor copers viewed problem situations at work as highly distressing events. This group also spent less time socializing during non-work time and demonstrated less involvement with hobbies or active leisure pursuits.

The ability to cope effectively with work stress was also related to a number of personality characteristics. Those correctional workers who coped most effectively expressed a high level of positive

feeling, possessed a sense of coherence about their lives, scored lower on a scale designed to measure irrational beliefs, and reported good health. Not surprisingly, good copers also reported high levels of satisfaction with their jobs, and their job performance ratings were significantly higher than those of poor copers.

Although more research must be conducted in the area of stress and coping among Canadian correctional workers, Hughes' results have important implications for managers. If managers, inmates and co-workers were perceived as the major sources of stress by a

substantial number of staff, perhaps there should be specific training goals for these staff to help them cope more effectively with the interpersonal difficulties they encounter on the job. Nearly half of this sample of correctional workers reported that their work was boring, and 12% found boredom to be the most stressful part of their jobs. Managers may need to give more attention to helping correctional workers cope with boredom and explore new methods for improving staff interaction to sustain enthusiasm in the face of challenging work circumstances. ■

Stress Among British Prison Officers

A recent study by researchers Gilles Launay and Primrose J. Fielding on prison officers in England overlaps considerably with the study completed by Gareth Hughes in Canada. The aim of the British study was to identify the major categories of stress that prison officers confront, and to determine the impact of various forms of stress on the health of the officers. Based on their reading of the state of previous research in this area, Launay and Fielding argued that there were two main sources of stress in the prison setting: staff-inmate confrontations and communication difficulties between management and uniformed staff.

Launay and Fielding administered two questionnaires to 89 basic and senior-grade officers at H. M. Prison Maidstone. The Sources of Stress Questionnaire, which contained 25 items, was used to identify the perceived severity of a variety of potential work stressors. The General Health Questionnaire, designed to assess health status, included the measurement of sleep patterns, the experience of depression and other factors related to general health.

Launay and Fielding's findings generally supported their initial

hypothesis. The results demonstrated that prison stressors could be divided into the two broader categories of "inmate" and "management" problems.

The British researchers were also able to link the sources of stress to the levels of health reported by the officers. The major finding was that stress associated with inmates had the greatest impact on health. Prison officers who reported that they found their relationships with inmates stressful had much poorer health than officers who did not. A large proportion of the sample indicated that they perceived management as a major source of stress. However, the perception that managers caused stress was not related to inferior health. For this reason, Launay and Fielding concluded that in order to reduce the health consequences of prison stress, British prison administrators should place an emphasis on programs that help prison officers develop better relationships with inmates. ■

Launay, G. & Fielding, P. J. (1989). Stress among Prison Officers: Some Empirical Evidence Based on Self-Report. *The Howard Journal*, 28, 138-148.

A Mental Health Profile of Federally Sentenced Offenders

A major survey of mental disorders among offenders in the Correctional Service of Canada has shown that mental health is rapidly becoming one of the major challenges facing federal corrections today.

The Research Branch oversaw the completion of the study, which involved interviews with a random sample of over 2,000 federally sentenced male offenders across Canada. The Mental Health Survey represents the first major attempt by the Correctional Service of Canada to estimate the prevalence, nature, and severity of mental health problems among the adult male offender population by applying objective diagnostic criteria commonly used by mental health professionals. The survey relied on the administration of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS), a survey instrument developed by the National Institute of Mental Health and endorsed by the World Health Organization. The DIS was designed for research on large numbers of the general population, both male and female, and has also been used to diagnose the incidence of mental and behavioural disorders among incarcerated populations. The diagnosis of mental disorder that flows from the DIS primarily involves meeting a set of stringent criteria derived from the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III. It is a highly structured interview with a set of probe patterns to reduce, as much as possible, interviewer discretion in coding.

The results of the survey revealed some remarkable facts about the lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in the Correctional Service of Canada offender population. Lifetime prevalence is defined as the percentage of the population that showed evidence of a partic-

ular disorder at least once in their lifetime.

As Table 1 shows, the risk of having had at least one episode of a psychotic disorder (e.g., schizophrenia, schizophreniform, mania) was 10.4%. The incidence for depressive disorders (e.g., major depression, dysthymia, bipolar) was 29.8%; for anxiety disorders (e.g., panic, generalized anxiety, phobia, agoraphobia, somatization) 55%; and for psychosexual disorders (e.g., dysfunction, transsexualism, ego-dystonic homosexuality) 24.5%.

Table 1

Different Types of Mental Disorder

Type	Percentage
• Psychotic	10.4
• Depressive	29.8
• Anxiety	55.0
• Psychosexual	24.5

In devising a more focused approach to examining an offender's mental health, we looked at the lifetime prevalence of antisocial personality, or alcohol and drug abuse/dependence, and sought to determine the extent to which independently, or in combination, these three disorders were found among the offender population. In Table 2, we show how the offenders were distributed according to diagnostic criteria we chose to examine. We note that 37.8% of the total inmate population were found to have met the criteria for

antisocial personality while at the same time having alcohol and drug abuse/dependence. Interestingly, nearly one out of five offenders had met the criteria for a dual diagnosis of antisocial personality and alcohol abuse/dependence.

Table 2

Antisocial Personality and Alcohol and Drug Abuse/Dependence

Antisocial + Alcohol + Drug	37.8%
Antisocial + Alcohol	19.7%
Antisocial + Drug	8.5%
Antisocial Alone	8.8%
Alcohol and/or Drug Alone	14.0%

It seems likely that inmates in our institutions have experienced much more mental disorder than was understood before

In constructing a meaningful "criminal profile" of mental health, we used the lifetime prevalence of antisocial personality or alcohol abuse/dependence or drug abuse/dependence as criteria. Notably, 89% of the total inmate population met the criteria for this criminal profile. The results, shown in Table 3, indicate that offenders who met the criteria for a criminal profile also had considerably more mental health problems than those offenders who met the criteria for a non-criminal profile. For instance, there is a fivefold increase in the likelihood of having had a psychotic episode at some point in their lives for those offenders in the criminal profile group.

Table 3

Different Types of Mental Disorder for Criminals and Non-Criminals

Type	Criminal Profile	Non-Criminal Profile
• Psychotic	11.4%	2.1%
• Depressive	31.2%	19.2%
• Anxiety	57.2%	37.7%
• Psychosexual	23.8%	30.6%

While it is possible that these survey results also reflect other factors, such as differences between inmates who remain in custody and those who are released, the ability of inmates to remember episodes that happened long ago and their willingness to report symptoms, it seems likely that inmates in our institutions have experienced much more mental disorder than was understood before. ■

Do Media Events Affect Correctional Policy? Furlough Programs and the 1988 Presidential Campaign

Correctional systems are frequently pressured to amend their conditional release practices following negative media coverage of correctional policies or when sensational incidents involving released offenders occur in the community. State furlough and work release programs in the United States suffered tremendously poor press during the 1988 presidential campaign in that country. Some interpreters have argued that Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis' position on furlough programs, and the media attention attracted by the case of furloughed offender Willie Horton during the campaign, were critical factors in the victory of President George Bush.

The National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) recently published findings from a study of the impact of the presidential campaign on furlough and work release programs reported by state correctional systems in the United States. The NCIA, a criminal justice consulting firm based in Washington, D.C., surveyed all

50 states in an effort to determine whether furlough and work release rates declined during the campaign period of September through November 1988. The research group compared the number of furloughs and work releases granted during the campaign with rates recorded for the same period in 1987.

The impact of media events on correctional policy is a complex phenomenon

The results of the NCIA study highlight the fact that the impact of media events on correctional policy is a complex phenomenon. The study showed that if the 1988 presidential campaign did influence furlough and work release rates, the effects were not felt uniformly across the United States.

At the national level, NCIA found that furlough and work release rates were lower

between September and November 1988 than during the same months in the previous year. The researchers estimated that in the three-month period in 1987, the number of furloughs granted by the 40 state systems for which rates were available was 21,765. The total figure for the same 40 states during the 1988 presidential campaign was 20,340 — a decline of 7%. Rates for work release programs also declined by 9%, from an estimated 27,944 in 1987 to 25,553 during the 1988 period.

Although the national figures provide some support for the hypothesis that the presidential campaign played a role in the declining release rates, the study also revealed that rates actually increased in some jurisdictions. In fact, while furlough rates dropped in 14 states, they increased in 18 states and remained the same in eight other states during the 1988 campaign period. For example, in Utah, the number of furloughs granted rose from 423 in the 1987 period to 859 during the campaign — a dramatic increase of 103%. In the large jurisdiction of California, which granted over 3,200 furloughs in the 1987 period, the same rate was reported for the 1988 comparison period. Another interesting finding was that some states

granted fewer furloughs, but more work releases at the same time.

A close inspection of the state-by-state figures released by NCIA demonstrates that a large proportion of the decline in the granting of furloughs could be traced to a small number of jurisdictions. Of the 14 states that reported lower furlough rates for the comparison periods, four reported very dramatic declines. Kansas, Mississippi, New Mexico and New York accounted for 82% of the total decline for the 14 states in which decreasing furlough rates were recorded.

Fluctuations in furlough rates that may have been triggered by the presidential campaign are, at most, temporary

One of the conclusions of the NCIA survey was that fluctuations in furlough rates that may have been triggered by the presidential campaign are, at most, temporary. The researchers found that while some states initiated more restrictive furlough policies, in some cases the policies would not significantly affect the overall furlough rate. For example, the state of Missouri suspended out-of-state furloughs and Wisconsin moved to eliminate furloughs for inmates serving life sentences. One interpretation offered by NCIA is that policy changes may have been hastily implemented to avoid further legislative action that would seriously restrict the operation of successful furlough programs.

The NCIA study was not able to provide figures on changes in furlough and work release rates that occurred during the year that followed the presidential campaign. However, the authors of the report noted that as of June 1989, no

legislation had been enacted in the United States to curtail the use of furloughs. It would appear that any damage to furlough and work release programs that resulted from the 1988 negative media attention will not be permanent. ■

National Centre on Institutions and Alternatives (1989). *Survey of State Work Release and Furlough Programs*. NCIA, 635 Slaters Lane, Suite G-100, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

Canadian Attitudes Toward Crime and Justice

by Michael Adams

Canadians have long counted themselves fortunate to be citizens of a law-abiding country which places a high value on discipline, order and respect for the law. Traditionally, when we have thought about the relative merits of our justice system and others operating in the world, most notably that south of the border, we have been almost smug in our belief that Canada is a safer and more civilized country with a superior system of justice.

Recently, however, crime and justice issues have come under greater scrutiny. It now seems that Canadians have begun to doubt not only the safety of their surroundings but the fairness and efficacy of the justice system set up to protect them and their property. What are Canadians thinking? Are they as negative and suspicious as the media would have us believe? What changes would they like to see happen in Canada's criminal justice system?

The conclusions discussed in this article are based on two studies — one of Environics' quarterly Focus Canada surveys¹ and a national focus group study² commissioned for the Solicitor General of Canada. The Focus Canada survey examined a number of justice issues, including confidence in the system, the appropriateness of laws and law enforcement, crime rates, punishment and parole. The focus group research also explored Canadian opinion on several aspects of the criminal justice system, particularly sentencing and corrections issues.

¹The Focus Canada survey was conducted among a modified probability sample of 2,006 Canadians interviewed in-home between December 3 and 31, 1988. Strict probability samples of this size are estimated to be an accurate representation of the Canadian population to within two percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

²In March 1989, the Solicitor General of Canada commissioned Environics Research Group Limited, in association with Dorothy Aaron Research Limited, to conduct focus group research on Canadian opinion regarding several aspects of the criminal justice system, particularly sentencing and corrections issues.

The 10 focus group discussions were conducted in mid- to late March 1989 in the cities of Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal (where the groups were conducted in French), and Halifax. The two groups in each city (with 7 to 10 respondents each) were differentiated on the basis of socio-economic factors, i.e., one group represented blue-collar occupations, the other white-collar. Respondents, men and women aged 25 to 50, were screened to ensure that they had no experience or special interest in the criminal justice system or related occupations. A wide range of occupations was represented.

The reader is reminded that this type of research, while useful for obtaining qualitative information on trends and opinions, is not based on a representative sample. The results, therefore, do not reflect the views of all Canadians in a statistical sense in the way that the Focus Canada national survey does.

Goals of the System

Canadians believe that the main purpose of the criminal justice system is to protect and serve society. Implicit in this perception is the assumption that the system is in place to protect the innocent. Mentioned less frequently, but still important, is the belief that the system should act as a deterrent to criminals and that it should function to punish offenders.

The focus group study also found that some believe the system exists to ensure the rights of individuals and prevent chaos by keeping peace and setting societal standards. This corresponds to the notion, expressed by only a few groups, that the system should reflect society's values and attempt to create a fair society.

Confidence in the System

Canadians view the justice system in much the same way that they have come to view other institutions — with less confidence. For example, only 4 in 10 Canadians in the Focus Canada survey expressed a high degree of confidence in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and in local police forces; and even smaller numbers reported equal confidence in the courts, including the Supreme Court of Canada. Government justice departments were lower on the list and lawyers were at the bottom.

