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# Research Reports

# Correctional Officer Recruits and the Prison Environment : A Research Framework

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Philippe Bensimon
Criminologist, Ph.D.
Research Branch
Correctional Service of Canada

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## Acknowledgements

If it were not for the hard work of my colleague, Claude Tellier, I would not be in a position to emphasize the broad scope of this study, its innovative vision and the impact it will have as a precursor on parallel research projects in behavioural and organizational psychology in a prison environment. The results, regardless of changes to its initial structure or the temporary nine-month shutdown for administrative reasons unrelated to this research, are due to her. Some of her earlier work also served as the foundation for the implementation of the *Correctional Training Program* in 1997 (Tellier et al., 2001; Tellier & Serin, 2001) and the profile for new recruits hired after September 1998 (Dowden & Tellier, 2001).

## Executive Summary

In the field of social sciences, one rarely explores the paths less travelled by others. As an epistemological principle, most research relies on one or more originating ideas that create the subject's continuity and thus its evolution. This may mean, however, that some of the foundations of the thought will sooner or later be refuted or even contradicted. On the topic of professionalization, however, it is safe to say that no work context today is spared from organizational re-engineering, and the duration and specific character of employability in every sphere of public and private activity, and the case of interest to us here, the work environment of correctional officers, is no exception.

Differences between federal and provincial jurisdictions, American, Canadian and European publications, developments in research that make many studies obsolete, fictionalized, ideological, journalistic literature, and official publications of an instrumental, symbolic or conceptual nature. There has been a great deal of writing to date on the world of prisons, but no one has really examined what happens to the recruit in the institutional setting at the national level using an agreed upon timetable over a longitudinal period. This long-term observation and investigation starts on the first day the recruit is selected for professional training and follows them step by step, first as they make their initial adjustment to the group and, then, as they comes in direct contact with the institutional reality. It involves the eternal struggle between theory and execution that exists in every occupation.

The long-term observation and investigation is accomplished through the administration of six questionnaires beginning on the first day the recruit begins their training at the staff college for their region and after assignment to a prison institution during one year.

Once the research has been completed, focus groups consisting of volunteer recruits representing each of the five regions will be brought together to talk about their experiences and their adaptation to the prison environment.

This study is based, then, on ground-breaking, large-scale research, which is a first in this corrections related field. Administration of the questionnaires, which began on September 23, 2002, the date when the first questionnaire was presented following the timetable for the various *Correctional Training Programs*, continued until July 14, 2003 (the date when the last CTP is scheduled) to close the sample. The research has been conducted in all of Canada's five administrative regions: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and Pacific.

Its purpose? To measure, evaluate and understand the adaptation made by recruits to their respective work environments so that the necessary recommendations can be formulated for the training colleges and the institutions. The recommendations will focus on recruitment in the broadest sense of the term and on the training and the various characteristics of the beginnings of all careers.

Why is it a first? Quite simply because the administration of the questionnaires is divided into six phases. Twenty-six developmental themes are