The focus group study also found that attitudes toward the criminal justice system as a whole were much more negative than positive. Participants expressed perceptions of failure of the system at an operational level ("too many offenders get off altogether" or "they're back on the street in no time") and suggested problems in terms of unfair or inconsistent justice ("the rich and powerful get off" and "money will fix anything").

Other negative perceptions revolved around complaints about the system's overemphasis on the

rights of offenders ("criminals get more justice than victims"), the inability of prisons to serve as deterrents ("some prisons are like a country club"), and the inefficiency of the courts ("archaic", "not enough courts and judges to deal with the number of offenders").

The level of confidence in the justice system among Canadians is affected by a strong sense that the system does not abide by fundamental principles, such as fairness. Just under 7 in 10 in the Focus Canada survey believed the law favours the rich and discriminates against female victims of sex crimes. Over half felt that low-income Canadians and victims of crime in general were treated unfairly, and more than 4 in 10 said they thought the law discriminates against people with criminal records and against native Canadians.

Focus Canada also reported a sense among Canadians that, if the justice system is failing to deliver, it is partly because Canadians themselves are not keeping up their end of the "social contract". Fifty-two percent agreed that respect for the law was on the decline and 72% thought criminal behaviour was increasing.

Focus Canada found a fear of crime that was out of proportion to victimization statistics. Twenty-nine percent — the highest proportion in 10 years of tracking data — said that they were afraid to walk at night in their neighbourhoods, but only 9% reported that they had been victims of crime in their neighbourhoods.

The focus group study found that group members demonstrated a very basic knowledge of Canada's justice system, its mandate, and functions. While most of their observations were negative, their overall attitude seemed to be that the system is imperfect but workable. While participants expressed a number of fairly positive perceptions about the system

in theory, they also showed some resentment, dismay and anger over the way they see it operating in reality.

Sentencing

Canadians are convinced that the criminal justice system is too easy on offenders. Focus Canada found the public's greatest concern on an operational level was the widely held perception that the punishments received by lawbreakers were too lenient. There was less concern about the enforcement of the law — a plurality believed that there has been an increase in the number of lawbreakers brought to justice — or about leniency in the laws themselves.

All groups felt strongly that there should be alternatives to prison for non-violent offenders. The most popular of these alternatives were properly supervised community service activities

The focus group participants also expressed the view that sentencing is far too lenient. At the same time, there was confusion over possible solutions to this problem. Although a substantial minority wanted to make judges subject to more stringent guidelines in sentencing, the majority felt that judges should retain their discretionary powers.

All groups felt strongly that there should be alternatives to prison for non-violent offenders. The most popular of these alternatives were properly supervised community service activities (including everything from manual labour to bookkeeping for charitable organi-

zations) and restitution on the part of the offender to the victim(s) of the crime. Other suggested alternatives to prison were work camps, military service and electronic monitoring. The general feeling was that these alternatives could help rehabilitate the offender and save money for the taxpayer.

Parole

Canadians want to reform, but not abolish, the parole system. Focus Canada reported that 7 in 10 think the country's parole system should be made more strict. Fewer than 1 in 10 want the program abolished.

Fear of parolees was not a major source of public concern

Once again, the attitudes expressed in the December Focus Canada survey were reiterated by the March focus group participants. When focus group participants were questioned about the issues surrounding parole, their responses were largely negative. Many felt that the offender gets off too soon, that parole is virtually automatic after one third of the sentence and that the nature of the offender's crime and the concurrent risk to society are not given proper consideration. While parole may technically be part of an offender's sentence, it is not viewed generally by the public as part of the "punishment" for a crime.

On the positive side, fear of parolees was not a major source of public concern (with the exception of Toronto) and parole was seen to have some merit in principle. There was strong indication that support for parole would likely increase if people better understood its role in rehabilitation, if the minimum time before eligibility were longer, if it depended on an

There was virtually unanimous agreement among participants in the focus group study that rehabilitation should be one, if not the major, goal of imprisonment

offender's efforts at rehabilitation rather than just "good behaviour", if there were better supervision and support of parolees and, especially, if potential parolees were screened more carefully.

Rehabilitation³

There was virtually unanimous agreement among participants in the focus group study that rehabilitation should be one, but not the major, goal of imprisonment. However, there was also general recognition that rehabilitation is difficult to achieve because so many offenders are repeaters. In fact, there was widespread belief that many offenders are beyond rehabilitation.

Many Canadians are not cognizant of existing rehabilitative activities taking place within prisons. The fact that many suggested the need for different levels of security in the penal system, through which prisoners must progress before they are released, indicates that there was little awareness that this exists now.

There was more recognition of rehabilitation programs after prison, primarily halfway houses, counselling and community service. In general, most people support the concept of halfway houses, and there is recognition of the need for more of them, but few are comfortable with having them in their

own neighbourhoods, at least "not as they are run now". People were concerned that inhabitants were not carefully screened and that they would not be adequately supervised.

The findings suggest that support for halfway houses might increase with public assurance of improved security and cross-checks, guarantees of house maintenance by well-trained staff, limits in the number of residents assigned to each house, location of houses near police stations and joint programs in which halfway houses were connected to employment programs or corporate sponsorships.

Justice Reforms⁴

The focus group found strong support for re-institution of capital punishment; this was the first priority for reform among participants. Other suggested justice reforms can be summed up in the phrase "a healthy serving of toughness, with a small dose of compassion". Quite a number of respondents felt that, as a priority, prison life should be made tough enough to become an effective deterrent to further crime. For example, some said prisoners should be sleeping 10 to a room, working hard labour, eating simple meals, and denied access to privileges or amenities. Even those who placed a lower priority on toughening prison life felt that any comforts or privileges beyond the bare minimum humane treatment should be earned by an offender's good behaviour and efforts at rehabilitation.

Other suggestions for reform included more emphasis on crime prevention, harsher sentences for violent and repeat offenders, making prisons more productive so that they could pay for themselves, and better rehabilitation programs

for offenders.

One of the concerns for Canadians, when they think about justice reforms, is the perception that governments have no interest in reforming the system — that they react only to pressure from lobby groups or the media. There is little appreciation that reform is an ongoing process.

A number of suggestions for reform of the prison system emerged from the national focus group study. These included: the segregation of prisoners so that serious offenders do not influence those who are likely candidates for rehabilitation; the withdrawal of privileges in prison (e.g., television, conjugal visits, better-than-basic food, recreation) unless earned through work and good behaviour; compulsory work activity for prisoners (whether some sort of labour, or learning or teaching a trade); occupational training (in jobs that offer more than minimum wage); support groups (i.e., group therapy) for prisoners with drug and alcohol abuse problems; more pre-parole planning and counselling; and the creation of a special type of prison equivalent to trade school, for offenders who seriously want to rehabilitate themselves. In fact, many of these policies and programs are currently in place, but the public is unaware of their existence.

The focus group study found that most people believe the criminal justice system is good in theory but flawed in practice

Conclusions

A number of trends and themes in Canadian public opinion were found in both the December 1988 Focus Canada survey and the focus group study conducted the follow-

³The Focus Canada survey did not question respondents on this issue. It was, however, an important component of the focus group discussions in March.

⁴The Focus Canada survey did not question respondents on this issue. It was, however, an important component of the focus group discussions in March.

ing March. Chief among these are the strong perception that the justice system is unfair (and biased in favour of wealthy Canadians) and that "punishments" (i.e., sentencing and incarceration) for lawbreakers are too lenient.

The two studies also found higher levels of confidence in police forces than in the court system, lawmakers and lawyers, and a strong desire for reform, but not abolition, of the parole system.

It also appears, from the results of the two studies, that fairly low — but growing — levels of fear among Canadians for their personal safety are associated with the perception that crime is increasing and that respect for the law is on the decline. The net result is an increased concern about crime in society as a whole.

When it examined sentencing and corrections issues, the focus group study found that most people believe the criminal justice system is good in theory but flawed in practice. Canadians believe that prisons are not unpleasant enough to serve as deterrents and that parole is granted too easily and without proper consideration for the safety of society.

The focus group study also concluded that Canadians are skeptical when it comes to the subject of rehabilitation. They believe it to be important, but they doubt that it is often achieved in the present prison system. Similarly, they believe that halfway houses, although an important component of the rehabilitation process, are often not operated safely. And they do not welcome these houses in their neighbourhoods.

It is clear that some of the fear about crime, and some of the negative perceptions about the justice system, are based on incomplete or inaccurate knowledge on the part of the public. And to the extent that it is, better communication efforts by government and by other institutions might be useful.

Indeed, the focus group study showed that police chiefs, police officers, judges, criminologists, psychologists, and even ex-convicts, but not necessarily politicians, are seen as credible spokespeople about the justice system.

Consideration might be given to communications which reinforce public perceptions about the positive aspects of the system, the importance and benefits of rehabilitation, and the ways in which this is accomplished through activities in prison, parole, and halfway houses.

The studies indicate that there is a definite need to provide the public with accurate information about parole: the success rate of parole, costs and benefits of parole, and the process by which parole decisions are made. People need to be reminded that parole, although concerned with rehabilitation rather than punishment, is still part of an offender's prison sentence.

There is also a need for information about halfway houses: what they are, how they operate, the number of residents per house, the types of offenders assigned to these houses, and the kinds of supervision provided at the houses.

Finally, consideration might be given to publicizing reform initiatives or ideas, even at early stages. This kind of public education may dispel the notion that the criminal justice system is rigid and may remind people that reform is a continuous and ongoing process. As some focus group participants noted, the public often hears about the failures of the justice system but rarely about its successes. But the study clearly shows that the public does want to hear from, and is willing to believe, the professionals who work in the system. ■

Starting in 1970 as a small sociological consulting firm, Environics has developed into one of Canada's largest and most sophisticated marketing research houses. Environics monitors and interprets social, political and consumer trends on behalf of more than 200 public and private sector clients through the company's nine syndicated tracking studies. Michael Adams, the President of Environics, has lectured and written extensively on the impact of social trends on public policy and social strategy. The following researchers also contributed to this article: Donna Dasko, Mary Jane Lennon, Dorothy Aaron and Jane Armstrong.

Public Support for Criminal Justice Policies: Some Specific Findings

by Edward Zamble

One of the things that can be most frustrating for correctional workers is the perceived lack of public support for the things they do. This can be felt in many ways, from the graphs in magazine articles charting public disapproval of how well — or how poorly — the criminal justice system is functioning, to the casual remarks overheard from strangers who place the blame for the outrages committed by criminals as much on workers in the criminal justice system as on the offenders themselves. In general, there is a feeling that the public is punitive and opposed to innovative or rehabilitative correctional programs; this not only discourages the morale of correctional workers, but it may even deter them from attempting new programs.

These perceptions are largely based on unsystematic impressions, or the disproportionate weight that is given to a few loud voices, but they are also said to be supported by "scientific" opinion polls. Indeed, in the past decade a variety of such polls have shown that Canadians are generally poorly informed on criminal justice issues, but that they also seem to favour more punitive and restrictive policies.

What do Public Opinion Surveys Tell Us?

Some of the surveys that have found these results have been carefully conducted. They include several studies done in this decade for the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice,¹ or for other agencies such as the Canadian Sentencing Commission.² For example, a widely cited survey directed by Doob and Roberts³ documented that Canadians are very poorly informed about crime rates and the detailed workings of the criminal justice system.

However, in addition to this abysmal level of ignorance about the system, answers to other

surveys have appeared to show a great amount of general dissatisfaction with the system. Gallup polls have regularly asked questions such as: "In general, how would you rate the treatment of criminal offenders?" Whether the question refers to criminal offenders in general, or in prison, or the frequency of parole, or almost any other aspect of the criminal justice system, the answers are almost always the same: People respond that the system is not working well, and that offenders are treated too leniently.

Is this really correct? Do Canadians want tougher treatment of offenders? Do they really not support rehabilitative efforts? Or

have their thoughts and desires been somehow misrepresented? For the past several years, my students and I have been looking at some of these questions, and by now it seems to us very clear that the previous impression has been much mistaken. We can confirm that most Canadians have large areas of ignorance about the criminal justice system. However, our data say that they are not basically punitive, nor do they really want a generally harsher system.

Any question determines the range and types of possible replies, and poor questions may yield unwanted, or even misleading, information. Every question may get replies, but only some give answers

To anticipate the conclusion, we have found that the problem lies in the questions one asks. There's an adage that originated among computer programmers that says "GIGO" or "Garbage in, garbage out". In the present context, it says that the answers one gets are only as meaningful as the questions one starts with. It does not matter how sophisticated one's analyses are, or how careful are the polling techniques. Any question determines the range and types of possible replies, and poor questions may yield unwanted, or even misleading, information. Every question may get replies, but only some give answers.

We learned some of this the hard way when we first tentatively started our survey work a few years ago. When we asked subjects some of the very general questions that had been used in other polls, many of them asked for details and

¹Doob, A.N., and Roberts, J.V. (1983). *Sentencing: An Analysis of the Public's View*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.

²Roberts, J.V. (1988). *Empirical Research on Sentencing: Research Reports of the Canadian Sentencing Commission, #1*. Ottawa: Department of Justice. Several others in the series are also relevant. They are summarized in *Canadian Sentencing Commission (1987)*. *Sentencing Reform: A Canadian Approach*. Ottawa: The Commission.

³Op. cit.

further information. They wanted to know what sort of cases we were asking about, and who the offenders were, and lots of other specific case circumstances. Although they were able to answer the global question, many indicated that they felt uncomfortable in doing so.

In teaching students, I sometimes discuss how easy it is to see only information that confirms one's expectations instead of objectively observing behaviour. I have sometimes used the aphorism "The subject is always right" to make the point that observations should take precedence over expectations. While my slogan is not to be taken literally, it emphasizes that subjects were giving us a lesson in those first attempts at measuring opinions. The way that they thought about justice decisions was much more complex than was allowed for by the questions we were asking, because those questions requested them to give global answers in situations where they wanted to say "Well, it depends . . ."

This set me to considering just how much the use of global attitudinal questions really does distort the picture of citizens' preferences on criminal justice matters. The result has been a set of studies done over the past four years in which we have looked at judgments that people make in specific cases. Sometimes we compare the results directly with those from the general or global questions. The results we have gotten are quite instructive.

A Study of Sentencing

One of the first studies in this line looked at attitudes regarding sentencing.⁴ Subjects were recruited in a large, busy shopping centre that is centrally located and a major node for public transportation, so that it is frequented by a wide cross-section of the local population. Most people who were approached and told about the purpose of the study were quite agreeable to filling

out a questionnaire.

The largest part of the study presented a set of scenarios, each describing a criminal case. The instructions clearly stated that the (hypothetical) offenders had already been tried and convicted, and that the subject's task was to decide what would be a proper sentence in each case. The scenarios each contained some details of a crime and an offender, such as the following:

A white male, 35 years of age, enters a pharmacy while the cashier is at the rear of the store. He goes around the counter so that when the cashier returns the intruder is behind him. The intruder then tells the surprised cashier not to turn around but to empty the till into a bag. He takes the bag containing \$580 and leaves. The offender has been convicted of several previous offences and has served a prison sentence before.

Probably to some people's surprise, there was little difference between the average or typical sentences that were thought appropriate by the person on the street and actual court decisions

What the subjects were not told was that the scenarios differed

systematically on several dimensions. In this study, we varied the offense from minor theft to robbery with aggravated assault. Some of the offenders were described as older (as in the case above) and some of them were just old enough to be dealt with in adult court. Some of them had extensive previous records, and some had none.

As one might expect, each of these factors made a significant difference in the sentences assigned, using any of several measures of severity. For example, the proportion of subjects who would have imposed a prison sentence (disregarding the length) varied from 8% for a first-time young offender convicted of theft, to a high of 100% for the older habitual offender guilty of robbery and serious bodily injury. From this, we can conclude that subjects were well aware of the differences among cases and that they considered those differences important for sentencing.

However, the most interesting thing about the results of this first study is not in the validation of the individual case methodology, but rather in the information it provides about the severity of judgments by the public. Aside from the variations in severity across cases, how punitive were the sentences assigned? Fortunately, at about the time the results were being prepared for publication, the reports from the Canadian Sentencing Commission appeared, and these included some compilations of actual sentences for various offences.⁵ This allowed comparison with the results we had obtained from our subjects.

⁴Zamble, E., and Kalm, K.L. (in press). "General and Specific Measures of Public Attitudes toward Sentencing." *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science*.

⁵Hann, R.G., and Kopelman, F. (1987). *Break and Enter, Robbery, and Extortion Offenses: Custodial and Probation Sentences: 1984/85. Ottawa: Department of Justice; Hann, R.G., and Kopelman, F. (1987). Assault: Custodial and Probation Sentences: 1984/85. Ottawa: Department of Justice.*

Probably to some people's surprise, there was little difference between the average or typical sentences that were thought appropriate by the person on the street and actual court decisions. For example, 82% of subjects would have sentenced those guilty of robbery to prison, as compared to the 84% of actual offenders who are sentenced to imprisonment. This may not be a fair comparison because the two percentages are derived differently, but the same similarity appears if one examines the length of the term assigned when the sentence is imprisonment. For example, if we compare sentences for robbers without previous convictions, the median sentence assigned by subjects was in the category of 7-12 months, as compared to 6-12 months for sentences assigned by the courts. (The categories we used to classify term lengths were a bit different from those of the Sentencing Commission because their reports appeared only after we had collected and analysed our data.) The only real differences in sentencing were for the crime of breaking and entering, where subjects wanted sentences of up to twice as long as those generally assigned by courts.

Thus, the results from our study contradict the impression of a generally severe and punitive public, as inferred from the results of surveys with global questions. Of course, we could have had a very atypical sample. While our demographic measures showed a fairly typical representation for adult Canadians, corrections issues do have a high profile in the local area. However, we had anticipated such issues in the design of the study, for in addition to the sentencing task we also asked subjects a set of very general or global questions like those used previously, e.g., "In general, the sentencing of convicted offenders by the courts is . . . (much too lenient, too lenient, about right, too harsh, much too harsh)."

While the public disapproves of what they think the system does, if they were given the choices they would probably do just about what the system actually does now

The answers to these questions were exactly what previous studies had reported: The great majority of subjects said that they were dissatisfied with the criminal justice system and that it was too lenient in all respects. At the same time that they were assigning sentences in hypothetical cases that were entirely typical of those assigned by real courts, 88% said that court sentences were too lenient.

There is a profound contradiction here. The two types of questions yielded very different sorts of answers, and there was very little correlation between them — actually, the correlation was statistically significant but trivial. We can say that the answer one gets is determined by the type of questions one asks. While the public disapproves of what they think the system does, if they were given the choices they would probably do just about what the system actually does now.

Attitudes toward Parole

This message is not a fluke result of one study. We have replicated the basic effect in a very similar project that looked at attitudes toward earned conditional release.⁶ In this study, we gave subjects a set of descriptions summarizing the cases of hypothetical inmates who were in prison and applying for

parole. We varied the offence as before, although with fewer levels, and we also included the factor of previous record. However, this time we varied a dimension of how much the inmate had been participating in institutional programs while in prison. (In practice, three dimensions is about as many as we can include at the same time without getting into very complicated statistical procedures or becoming sloppy.) Here's an example:

The offender was convicted after he broke into a residence and stole a stereo system, TV, and VCR. Before this offence, he had no previous criminal record. During his term in prison, he has upgraded five high school courses taught in the prison and also works in the welding shop. The offender has completed a program dealing with drug problems run by a prison psychologist. While in prison, he has had satisfactory conduct reports and has not had any discipline problems.

The results in this study replicate the pattern of what we found for sentencing. As before, responses to the global questions seemed to show punitive attitudes: 82% said that overall the parole system was too lenient. It was also clear that subjects were particularly concerned about violent offenders released on parole, for 54% said that the number of non-violent criminals released on parole was about right, but 87% stated that the number of violent offenders released was too high.

At the same time, the answers to the specific cases showed widespread support for the use of conditional release options. The

⁶Cumberland, J., and Zamble, E. (1989). "General and Specific Measures of Public Attitudes: Release Decisions." Unpublished manuscript, Queen's University; submitted for publication.

great majority (86%) endorsed some form of release (at least temporary absences, with more liberal release terms promised after successful completion) for the "best risk" case described above. Despite the particular concern with violent crimes indicated in the global results, 58% would have allowed release for a prisoner serving a term for a brutal aggravated assault and robbery, if he had no previous record and had participated in several institutional programs. Even our most serious case, a habitual offender guilty of a serious violent crime and with no participation in educational, vocational, or psychological treatment programs, would have been approved for a release program by 28%.

*The great majority (86%)
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of release for the
"best risk" case*

While we do not have access to figures for parole decisions comparable to our own breakdowns, the two seem generally very similar. Even if we did, the comparison would be difficult, because there are no records of how individual members of the Parole Board vote. Still, if the percentages in each of our cases are converted to majority decisions, release programs would have been approved for property offenders in all cases regardless of previous record or program participation, and also for the one violent case cited above. This pattern of response is very much compatible with current policy statements. It certainly is no harsher than actual decisions, and it may even be more lenient.

Thus, again we have evidence that citizens choose decisions that are in line with current practice, despite the results of the

general attitudinal questions. In addition, the data show very good support for parole and early release programs.

Some Extensions

Given the functionality of the scenario method, we can use it to answer questions about what people really think the criminal justice system should be doing. By varying the dimensions, we can use it to investigate the model that citizens use in making their decisions, and test whether they follow such logico-legal constructs as the just deserts philosophy. For example, given the significant impact of the institutional behaviour variable, the second study shows that citizens' decisions are at least in part informed by the elements of utilitarian theories of corrections, rather than being entirely based on a just deserts model.

We have seen support as well for other current policies that do not conform with the just deserts philosophy. In this respect, we can cite the results of another study of sentencing,⁷ in which it was shown that sentences assigned by subjects were less severe in cases where the legal principle of diminished responsibility might apply. In fact, citizens not only assigned significantly shorter sentences to offenders with diagnosed mental illness, but they did the same for cases of chronic emotional disorder without psychosis. This latter effect might indicate positions that are more liberal than current practice, and there is more evidence of such liberality in the finding that the greatest reduction in sentences

was for intellectually subnormal offenders.

Thus, when we ask for decisions from the public about specifically defined situations, the data lead to conclusions that are quite different than those from global questions. Specific questioning allows one to see what things matter to citizens, and how much. It also provides answers that are not contaminated or dominated by great generalizations or global emotional responses.

There are other advantages of the scenario method that should be discussed here. Not only does it provide a more accurate picture of public preferences overall, but it yields much richer information than other methods, both to guide policy making and also to lead to some understanding of the processes and values that determine people's opinions. It would be useful to have such detail routinely, especially if lawmakers wish to establish procedures that are consonant with the values of the public. The level of public support for justice policies clearly depends on situational factors, rather than being derived from absolute and invariable rules.

In addition to the value of detailed and specific information, another one of our studies of attitudes toward capital punishment⁸ showed another, unexpected advantage of the specific case method over the usual type of question. Along with a set of scenarios of different types of homicide, we asked subjects a global question on capital punishment based on the question used most commonly in the Gallup polls.⁹ This question

⁷Banks, D. (1988). "The Effects of Mental Impairment on Sentencing." B.A. (Honours) thesis, Queen's University.

⁸Mills, J., and Zamble, E. (1989). "General Question, Specific Questions: Canadian Public Attitudes toward the Death Penalty." Unpublished manuscript, Queen's University; submitted for publication.

⁹Gallup Poll of Canada (24 November 1979). Gallup Poll Report. Canadian Institute of Public Opinion.

asks respondents whether or not they favour use of the death penalty, but it also allows a "don't know" answer. When we compared results to those from the scenarios, we found that a much higher proportion of subjects would have chosen the death penalty in at least one specific case compared to the proportion that endorsed it on the Gallup question. However, further analyses showed that the great majority of the people who answered "don't know" actually chose the death penalty on at least one scenario, so they should functionally be classed as advocates. When we accounted for these, the results of the two methods became about equivalent and much of the apparent difference disappeared.

It is likely that in other circumstances the noncommittal votes might mask opinions in the other direction, for there is no reason to expect that they would always be in the direction we found. What is certain is that the assumption that they will split in proportions like those of committed opinions is demonstrably false. To have made that assumption would have led to a result that seriously misrepresented the split of public opinion.

If one wants to use very general questions to measure opinion, there is a conundrum here. Many people will object to answering a question that gives them only "yes" or "no" options, ignoring the complexity that they perceive in an issue. The "don't know" option is often interpreted by respondents as "it depends", so it might seem a good alternative, except that, as we have seen, this can lead to sizable errors. In contrast, one does not have this problem with specific case decisions, for we have found that the better the cases are described the less trouble people report in making decisions.

Conclusions

Conventional opinion polling has become widely accepted as a way

of measuring public opinion in the past few decades, largely because of its success in predicting voting patterns in elections. The sampling rules are well known and carefully observed by consulting firms specializing in enumerating the public mood on political questions. The accuracy of polls in predicting the rise and fall of political fortunes has brought them much credibility, especially among politicians and other policy makers.

As a result, the techniques used to measure preferences among candidates have also been used to measure attitudes on complex issues, such as the treatment of criminal offenders. However, there are some profound differences between the two situations. In an election the choices (candidates or parties) are a small set of completely specified options, which are usually well known to respondents even before the question is asked. Moreover, all the specific factors that might affect the choice are determined: the date of the election, the issues, the claims, the charges, the context of other events, are all established in particulars.

It is very different if one wants to measure something like attitudes toward the criminal justice system. Cases vary widely, as do the dispositions that people consider just and proper. Even relatively uninformed citizens are aware of a great many cases, and they are likely to have some implicit dimensions of variation that will allow the production of an indefinitely large number of variations.

Asking a person to give an overall judgment requires some way of averaging all the cases available to memory or imagination. Not only does this averaging lose much information, but we do not know how it is done. The required averaging can occur in a variety of ways, many of which will lead to serious distortion. For example, we can hypothesize that the wording or context of global questions will

sometimes cause people to think of the worst case they are aware of, and to base their judgment on this case: the result will be that judgments will express severe disapproval of the entire system.

Although we do not have direct evidence of exactly what happens when people answer global questions, our studies confirm the arguments above and show that overly simple questions can lead to misleading answers about public opinion on criminal justice questions. Criminal justice decisions are complexly determined, and the specifics of each case are critical in making decisions, even if general policies for making decisions are clearly articulated. To reduce the choices to the generalizations of global questions is to make the answers vacuous and not to be trusted. GIGO.

Criminal justice decisions are complexly determined, and the specifics of each case are critical in making decisions, even if general policies for making decisions are clearly articulated

On the other hand, methods that gather detailed and specific information, such as our scenario technique, are more informative and are also more likely to yield an accurate picture overall. Using such methods, it may be possible to construct a workable model of the cognitive processes that people use in evaluating the system, and to see the values and perspectives they use to make decisions. We have actually stated some hypotheses along these lines, and we hope to provide some experimental tests of them in the near future.

The research we have done gives the overall impression that Canadians base their decisions on the desire to control crime and minimize its harmful effects; punishment for its own sake does not seem to be among the bases of their decisions

In the meantime, what we can say is that the Canadian public is not so punitive as they have sometimes been depicted in the past, or as they might seem from the results of global polling techniques. There may be some very audible individuals of the "hang 'em high" mentality, but in general the Canadians we have seen in our research are pragmatic in their approach to decisions on criminal justice matters. The research we have done gives the overall impression that Canadians base their decisions on the desire to control crime and minimize its harmful effects; punishment for its own sake does not seem to be among the bases of their decisions.

We can also say that our subjects functionally endorsed most current principles in the criminal justice system, because their own decisions generally coincide with actual current practice. There may certainly be cases where public opinion will massively disagree with decisions in actual cases. Sometimes this may occur because of misrepresentation or poor dissemination of relevant information. At other times, it probably shows the difficulties of making decisions when so many factors are relevant, for even people with very similar values may differ in cases where decisions pivot like angels on the proverbial pin. In any case, it

should not be forgotten that the system can make mistakes, and given the argument here that the public generally agrees with the bases of decisions by the system, serious public outcry about specific cases should be taken very seriously as indications of possible errors.

If our general conclusion is warranted by the results of our data, it still appears to contradict the consistent findings that people evaluate the system negatively and say that it is too liberal. If this is so, then what is needed is not sterner policies but better public information. Citizens answer the global questions on the basis of some generalization from their impressions of the system. If at the same time their choices in actual cases would be similar to those made by the system they condemn, it must be those **impressions** that are at fault.

What is needed are changes in public information about criminal justice

What is needed are changes in public information about criminal justice. In the short term, a substantial public information campaign would be very useful. On the basis of some anecdotal findings in our data, we believe that statements of concrete facts from politicians can have effects in this area. When we first started in the area several years ago, we found, in agreement with the data of other researchers,¹⁰ that very few subjects realized the size of the difference between US and Canadian rates for violent crime. In our most recent study,¹¹ with people recruited from the same population in the same ways, we

found quite a different result, with close to two thirds hitting the correct range. All we can see in the interim that might account for the change are repeated statements about the relative rates by officials at various levels. Self-serving politicking it may have been, but it was also factually correct and educationally effective.

If this can be widened, and accompanied by substantial reform in the educational system to inform our children about how the criminal justice system works, then we would expect that expressed citizen approval of the system would markedly increase. Only a few years ago, the federal correctional system in Canada seemed hesitant to disclose information about its operation, and this has now changed so that openness and accessibility are actively promoted. It is time to move further, for there is a need for an active effort to disseminate information to the public about actual practices in the entire criminal justice system. ■

Edward Zamble, a professor of psychology at Queen's University, Kingston, has been involved in correctional research in the area of criminal behaviour for over 10 years. The Correctional Service of Canada and specific federal institutions have called on Dr. Zamble's expertise on numerous occasions. He is presently acting as a consultant to the Ontario Regional Treatment Centre. Dr. Zamble earned his Ph.D. at Yale University.

¹⁰Doob and Roberts, *op. cit.*

¹¹Cumberland and Zamble, *op. cit.*

Public Opinion and Public Policy

by Alex Himelfarb

Surveys show that most Canadians believe" has become a universal phrase in contemporary social analysis and public policy. Opinion surveys are big business and getting bigger. The latest survey findings regularly make the national headlines and in significant ways shape the social policy agenda. Pollsters and survey experts are becoming influential policy advisors. As the use of opinion surveys becomes increasingly pervasive and as their influence grows, we need more than ever to understand their limits and dangers. Some of the most important issues are not empirical, not questions of sampling or accuracy but rather conceptual. That is, we must ask what such a technology can contribute to policy and program development irrespective of technical improvements.

Proponents often point out that public opinion surveys are an example of a uniquely democratic technology. If democracy is to serve "the people", then we must have some way to hear the "people's voice". Surveys, the argument goes, have allowed us to tap public needs and concerns. Without them, we hear only organized interest groups or depend on our best guess of the public mood.

Critics, who have become more adamant over the past few years, argue that our opinion surveys give us at best a partial glimpse and at worst a distortion of the public view. According to this perspective, survey methodology is ill-equipped to get at people's complex, nuanced and shifting perceptions and opinions. Further, they argue, such surveys promote "quick fix" policy solutions, "quick change politics". According to the critics, the proliferation of surveys has resulted in confusion between opinion and judgment informed by experience and research on what works. Some have gone so far as to suggest a moratorium on public opinion surveying and a return to more fundamental research. But these surveys are here to stay and, as practitioners become increasingly sophisticated in their use, they can become a valuable instrument for public policy — if we know their limits and their dangers.

The Problem of Public

Public opinion surveys are limited by the assumption that often underlies them, that there is a singular homogeneous public whose opinions can be recorded. This assumption influences the design of surveys and the analysis of survey data. The very notion of close-ended questions, where the responses are predetermined by the researchers, presumes that the researchers already know, more or less, the range of opinions they are tapping. The set questions and answers, regardless of how often they are pre-tested, constrain the range of responses possible. Surveys may, therefore, altogether miss those answers that do not fit the

researchers' preconceived notions of what most people think.

Imagine, for example, that you are asked to rank a list of issues in order of how much they concern you. The list might include issues such as the deficit, inflation, interest rates, unemployment, Canadian unity, violence, crime, aboriginal self-government, sexual equality, cultural sovereignty, and the environment. No doubt you could rank these issues. How different would your answer be if the question were open-ended, if there had been no list? Research shows that there can

be significant differences.¹ For example, respondents may rank "crime" relatively high on a list but are far less likely to volunteer it when there is no list.

Generally, it is more expensive to use open-ended questions. They are more difficult to code, quantify, compare and track over time, but they allow respondents to tell it their way. Closed questions inevitably constrain respondents and therefore limit the capacity of surveys to uncover the unexpected. Closed questions have a self-fulfilling effect.

Some critics have gone further to suggest that the way these results are often presented has similar consequences on the opinions of Canadians. Imagine, for example, that you read that most Canadians are concerned about crime and corrections. Might you wonder whether you should rethink your own views? What do they know that you don't know? The bandwagon effect may operate not only in politics but also in public policy. Public opinion surveys, then, can become an instrument for shaping rather than measuring public opinion.

Thus, we read newspaper articles about what "most Canadians" or the "average Canadian" think(s) about crime, corrections, conditional release, or what have you. We read that the average Canadian is concerned about crime and lacks confidence in our system of corrections and conditional release. Sometimes we read that the average Canadian wants a tougher system, or at least one that gives unambiguous emphasis to public protection. All of this is, of course, very important to know for policy and program development, but it represents only some subset of public opinion.

Who is this average Canadian? The average Canadian is a

¹Davidson, W.P., Leiserson, A. (1972). International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, Crowell, Collier and MacMillan Inc.

myth. Real people have a particular gender, age, ethnicity, level of education; they also live and work in communities, which shape their views. They draw their views from their experiences and interactions, and as their experiences and interactions vary, so do their views. For policy purposes, it is generally less important to know what most people think than to know how particular groups of people with shared interests and experiences think.

The "quick and dirty" survey cannot capture the views of the many publics that must be taken into account in policy development. While sophisticated sampling techniques may allow us to measure within a few percentage points Canadian opinions on any issue, by surveying fewer than 1,000, they may not give policy makers the information they need, particularly in a country as diverse as ours.

If we are to understand public opinion, we must know something of how these opinions were formed

Of course larger surveys may be able to take into account some of the key socio-demographic factors that differentiate publics — gender, age, urban/rural residence, education level, etc. — but even these analyses are limited. First, unless the surveys are very large and therefore expensive, they can only get at a select few of these factors. Selecting the key factors, then, depends on the ingenuity and insight of the researcher in defining the important groupings of opinion. Second, and more important, these techniques are rarely able to tackle the more subtle bases for opinion formation. If we are to understand public opinion, we must know something of how these opinions were formed. Were they a result of

direct experience, opinion leaders, the media? In our field, for example, we will want to understand the views of those who have been victimized and those who have not, of those who have had contact with the criminal justice system and those who have not, of the informed and uninformed, etc. It is important for us to know, for example, whether concern about corrections is more common among the uninformed than among those who understand our correctional system. We would imagine a very different policy direction if we found that people became more satisfied with our programs as they learned more about them than if the reverse were the case or if we found that information made no difference at all.

In response, survey researchers are developing more varied, and sometimes more expensive, techniques to allow targeting of particular groups, and to provide some understanding of the various publics — opinion groupings — that may form around any issue. Some may complement their survey findings with more subjective qualitative (open-ended) research, focus groups and the like.² In any case, the value of the survey data is not simply a function of the sophistication of the methodology; it is dependent on the skill, knowledge and ingenuity of the researchers and particularly their understanding of the "structure of the Canadian public".

The Problem of Opinion

The second problem resides in the very idea of "opinion". Let's assume we have asked a number of respondents to give us their opinion on whether corrections programs are effective. What have we learned if the answer is "no, corrections is not effective"? Some may be telling

us that they are generally cynical or distrustful about government and government institutions. Their answer may reflect their attitudes toward government programs in general. Some may be saying little more than "I've never thought about this before, but now that you ask, I guess not." Such opinions are not likely strongly held or even very meaningful. Others may be saying that they don't believe anything can work to reform criminals. Their opinion, then, reflects their view of human nature. Yet others may be saying that their judgment, based on their knowledge, is that we're not as good as we should or could be. The possibilities are virtually limitless. Few surveys help us to know whether the so-called opinions we have tapped reflect enduring attitudes, firmly held beliefs, top-of-the-mind views, judgment based on experience and knowledge, or simply an answer created on the spot in order to fill out the questionnaire.

Perhaps most important, we must know whether these views are based on an accurate understanding of crime and corrections or are based on myths and misperceptions

For policy purposes, we must know whether, for example, some measured public lack of confidence in criminal justice is episodic and transitory, perhaps the result of a particular incident or series of incidents, or enduring and reflective of deeply held concerns. We must know what underlies this apparent lack of confidence. Is it

²Public Agenda Foundation (1987). *Crime and Punishment: The Public's View*, New York: Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

the perception that crime rates are growing, or that we are not doing enough, or that nothing works anyway? Is it the perception that traditional community values are crumbling and the sense of insecurity about what this means? Perhaps most important, we must know whether these views are based on an accurate understanding of crime and corrections or are based on myths and misperceptions.

Pollsters increasingly recognize the limits of one-time snapshots of opinion and argue that only through tracking public opinion over time can we know whether we are getting at views that are enduring and meaningful. In addition, some survey researchers have tried to link people's opinions on specific issues to their general views on the state and future of the nation, the government and their own lives. For policy purposes, it is also crucial to link opinions to level of knowledge and understanding of issues.

Opinion surveys are most useful when they provide information on our various publics; are at least to some extent open-ended; track people's opinions over time; link people's opinions on specific issues to their general views of the world; and link people's opinions to their level of knowledge and understanding of the issues

But the problems run deeper. You have probably all completed a questionnaire or responded to an interviewer on some issue or other. You were probably not always sure about your answers or

your commitment to them. No doubt you sometimes treated the exercise lightly, sometimes seriously. Perhaps you were not always truthful. While researchers have tried to develop technical solutions to these kinds of problems, they can never fully address the difficulty in determining just what we are measuring when we measure opinion. Psychoanalysts, psychologists and sociologists have developed countless techniques to try to get at people's subjective worlds, their views about themselves and others and their concerns and preferences. Social scientists like to argue about which techniques are most suitable but they do tend to agree that no technique allows us to know with confidence people's inner experiences.

Opinion surveys are most useful when they provide information on our various publics; are at least to some extent open-ended; track people's opinions over time; link people's opinions on specific issues to their general views of the world; and link people's opinions to their level of knowledge and understanding of the issues. Even when they are technically sound and methodologically sophisticated, the quality of survey data will always be limited by the researchers' skills and their understanding of the issues.

We often have difficulty in articulating our own views and opinions. We know how difficult it is to penetrate the inner experience of others. The results of the best public opinion surveys can never be more than an approximation.

Closing the gap between these approximations and "reality" generally requires more intensive, often multidisciplinary approaches. Researchers investigating public opinion on capital punishment know how important it can be to close the gap. In poll after poll, the majority of Canadians (between 70% and 80%) appear to support capital punishment in some case or

other. When they are given specific case scenarios and asked if they would like to see capital punishment imposed in these cases, we find far less support.

Many Canadians support capital punishment in the abstract but not when confronted with real people in real situations. Similarly, most Canadians support some version of community corrections — but not necessarily in their community.

Nevertheless, opinion surveys can help to ensure that the policy process does not lose touch with the public the policies aim to serve. They can be useful for getting some sense of public concerns and preferences. They can therefore help to shape public policy objectives and to track the effects of social action (or inaction). They may be less helpful in the really hard decisions. If, for example, public opinion challenges our policies or programs, should we change our thinking and develop new policy directions or should we inform and educate the public about what we do and what is possible? Opinion surveys help us to understand the environment in which policy development must occur — what is demanded or expected, what will be resisted or rejected. The surveys may help us to establish our policy and communications objectives and priorities but they are less useful for developing the specific policies and programs, the means, for achieving our objectives. ■

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In this issue of the Management Focus section, we are pleased to feature Mr. Andrew Graham, Deputy Commissioner of the Ontario region, who presents a discussion of the reality of the revitalization of the Public Service of Canada and the challenge of upcoming changes. These changes will invariably have an impact on the Correctional Service of Canada. Mr. Graham suggests that our Mission places us advantageously in a position to meet these challenges and that ongoing leadership and communication is necessary to sustain our efforts.

The Correctional Service of Canada has recognized in a very tangible way that staff are its most valuable resource. As Mr. Graham states, this is especially true during times of change. In support of Core Values 3 and 4, a Leadership and Change workshop was held in October 1989 in the Prairie Region on how to improve managers' ability to align organizational culture, build team-work and coach people toward higher performance. Mr. William Shrubole, Regional Administrator, Planning, Administration and Informatics, and Joanne Mysak, Regional Administrator, Communications, have provided us with highlights of the workshop.

The Rejuvenation of the Public Service and the Mission of the Correctional Service of Canada: A Time to Grow

by Andrew Graham

Across the Public Service of Canada, we are beginning to see the start of millennial thinking. As the year 2000 approaches, the feeling that fundamental changes are about to happen will probably grow. The challenge of such change is real. The need for revitalization of the Public Service is also real. The Correctional Service of Canada, as part of the Public Service of Canada, needs to focus not only on what we have already started but also on the challenges that remain. Our Mission positions us to meet these challenges and it should also enable us to contribute to the overall process within the Public Service.

In his recent talk to the Correctional Service of Canada's Senior Management Conference the Clerk of the Privy Council and head of the Public Service, Mr. Paul Tellier, made it very clear that he and senior department heads were focusing on the next decade and beyond. Canada as a whole is on the verge of major changes. While the Public Service will con-

tinue to operate in an environment of restraint, the mix of forces that affect its capacity to act will change dramatically. Issues of public policy are becoming increasingly globalized and integrated. While this is more evident on the economic side of public policy, questions of social and justice policy also take on greater complexity and inter-relatedness. There is an increasing challenge to authority and dogma. This challenge has a direct impact on service-oriented operations such as the Correctional Service of Canada. Any restraint is increasingly subject to challenge and scrutiny.

The face of the Public Service must reflect a changing social mix within the country. The pace of that change is also accelerating. The Public Service is not now representative of this country. Further, the Service is managed under legislation that is showing its age and is in need of reform.

In response to challenges such as this, the Clerk and senior deputy ministers have formed a

series of task forces to begin to come up with directions and solutions. This is no long-term exercise. Mr. Tellier will be supported by Mr. John Edwards, a career public servant and former Public Service Commissioner, who has been appointed Manager of Public Service 2000, the name for the initiative to renew the Public Service of Canada. The Clerk has stressed that action is necessary. Therefore, the deputies who are involved have to report to their colleagues early in 1990. While no ready solutions can be conjured up, this process is indeed driven by a sense of urgency, one that reflects our concern to get on with our Mission which is, after all, our strategic vision of the future.

An important part of this process is a paper by Professor Timothy W. Plumtree, entitled *Tomorrow's Public Service*. Professor Plumtree is the author of *Managing Beyond the Bottom Line*, a very useful analysis of public sector management. This paper was presented to the Assistant Deputy Minister Update in October 1989, at which time Mr. Tellier announced the beginning of the process of rejuvenation. Professor Plumtree's views, therefore, provide a useful intellectual backdrop for this process.

Professor Plumtree points out: "If the principles of liberal democracy are the bedrock of parliamentary government, the public service is the structural steel on this foundation that sustains the edifice of government. It is an integral part of the constitutional framework of this country. Ultimately, a vision for its future endorsed by the elected government could have a significant impact on how this country is administered, and even on how it is governed." This Service must underline the importance of the exercise, but also reinforce the power of having a strategic vision.

Professor Plumtree goes on

If the public service wants a better image, the ethic of 'service to the customer' needs to become a more deeply entrenched institutional norm

to outline the underlying trends that will affect the Public Service. These are similar to Mr. Tellier's views at the Senior Management Conference. From both sources, it is clear that there will be two underlying and contradictory trends for the Public Service in the next decades. The first one is for a far more flexible and responsive Service that can reduce costs, cut through procedural impediments to action and be much more client-centred. In Plumtree's words, "If the public service wants a better image, the ethic of 'service to the customer' needs to become a more deeply entrenched institutional norm." The other trend is toward what Plumtree calls "procedural rectitude". This is a recognition that the demands for fair and unbiased action by those affected by government activity will grow. Procedural safeguards that protect all parties reduce the speed with which agencies can respond. The tension between the forces is already evident within the Correctional Service of Canada and will grow.

Professor Plumtree concludes that this is an important time in the life of the Public Service. It has seen much change internally. Canadian society is changing. There will be more change once the impact of major economic and social policy legislation is felt. Therefore, it is legitimate to confront the issues of change. His conclusion is: "Organizations facing problems of this order tend to take refuge in dealing with the more tangible aspect of the institution: pay rates, corporate newsletters, human

resource planning systems and the like. Changing organizational culture to inculcate a different set of norms and values requires a broader and more subtle response. The difficulty in changing organizational culture lies not so much in knowing what to do as in accepting and acting on the consequences of a decision that change is required." Inherent in this process of change is that it must come from the top. It must be reinforced in a variety of ways: Top management must have a common vision; there must be substance, not optics; it takes time and there will be a healthy staff cynicism to address.

Professor Plumtree concludes that the implementation of change needs to be discussed more across the government. There is no question that this is necessary, but how?

Foremost is the challenge to shift our managerial emphasis from a process orientation to a results orientation

The Challenge to the Correctional Service of Canada

The Service is part of the Public Service and, as such, faces the same challenges that are felt generally. While there may be degrees of impact, our future too lies within the emerging mosaic of Canada. What do we do? How do we rise to these challenges?

In the true sense of rejuvenation, we have already begun. The Mission Statement and the process that brought us to its creation and, now, implementation, provide a strategic framework for rejuvenation. We are indeed fortunate to have moved as far as we have. It can, however, only be the beginning.

The Service needs to contribute to what is happening in the government in general. We tend to underestimate our experiences, especially as managers. We have unique correctional experiences that our counterparts in other departments are eager to hear. However, with respect to how we manage, the experience of the past year has been a singular one in government.

The danger always exists that, in sharing our experience, we will be too sanguine about how far we have come. The challenge to us is to understand that the vision we have articulated in the Mission is a necessary precursor for action.

The Mission, in the context of the emerging Public Service of Canada, poses some specific managerial challenges. Foremost is the challenge to shift our managerial emphasis from a process orientation to a results orientation. Our strategic objectives are clearly results statements. In an increasingly open organization, one that opens itself of volition and is opened by democratic processes, there is little patience with process responses to demands for results on the part of our clientele, our public and, ultimately, ourselves. Therefore, managers within the Service have to shift their cultural bias from process to results. This has a wide variety of implications for the Service. The fundamental one is that we must measure our success and failure in relation to what the Mission says we will do, contributing to the protection of society, by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens. The bottom line becomes clear: a different management focus, one that can mean change in resource distribution, orientation on what information is important, different workplans and a clarity of purpose. The implications of all of these merit consideration that this article cannot fully address.

Another fundamental shift that the challenge of rejuvenation

poses is that of communication and information flow. The future for the Service and the Public Service in general will mean the abandonment of a hierarchical communication flow. This will happen either by design or by force of the new technology that is emerging. A healthy organization will maintain a proper flow of managerial information up and down the system. In one such as ours, that flow is vital for all levels to exercise their accountabilities within the organization and outward.

We are therefore on the verge of an era when the flow of ideas, feelings and hard data about where and how we work will change

However, as we address that issue, the new technology should enable the Service to jump the queue in terms of obtaining information. The old, orderly and perhaps comfortable notion is that information flows through the chain of command in terms of expressing their feelings about the work that is being done. We are therefore on the verge of an era when the flow of ideas, feelings and hard data about where and how we work will change. As a Service with a long history of quasi-military chains of command that exactly parallel the lines of accountability, this will be a challenging process. The greatest difficulty will be to maintain the integrity of the lines of accountability within the organization while, at the same time, giving positive manifestation to the need for a totally different way of talking to each other. The tight control of information up and down must go. What one does with the information that flows in a less structured system demands a new discipline on the part of managers.

Our Mission was just a beginning. We need a continuous dialogue to sustain the effort

The challenge of rejuvenation within the Public Service is an exciting one. As this country changes in profound ways, the Public Service must keep pace. The leadership presently shown is a positive force for change. Each organization within the Public Service will have to face these changes within the context of its culture and history. It will also have to define its future. The Correctional Service of Canada already has a good foundation to begin addressing these issues. Indeed, we can contribute positively to that process. We have only begun to think through the heart of the meaning of those challenges. Our Mission was just a beginning. We need a continuous dialogue to sustain the effort. ■

Prairie Region Management Workshop: "Leadership and Change"

by William Shrubsole and Joanne Mysak

Teamwork, a central theme in the management philosophy of John Duggan, Deputy Commissioner, Prairies, was the impetus for a workshop held with Prairie Region senior managers in October 1989. The workshop was part of an initiative toward the attainment of the corporate objective to coordinate guest speakers, seminars and programs on topical management issues. Art McNeil, co-author of *The "I" of the Hurricane* and *The V.I.P. Strategy*, was invited to deliver a one-day session on management initiatives and forward thinking in the management and leadership of complex organizations. Prairie Region managers contributed to the discussion of innovative management techniques by providing examples of their daily environment and the corporate culture within which they manage. The workshop provided managers with insights into issues they will need to address in their management role.

Central to both of McNeil's books and his management seminars is the difference between management and leadership. Both are present and needed but they are not synonymous. This is best described in his first book,

The "I" of the Hurricane, as follows:

The two sides of the **figure** highlight the differences between management and leadership. The goal side provides direction; it, in turn, fosters a need to accomplish the goal. Success is measured by results. The process is rational and is executed at the conscious level. The more experienced you are, the more logical your thinking.

As our society developed its management side, we became more efficient. The price we paid, however, was a loss of the human magic that comes from the other side. We lost our ability to dream, to develop vivid mental pictures of different places to be or ways of being. The very term "to lead" implies having a different place to go or way of being. How can you be a leader if you've got no place to go? And yet, organizations are filled with managers who have no vision. They are trapped within the real or imagined barriers and constraints of the status quo.

Good management is vital to performance. Without it, opportunities would be recognized and talked about but never realized. It is not necessary to belittle the value

of technical managers and their analytical approach; clearly, what is needed is balance. And to regain balance, most executives must strengthen the leadership skills of their management teams. North American managers already "know" more than they "do". Visible leadership can encourage action and provide a spark that will ignite corporate energy.

Visible leadership can encourage action and provide a spark that will ignite corporate energy

Some of the other concepts that Art McNeil uses are very familiar — Reason for Being, Values, Mission, Key Success Factors, Vision of a Preferred Future and Objectives. In leadership terms, core values and vision are very central to who we are. Core values and vision provide a focus for corporate energy, a plan. Management shapes them and provides direction for the plan. As described in his second book, *The V.I.P. Strategy*,

Vision is compelling but not controlling. It shows you where you want to be, but not exactly how to get there. Vision is the power; planning is the tool. A plan shows you how to get so far, but then, to get further, you need another plan. It's been said, "The minute you lay down a plan it's out of date." A vision shows you where you're going — and why you are going there. Visions are flexible, dynamic, organic.

Vision: A Context for Goals

Vision provides the broader themes or directions for goals:

Finding the Right Balance

Goals	Visioning
Direction (focus) Need to Accomplish Measured by Results Rational Conscious Adult Maturity Linear	Energy (Power) Need to Move Towards Measured by Feelings Intuitive Below Conscious Childlike Creativity Holistic

Goals

- are based on a need to accomplish
- are measured by results
- are rational
- are conscious
- lead to adult maturity
- are linear, one-dimensional
- create focus
- motivate
- provide direction
- are based on past performance

Visions

- are based on a need to accomplish continually
- are measured by results and feelings
- are rational and intuitive
- are conscious and subconscious
- lead to adult maturity and child-like creativity
- are holistic and multi-dimensional
- create purpose and focus
- align
- create energy
- can establish new possibilities

In this seminar, McNeil takes his management/leadership model and applies it to real life with examples from both his experience and experience of the participants, in our case, corrections. The theoretical concepts become tools and skills that all participants can use in the future. Art McNeil uses both small and large groups, involving participants in the learning process. Sometimes forgotten, but remembered during the seminar, is the truism that adults learn best by experiencing the learning process.

Throughout the seminar, Art McNeil's approach gives the group opportunities to contribute their experiences and to examine concepts and issues as a collective body. With this methodology the seminar becomes a subtle but powerful team-building exercise. Participants do not simply absorb or not absorb massive amounts of theoretical knowledge. Some theory is learned, but, and perhaps more

importantly, skills and tools that can be used in everyday life are also acquired.

The environmental scanning seminar in the Prairie Region followed Art McNeil's day on leadership and change and was designed to incorporate teamwork from the senior managers. The seminar was introduced as a method of validating current corporate objectives and developing future scenarios which could impact upon the way the Correctional Service of Canada operates. Senior managers were asked to brainstorm ideas which would affect the Correctional Service of Canada and its management objectives in the future. The ideas from the session were grouped and managers divided into subgroups to discuss these ideas further. While in the subgroups, the managers discussed the ideas from the brainstorming session in view of their relevance to the Correctional Service of Canada and their impact on our operations. As a result of both the previous day's seminar and group consensus, the many discussions stayed at a regional or corporate level. Because many of the factors discussed may impinge on some individuals to a greater extent than others, there was no me-ism or isolationism. What clearly evolved was a very dramatic and exciting team approach to examining the possible future of corrections.

This concept is especially important in the Prairie Region, where because responsibility centres are geographically dispersed, meetings of senior managers are not as convenient as in regions where responsibility centres are more closely grouped. Teamwork philosophy is being maintained through Regional Management Committee meetings in which a portion of the meeting is devoted to the resolution of topical issues in the Region. It is also maintained through planned social activities to encourage ongoing interaction of the managers.

The seminar by Art McNeil

is only the first step in what is hoped to be an evolutionary process of management/leadership change in the Prairie Region. John Duggan has formalized his desire to prepare for the 1990s in his accountability contract with the Commissioner. The commitment he has made to his managers is "to design and implement a professional development plan for Senior Managers in the Prairie Region by providing them with opportunities to develop and utilize innovative management and leadership techniques." ■

Public Attitudes Toward the Criminal Justice System in Five Countries: Canada, United States, Holland, Australia, and Great Britain

In this issue, instead of profiling an international agency as we have done in the past, we have chosen to report on studies pertaining to public attitude in five different countries. We were initially interested in looking at public attitudes from an international perspective, hoping that we might be able to compare the studies. Finding the task onerous, owing to the various methodological approaches used by the researchers, we decided to summarize interesting research on public attitudes in different countries and to highlight the major findings without attempting a detailed comparative analysis.

For Australia, we picked an article by Walker, Collins and Wilson written for a book entitled *Public Attitudes to Sentencing*. The comprehensive study by Brillon, Guérin and Larmarche, "Attitudes of the Canadian Public Toward Crime Policies", was the Canadian research that we chose to profile. The England and Wales summary was based on a social issues survey conducted in 1986 by Walker, Hough and Lewis. The 1975 Dutch national survey on attitudes toward crime and crime control and the national victim surveys of 1982 and 1985 were selected for our discussion of Holland. A survey conducted in Maryland in 1980 by Gottfredson, Warner and Taylor serves as an example of research from the United States. All the sources were assembled in a recent book, *Public Attitudes to Sentencing: Surveys from Five Countries*, published in 1988 and edited by Nigel Walker and Mike Hough.

CANADA

A recent study by Yves Brillon and his colleagues at the Université de Montréal looked at general public attitudes of Canadians toward crime. The sample that the researchers studied was made up of a highly urbanized population from Montréal, Toronto and Winnipeg (N=614) and a rural population from the provinces of Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba (N=203), with a total sample size of 817 subjects.

In one set of questions, the respondents were asked to select what they considered to be the most important objective of sentencing. Thirty-one percent felt that the most important aim was to discourage people from committing crimes, 25% considered it to be protecting citizens against crime, and 19% saw punishment more as a measure of expiation imposed on the criminal. A smaller sample

(14.7%) considered the most important objective to be reintegration, 7% compensation for the harm done to victims and only 2% felt that sentencing enables society to take revenge on people who commit crimes.

A notable aspect of the research was that respondents were asked to specify the type of criminal they had in mind when giving their opinion on the severity of the sentences. Thirty-two percent answered that they thought of various forms of murder, 9.7% of rape and 22.1% of what they considered to be other forms of serious criminality, such as premeditated acts, sadistics acts, or theft with violence.

When queried about life sentences, 38% of the respondents answered (16.8% strongly and 21.1% somewhat) that it is inhuman to keep somebody incarcerated for 25 years. On the other hand, 58% of respondents (30.3% some-

what and 27.6% strongly) disagreed with this point of view, suggesting their tendency to consider prison as performing the double function of deterrence and the protection of society.

It is interesting to note that 72.1% of the sample were somewhat (35.5%) or strongly (36.6%) against improving the living conditions of prisoners. This finding is not surprising when we consider that approximately half of the respondents thought that correctional institutions are luxurious. Furthermore, 85% noted that the sentences pronounced by judges are not severe enough. The research concluded that there appears to be a relationship between punitiveness and the respondent's perception that the quality of the living conditions in prison is quite high. The authors consider that this also indicates that the public wants sentences and the prison environment both to be punitive and to act as a deterrent.

Most Canadians seem to determine the dangerousness of an offence by its type rather than the personality of the offender. For example, for an occasional petty theft, 5.4% of the respondents would have liked the offender to be sentenced to a prison term, 52.9% to a probation period and 40.6% considered a fine to be an appropriate penalty. Should an individual be a multirecidivist in committing petty thefts, the number of respondents who favoured prison increased to 19.5%, 47.1% preferred probation as a sanction and 32.2% preferred a fine. For an armed robbery, even if committed by a first-time offender, a greater number of respondents (74.6%) suggested that the judges should resort to imprisonment, 16.4% would accept probation and only 6.4% would consider fining the armed robber.

After the type of offence, premeditation was considered to be the most important factor in assessing the level of dangerousness (iden-

tified by 27.1% of the sample). Next in order of importance, 23.6% felt that the circumstances surrounding the perpetration of the crime is the most important criterion, 20.4% believed it to be the offender's motivation to commit the offence, 16% said that recidivism is the primary factor, 8.8% considered the personality and social standing of the offender, and 2.6% felt that the age and gender of the victim are the most important elements.

Socio-demographic analysis revealed that more punitive attitudes were associated with respondents who earned \$35,000 or more, who were proprietors, English-speaking, over 62 years of age, had less education and were rural residents.

In summary, the survey results illustrated that the public considers a variety of factors in their perceptions of the appropriateness of sanctions. Some offenders should be removed from society and some can be tolerated. Since most people had dangerous criminals in mind when they answered most questions, the authors conclude that the data gathered by the survey, as with many other public surveys, overestimates the punitiveness of the population.

UNITED STATES

A major survey was conducted recently by Stephen G. Gottfredson and Ralph B. Taylor of Temple University and Barbara D. Warner of the State University of New York to evaluate the perceived seriousness of different offences across various groups of individuals in the State of Maryland. Respondents included a group of 112 undergraduate students, 74 state troopers, 120 guards from Maryland correctional institutions, 87 parole and probation officers from several jurisdictions, 23 members of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and 41 defence and prosecuting attorneys. Seventy-four felons confined in Maryland correctional insti-

tutions also voluntarily participated in the study.

Large differences in the perceived seriousness of different offences were manifested across the groups. For example, inmates perceived property crimes, major drug offences, and offences involving personal injury to be much less serious than did other groups. Interestingly, the student sample appeared to perceive all types of offences as being much more serious than did any other group. The authors explain the finding by suggesting that individuals having some involvement with the criminal justice system deem offences to be less serious than do persons not having criminal justice involvement.

In a separate set of studies, the authors examined issues of consensus between those who set correctional policy and those affected by policies. In 1980, an interview schedule containing both structured and open-ended items was administered to 88 Maryland correctional policy makers. The sample was chosen to comprise major officials within the criminal justice system, including correctional administrators, planners, and other officials representing the state (N=16); correctional administrators, planners and other officials representing local jurisdictions (N=13); local elected officials (N=14); supervision officials (wardens, superintendents, N=15); law enforcement officials (N=1); and representatives of the legal system (N=11).

The interview covered issues related to the problems and assets of Maryland's correctional system; perceptions of the level of crisis in corrections and the reasons underlying it; short- and long-term solutions to prison crowding problems; attitudes toward proposed policy changes; assessment of the attitudes of others concerning proposed policy changes; and goals and philosophies for corrections.

In December 1980, a public-attitude survey, which included just

over 600 interviews, was conducted in 13 of 24 counties in Maryland. The same basic information on attitudes toward correctional goals and proposed policy changes was collected, but using a simpler format.

A considerable discrepancy was noted between public opinion of four major correctional goals and policy makers' perceptions of public opinion with respect to these same identified goals. While the policy makers felt that the public prefers the goal of incapacitation, this goal is in fact the second lowest priority in the view of the public. While policy makers felt that the public supports retributive punishment, this goal is actually assigned the lowest priority by the public sample.

Policy makers and the general public agree that simple retributive punishment is the least desirable goal for a correctional system, and both assign high priority to the goal of treatment and rehabilitation. Disagreement exists over the goals of incapacitation and deterrence. Further analysis of the policy makers' perceptions of public sentiment on certain key correctional issues revealed that policy makers generally misperceive public opinion. Of interest, while the opinions of the policy makers and the public were quite similar, policy makers overestimated by half the public will to abolish parole.

Respondents in the survey of the general public reported that the Maryland corrections system was doing poorly at meeting any of its proper goals. When asked about Maryland's attempts to implement these four goals, less than half the respondents felt that Maryland was doing a good job at implementation. Further, a very large proportion of the respondents (ranging from 79% for the goal of incapacitation to 70% for the goal of rehabilitation) reported that more should be done to meet these correctional goals.

It has often been assumed

that the general public is not only uninterested in correctional issues, but ignorant of these issues as well. The authors concluded from their survey that this is not the case, at least not in Maryland. They found that the majority of the sample were interested in corrections issues, that they were quite aware of the major problems facing the state corrections system, and that they followed the issues quite regularly. Finally, it was clear that the public held strong opinions concerning the proper goals of the correctional system. Contrary to general belief, they found that the general public were not especially punitive — rather, they stress more utilitarian goals, such as rehabilitation, deterrence and incapacitation.

HOLLAND

In 1975 the Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Justice in the Netherlands conducted a national survey on attitudes toward crime and crime control. Essential parts of this study were replicated as an annex to the Dutch national victim survey of 1982 and as a separate survey in 1985.

In each of the surveys, respondents were asked to evaluate three repressive methods of crime control (incarceration, heavier punishment and work camps) and three preventive methods (reform, social assistance and job programs for ex-convicts). Those who supported either type of method tended to be skeptical about the other. Positive opinions about repressive and preventive policies, however, are far from mutually exclusive. For instance, half of the respondents who were in favour of repressive measures were equally supportive of preventive measures. The data suggested that support for repressive options was somewhat greater in the more densely populated areas in Holland. Perhaps those who had been victims of

crime expressed a preference for preventive measures. Further analysis showed that the well-educated and younger segments of the population tended to favour repression less than others.

Support for repressive approaches to crime control did not increase at all over the ten-year period that was examined. Support for rehabilitative approaches declined, but a majority of the population still supported such measures.

The main objective of the 1985 Dutch national survey was to assess attitudes toward sentencing. Respondents were invited to suggest a sentence for seven typical cases to permit comparisons with the actual sentences for the same type of offences pronounced by courts in the Netherlands in 1983. Of the 17,000 respondents, 14% proposed an unconditional prison sentence of up to one year for bicycle theft, when the courts had sentenced 23% of the bicycle thieves to a sentence of up to four months. Sixty-five percent of the respondents proposed a prison term ranging between three months and five years for rape, while the courts imposed imprisonment for 71% of their rape cases, but for shorter terms of one to 18 months. Seventy-eight percent requested sentences between one and five years for attempted homicide. For the same type of offence, the courts sentenced 85% of their cases to prison for a maximum of 4.5 years.

In 1982, a victim survey of 10,000 respondents asked a series of questions regarding government expenditure on crime control. The same questions were asked in the 1985 Dutch national survey. In 1982, 54% of the sample said that they would welcome an increase in expenditure for crime control, while in 1985 the figure had increased to 77%, of which 32% said that they would even be prepared to pay more taxes for this purpose.

According to the authors, there appears to be continued support for a Dutch criminal policy that emphasizes both preventive and repressive measures. Those who feel threatened by crime favour extra government spending on crime control, regardless of their criminological position.

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Institute of Criminology commissioned a survey in 1986 in which a randomly selected cross-section of 2,551 members of the public were asked to determine an appropriate sentence for each of 13 types of offences. Respondents were shown a card listing the available forms of punishment, including the death penalty, no penalty, and a warning, and were asked to specify which one they felt was most appropriate to the offence under consideration. In addition, they were asked to rank the offences according to severity.

The average response showed broad agreement with typical court decisions, including a tendency to punish violent offenders with prison sentences and to punish property offenders with non-custodial penalties, particularly fines. There were significant areas where public opinion appeared to be at odds with court practice, sometimes being more punitive, sometimes less. For example, the public chose prison sanctions in most cases of wife battering, while the courts generally sentenced the offender to probation. On the other hand, the public was slightly less punitive than the courts for medicare fraud.

Life imprisonment was seen by 53% of the sample as appropriate for persons convicted of murder and 36% felt that it was an appropriate sentence for those convicted of heroin trafficking. Significantly, only one in four respondents called for the death penalty for murder and one in six for the drug

offender. The courts also favoured life imprisonment for murder, and it is not unknown for such a sentence to be imposed on major drug traffickers.

Although a \$1,000 social security offence is regarded in law as more serious than a \$5,000 medical or tax fraud, the public seems to be more lenient toward the social security offender. Almost two fifths of the sample would give a person who commits a social security fraud a non-custodial sentence, about the same proportion would hand down a fine, and over one fifth would allocate a community service order to the offender. In contrast, over half the sample would impose a fine on other fraud offenders. Social security offenders would receive higher fines than individuals who had committed tax fraud.

In the case of a \$5 shoplifting offence, 51% of the respondents were in favour of a police warning, with a wide range of other options supported by respondents.

Further analyses were conducted to determine which social and demographic variables were relevant to the determination of the respondents' various choice of sentences. The major findings were as follows.

Except for shoplifting, breaking and entering and armed robbery offences, the trend was for individuals with higher education to advocate much more lenient sentences than those with less formal education.

Males were more in favour of the death penalty than females, for heroin trafficking offences ($M = 20\%$, $F = 14\%$) and murder. Males were also more punitive than females for the offences of burglary and male homosexuality. On the other hand, females were slightly more punitive than males for the offences of factory pollution (28% of the women and 24% of the men felt that such an offence warrants

a prison term), child beating and employer negligence (for which imprisonment was advocated by 23% of the women and 18% of the men). The authors were surprised to find that males and females gave similar sentences for individuals convicted of spousal assault.

Respondents over 60 years of age (21%) were more likely than the respondents of 20 years and under (11%) to advocate the death penalty for heroin trafficking, and the older segment of the population was also more punitive than those under 20 with respect to social security fraud, wife beating, homosexuality and fraudulent offences.

The authors reported being surprised to have found that the diversity of the opinions regarding sentencing indicated a high level of sophistication in public attitudes about crime and punishment. The findings generally revealed that a significant number of Australians are willing to suggest non-custodial alternatives to imprisonment: fines, probation and community service orders.

ENGLAND AND WALES

How punitive is the English public? Feelings toward punishment as a form of retribution remained the same in two Gallup polls conducted in 1982 and 1986; support for rehabilitation decreased slightly, from 16% to 14%, while about the same proportion of the population (41% versus 38%) continued to believe in punishment as a deterrent. The responses could be expected to vary with the amount of information provided about the type and seriousness of the offence and the offender.

A survey tapping views about a number of social issues, designed by Nigel Walker of the University of Cambridge and Mike Hough and Helen Lewis of the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, was conducted in 1986

in 81 constituencies of England and Wales. The sample size was 1,249 adults drawn from the Electoral Registers, with approximately 21 names selected for each constituency. By an unforeseeable mischance, the fieldwork coincided with an unusual amount of media attention to sexual crimes. Two days before field work began, guidelines for tougher sentencing of rapists, issued by the Lord Chief Justice, generated considerable publicity. Furthermore, while the interviews were in progress, several sexual attacks were publicized.

Respondents were asked if they could remember any court cases about crimes they had read or heard prior to the survey. Those who said they could were asked about the details of the case, specifically the sentence. Slightly more than half (54%) could recall a recent case. The percentage was larger (61%) among those who had said that they discussed sentencing very or fairly often and lower (45%) among those who discussed it less often. Of those who could recall a recent case, only three quarters could recall its outcome. The researchers were surprised to find that the level of crime (31%) and the sentencing of criminals (26%) were the most frequently discussed topics among friends and family.

The respondents were also questioned about the main aims of the courts when sentencing someone for a crime like burglary or robbery. They were given the choice between deterrence, general or individual retribution, reparation and expression of public disapproval. Forty-four percent of the respondents felt that offenders should be sentenced to what they deserve, 33% felt that sentencing should act as a deterrent, and 6% felt that the main function of sentencing is to make the victim feel happier.

In questioning about the

alternative sanctions for different types of offences, respondents were given five choices, varying from "too soft" to "too tough" and "don't know". For the two crimes of violence, rape and mugging, 90% and 87% respectively thought the courts were too soft. In the case of burglary, 54% of the respondents thought the courts were too soft and in the case of shoplifting 17% thought that the courts were too soft and 15% felt they were too tough.

The respondents were questioned on specific sentences for particular offences. They were given six stories, which for most were presented in the form of a faked newspaper clipping. Each of the stories was presented with a sentence, which was by court standards very severe, mildly severe or lenient. Interestingly, the 1,215 respondents found 203 ways of ranking seven penalties. According to the authors, this was because of the respondents' differing evaluations of suspended sentences, probation and community service. The analysis also showed that while probation and the other non-custodial sentences used in the stories were generally perceived as more lenient than imprisonment in the eyes of sentencers and most respondents, not all regarded probation as more lenient than fines or community service.

These findings support the belief that the English public generally supports sentences for common crimes.

Conclusion

Contrary to popular belief among professionals in corrections, not only is the public knowledgeable about the criminal justice system, but there is also a high degree of openness about the issues that dominate this realm of human experience. Our profiles of studies from five countries suggest that people everywhere wish to contribute to the evolution of community

and institutional corrections. This news will be welcomed by correctional officials who are concerned with public education. One of the most salient notions that emerges from the international overview of research in this area is that the public is less punitive than expected and generally optimistic about offender rehabilitation. With regard to sentencing, the research uncovers a wide range of views and highlights the complexity of the public's role in the development of the various aspects of the criminal justice process. Perhaps most startling were the research findings demonstrating very clearly that correctional policy makers underestimate the progressive views current among the public. ■

Regional Research Activities

The following section highlights regional research and development activities in support of correctional programs and management throughout the Correctional Service of Canada (Corporate Objective #9). The regions have only recently taken on research initiatives in support of this Corporate Objective. However, Regional Research Committees have already been implemented and a number of Regions have been particularly active in encouraging new research. Below we provide a listing of Regional Research Committee Members and a summary of some of the research activities currently underway in the five regions.

ATLANTIC REGION

A considerable amount of interest and activity in research issues exists in the Atlantic Region. Representatives from the judicial, academic and private sectors will compose membership of the Committee.

New Research Initiatives

Several chaplains from the region have already submitted research topics to be considered by the Committee. Reverend R. Fawkes is presently studying the use of guided imagery on Scripture as a pastoral care modality in grief counselling of sex offenders.

Father F. Cudjoe has proposed research on multicultural counselling in the institutional environment. Our Mission commits us to respond to the cultural differences of individual offenders. Father Cudjoe's proposed research will assist us in understanding offenders from different cultural backgrounds.

The Reverend K. Graham has already completed a study into an investigation of personality characteristics of sex offenders.

QUEBEC REGION

In addition to establishing a regional research committee and stimulating various research initiatives, the Quebec Region conducted a minisurvey of managers on the subjects they would like to see addressed in FORUM ON CORRECTIONS RESEARCH.

Research Committee Members

Marc-André Lafleur, Chairperson
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Planning and Management Service

Jacques Dyotte
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Operations

Michel Gilbert
Warden
Drummond Institution

Gilles Thibault
District Director
Eastern and Western District

Normand Granger
Regional Manager
Community and Institutional
Operations

Thérèse Gascon
Acting Regional Manager
Planning, Administration and
Computer Operations

New Research Initiatives Client Profile of Community Residential Centres

Martin Vaclair, a master's student in Criminology at the Université de Montréal, is assembling a profile of the clients referred to the Quebec Region's Community Residential Centres. It is mainly a descriptive study, with a quantitative approach, complemented by semidirective interviews. The research began in September 1989, and the report is scheduled to be submitted in May 1990.

Study of the Validity and Reliability of Test for Case Management Strategy

Carl Dessureault, a master's student in Criminology at the Université de Montréal and a WP-03 employee in the Trois-Rivières district, is currently exploring the validity and reliability of case management strategies. The research began in March 1989, and no submission date has yet been scheduled.

Three other research projects currently in progress were initiated by University or Research Centre teams:

Mental Ability

In October, Dr. Jean-Marc Chevrier, Director General of Montréal's Institut de recherche psychologique inc., began administering individual mental ability tests to fifteen inmates at the Federal Training Centre and Leclerc Institution.

Longitudinal Study of Adolescents to Trace the Development of Criminal Behaviour

Several years ago, Université de Montréal professors Marc Leblanc and Marcel Fréchette launched a longitudinal study to explore the development of criminal activity and identify factors that sustain it at different ages. Hundreds of adolescents in regular schools and wards of the youth court were evaluated at three different stages in the past. Their current average age is 29. The main objective of reviving the project is to begin a longitudinal observation of the children for the purpose of studying the intergenerational recurrence of adjustment failure. Of the 894 subjects still living, just under a hundred are currently serving two-year sentences in correctional facilities. The research began in the spring of 1989 and is to extend over several months.

Testing of Drug Addiction Diagnostic Tool

In February 1989, the Correctional

Service of Canada, Quebec Region, granted a research contract to the Centre de Criminologie Comparée of the Université de Montréal (Dr. Serge Brochu) to develop a method for diagnosing drug addicts and to train the case management officers of the Regional Reception Centre in its use. The instrument has now been developed, and institutional case management officers have received training. This diagnostic tool is currently being tested by comparing its results with the profile obtained from psychological testing at the Regional Reception Centre (depression level, psychopathy, aggressiveness, anxiety, etc.) and the socio-demographic data available on the inmate. This investigation was carried out on a total of 200 inmates during the summer of 1989. The researcher is now analysing and interpreting the results. The report should be submitted in a few weeks.

ONTARIO REGION

The Ontario Region Research Committee has met on two occasions. It first met to review the documentation prepared by the Correctional Service of Canada Research Branch, National Headquarters, on the role and function of the Research Committee. The second meeting was convened to review research proposals.

The Ontario Region is particularly advantaged in the sense that it has a large university community with a high level of interest in research. The Research Committee's focus will obviously be on research undertaken by Queen's University in both the psychological and psychiatric fields. Currently, Dr. Edward Zamble, of the Queen's University Psychology Department, has several initiatives under way to do longitudinal studies of the offender population in the Ontario Region.

The Region is also currently attempting to set up a chair in forensic psychiatry at Queen's

University in conjunction with the Ontario Psychiatric Hospital.

Research Committee Members

G. Mills
Associate Warden
Regional Treatment Centre

D. Pyke
Warden
Millhaven Institution

F. Sisson
Warden
Pittsburgh Institution

J.G. Leger
Regional Administrator
Health Care Services
Regional Headquarters (Ontario)

H. McLean
Psychologist
Prison for Women

L. Stebbins
Warden
Pittsburgh Institution

Dr. E. Zamble
Psychologist
Queen's University

K. Payne
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Planning & Management Services
Regional Headquarters (Ontario)

New Research Initiatives

The following research projects have been initiated by Ralph Serin, Psychologist at Joyceville Institution, as part of a research plan that was submitted and approved for funding by the Correctional Service of Canada, Research Branch, National Headquarters. The studies are particularly noteworthy in that they involve collaboration with staff at both the Regional Treatment Centre in Kingston and the Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies).

Psychopathy and Release Outcome

This project involves the follow-up of 93 inmates released over the past five years. In an earlier study, psychopathy ratings and actuarial risk assessment scores were obtained. The predictive efficiency of these measures will be compared.

Retrospective Psychopathy Ratings

As a preliminary step in a collaborative research effort between the Regional Treatment Centre (Ontario) and the Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies), two research assistants will rate psychopathy through a review of National Parole Board files. Their ratings will be compared to existing psychopathy ratings obtained from interviews and files. If the two ratings coincide, the criteria used in existing psychopathy ratings will be used to rate sex offenders from each region for whom there is important information that could indicate psychopathy (e.g., phallogometric data).

Clinical Versus Research Ratings of Psychopathy

This project compares psychopathy ratings from two research samples and one clinical sample. Item-total correlations, internal consistency, factor solutions, and correlations between factors will be compared for each sample. This research addresses the issue of operationalizing psychopathy assessments for clinical purposes.

A Triage Model for Psychological Referrals for Parole Assessments

This project investigates the validity of a three-tier model that allocates psychological resources according to the needs of a particular case. More serious cases would receive a more comprehensive assessment. The intent is to provide more prescriptive assessments. The preliminary task will investigate the reliability and validity of the model.

PRAIRIE REGION

In addition to establishing a Regional Research Committee, the Prairie Region held a Management Workshop in Banff, Alberta, on October 3-6, 1989. This workshop, "Leadership and Change — Blueprint for the 1990s", included a one-day session to consider how successful managers have improved their ability to align organizational culture, build powerful teams and coach people toward higher performance. Other sessions included scanning exercises, and the identification of needs for future sessions, their theme and format. The Management Focus section of this issue of FORUM elaborates on the content of this workshop.

A regional information package, describing the region's research activities has been developed for distribution, in December 1989, to the operational units and network agencies.

The Regional Psychiatric Centre (Prairies) has developed a comprehensive research plan with 32 proposed studies in the areas of sexual offenders, violence, criminal psychopathy, native issues, drug/alcohol abuse, and general forensic issues.

The Region will also be developing a Regional Research Plan, which will include proposals submitted by regional and field staff.

Research Committee Members

W. Paul Oleniuk, Chairman
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Planning and Management Services

John Brennan
Dean of Commerce
University of Saskatchewan

Art Gordon
Chief of Psychology and Research
Regional Psychiatric Centre

Tim Fullerton
Warden, Drumheller Institution

Jeff Christian
District Director
Alberta/Northwest Territories

Joanne Severn
Regional Planning and Analysis
Officer

Fred Trebilcock
Regional Coordinator
Resource Analysis

New Research Initiatives

Aggression Against Women by Men as Manifested in Spousal Assault

A University of Regina graduate student received Regional Research Committee approval for his master's thesis research project. The project will examine personality and attitudinal differences and similarities between men who commit sexual or spousal assault and men who have not been identified as aggressive offenders against women, and the similarities and differences between men convicted of sexual assault and men who admit to assaulting their spouses. The researcher will attempt to identify a pattern of variables, which may be used to predict offenders and offence preferences.

Why Conditionally Released Offenders Go UAL (Unlawfully at Large)

The staff of the Native Counselling Services of Alberta (NCSA), which has been operating Grierson Centre halfway house in Edmonton since April 1988, has become concerned with the number of residents being declared Unlawfully at Large. The NCSA Research Department, with assistance from the Correctional Service of Canada, has begun analysing federal and provincial resident information and interview and questionnaire data to determine major factors contributing to residents going Unlawfully at Large.

The Native Counselling Services hopes study results will enable them to modify policies and procedures to combat the problem.

PACIFIC REGION

The Regional Research Committee anticipates meeting on a monthly basis, with the timing of meetings to coincide with the availability or need to review research proposals.

Research Committee Members

R.T. Lusk, Chairman
Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Planning and Management Services

R. Brock
Warden, Mission Institution

P. Jacks
District Director, Abbotsford Parole

R. Wiebe
Deputy Warden, Matsqui Institution

M. Schimpf
Chief, Evaluation and Research
Regional Psychiatric Centre

C. Smiley
Director, Psycho-Social Services
Regional Psychiatric Centre

C. MacInnes
Assistant Regional Administrator
Community and Institutional
Management
Regional Headquarters

B. Lambert
Project Manager
Planning, Administration and
Informatics
Regional Headquarters

J. Konrad
Project Director
Programs Task Force
Regional Headquarters

J. Gingras, Recorder
Assistant to Assistant Deputy
Commissioner
Planning and Management Services

New Research Initiatives

Family Violence

The Pacific Region has undertaken to develop a high-quality assessment instrument, which will enable staff throughout the Correctional Service of Canada to identify offenders who have the potential to benefit from family violence interventions such as family life enhancement groups.

The Correctional Service recognizes that the establishment and maintenance of positive community and family relationships will normally assist offenders with their reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens.

Although many offenders could benefit from participation in therapy groups dealing directly with family violence, there may be limited willingness to participate in a confrontational group aimed at assaultive spouses. However, if the issue is approached from a less threatening perspective, such as the enhancement of family life, offenders may be more interested in participating. ■

Adult Post Secondary Education in Secure Federal Correctional Institutions in British Columbia: A Comparative Survey of Prisoner-Students' Perceptions. Karen Almond, graduate student, School of Criminology, Simon Fraser University. Dr. John Ekstedt, Faculty Advisor.

Pedophile Retrospective Accounts of their Acts and Subsequent Responses to their Events. Dr. John Charles Yuille, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia.

Construct Validation of Psychopathy. Dr Robert Hare, Department of Psychology, University of British Columbia.

B.P.I. Validation Study (proposed).
Art Lindblad, Ph.D, Intern,
Regional Psychiatric Centre
(Pacific).

This section of the magazine will be devoted in the future to short summaries of selected conferences, seminars, or workshops that are attended by Correctional Service of Canada staff in Canada or abroad. Some effort is needed, on the part of all staff, if we are to take seriously the importance of sharing ideas, knowledge, values and experience, nationally and internationally. We ask you to join in that effort and contribute your reflections and observations when you attend significant events as representatives of the Correctional Service of Canada.

Summer 1989

Italian Corrections: A Brief Profile

Brian Mainwaring, a staff member of the Correctional Service of Canada, visited two Italian prisons while on vacation during the summer of 1989. The following is a brief report on some of his observations.

Solliciano prison in Florence was built in 1883 and houses 750. The army is responsible for the security of the institution. There are separate sections for those awaiting trial, those awaiting sentence, and those serving their sentences, and an area for about 150 women. Three distinct types of protective custody are managed on different ranges. Program, activity and visiting areas are small by Canadian standards. The design of the prison is not conducive to group movement, having long, narrow corridors and stairs, and blind corners. There are no armed control posts. An option for military conscripts is to serve their period of national service as prison guards. Of the 800 staff, 600 are military. There are four "educatori" who do the equivalent of case management work.

When Italy was unified in the 1860s, much church land was confiscated by the state. An original Donatello hangs on the wall of the

Warden's office in Solliciano, close to a fifteenth-century baptismal font. Both were removed from the church buildings. Santo Stefano prison in San Gimignano originated as a medieval convent but now houses 270 inmates in well-kept, attractive surroundings. Through job sharing, most of the inmates are able to work. About thirty inmates were seen using the outdoor recreation area. Inmate movement inside the institution seemed relatively free. Inmates eat in their cells, which are designed for two to five people. They receive a daily half-litre ration of wine with their meals. Armed soldiers were posted on the wall that forms part of the ancient battlements surrounding the city.

There are temporary absence and parole programs, although these are completed without benefit of community supervision.

August 7-10, 1989

North American Conference on Employee Assistance Programs New York, New York

The North American Conference on Employee Assistance Programs was organized to provide information on the development and implementation of Employee Assistance Programs. Of particular interest to the Correctional Service of Canada was the session "Law Enforcement and Correctional Departments' Response to Stress at the Worksite", which outlined the development of a planned strategy, a Comprehensive Critical Incident Response, to assist staff, support-workers and family members affected by violence, hostage takings, death or injury of a fellow officer or an inmate, or bizarre criminal cases.

The elements of the Comprehensive Critical Incident Response program are training programs for staff, peer support team training, on-site crisis intervention and critical stress debriefings, and follow-up to help manage post-

incident reactions.

Research has indicated that while 86% of those involved in critical incidents suffer some form of reaction and an additional 3-5% develop chronic reactions, pre-crisis response plans appear to offset the effects of post-incident reactions.

September 11-13, 1989

"STIGMA 89" — International Halfway House Sixth International Conference

London, England

The "STIGMA 89" Conference was co-sponsored by the International Halfway House Association (IHHA) and the Inner London Probation Service. The IHHA is an international organization for public and private bodies providing residential and day-care programs for the socially disadvantaged. The conference was attended by delegates representing thirteen countries. Mr. Louis Zeitoun attended the conference and prepared an extensive report for the Correctional Service of Canada.

The goal of the conference was promotion of the international exchange of ideas, knowledge, practices and philosophies of community-based residential treatment programs for offenders and the socially stigmatized.

The Honourable John Patten, Minister of State, Home Office, indicated that England has implemented a government strategy to move away from incarceration. A network of bail hostels provided by the private sector has been established, along with after-care hostels operated by volunteer organizations and funded by the government through a system of grants. Electronic monitoring has been introduced recently as part of a research study.

The Honourable Richard Patten, Ontario Minister of Correctional Services, affirmed the commitment of his government to move away from incarceration and toward community-based programs.

Don Evans, President of the American Probation and Parole Association, highlighted several emerging major trends in criminal justice: a changing need for social services in prisons with the new influx of inmates with AIDS and drug problems; increasing interaction among government departments and volunteer agencies; the continued distortion of crime by the media; changing offender profiles — the prospect of older inmates, more females, fewer street criminals but more white-collar criminals; a shift in correctional philosophy to an eventual rebirth of rehabilitation; the mirroring of institutional programming by community corrections; and a need to enunciate core values and to learn how to manage value differences.

Canada will host the next conference, scheduled for 1991 in Montreal.

September 19-21, 1989

Criminal Justice Statistics Association

1989 ANNUAL CONFERENCE — "Allocating Resources and Determining Impact"

Key West, Florida

This conference provided an opportunity to discuss methods of tracking the resource effects of criminality as individuals are processed through the judicial system, from commission of offence to release from prison.

Overcrowding in correctional institutions in the United States has occurred without an increase in crime rates. There has been an increase in resources available for the apprehension and conviction of criminals without a corresponding increase for prisons. Also, poor assessment of offender risk has led to sentences that are either too severe or too lenient. Two to three hundred jails are now under court decree (i.e., at maximum capacity and not admitting prisoners until space becomes avail-

able). The danger in this situation is the possibility of violence in the institutions and further polarization of sentences.

The concern has been raised within the correctional community that increased criminality may result from a degradation of morals and quality of life in overcrowded correctional institutions. However, methods and programs designed to reduce overcrowding and to redirect resources are in conflict with public pressure for increased severity in sentencing.

The technical aspect of the meetings provided discussion on the statistical modelling of prison populations for forecasting and determining inmate profiles.

Dr. Allen Beck, of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, spoke about his research into recidivism. He has found that the principal indicators are age, prior arrest, and ethnic background. There was no correlation between the amount of time served and the propensity to recidivate. Dr. Beck also found that, with the exception of robbery, property crimes are increasing at a greater rate than violent crimes.

The next Criminal Justice Statistics Association annual conference will be held in Denver in 1990.

September 25-28, 1989

Second International Conference on Prison Education

Oxford University, United Kingdom

The theme of the Second International Conference on Prison Education was "International Perspectives on Correctional Education". The place of correctional education among other programming activities and its contribution to various mission statements of correctional jurisdictions were the issues upon which conference sessions focused. The Correctional Service of Canada was represented at the conference by Mr. Earl Fox, Director, Education and Personal Development.

In the United States, mandatory adult basic education in federal institutions has been successfully introduced and has been expanded to require inmates to complete high school before they can qualify for the top inmate jobs (such as industries). Other programs, such as parenting programs, drug education, and coping skills programs, may be made mandatory in the early 1990s.

It was noted that very few formal evaluations have been conducted to determine the value of correctional education. Generally, evaluation attempts have been sporadic and of questionable quality and have tended to focus on enrollments, withdrawals, successes and student gain.

It became obvious during a meeting with representatives of other correctional jurisdictions that the Correctional Service of Canada is an extremely well resourced agency. With the resources available and guided by the Mission, the Correctional Service of Canada has the opportunity to serve as a model for corrections. Evaluation and research play a lead role in establishing the Correctional Service of Canada's approaches as effective programs for preparing inmates to become law-abiding citizens.

As 1990 has been designated the International Literacy Year by the United Nations, a number of member states are planning conferences to highlight the significance of literacy and education for offenders. Simon Fraser University will be sponsoring the 45th International Conference of the Correctional Education Association, July 8-11, 1990, in Vancouver, British Columbia. The Correctional Service of Canada will be hosting the International Conference on Literacy and Corrections. The theme of the conference is "Freedom to Read". This event will be held October 14-17, 1990, in Ottawa, Ontario. ■

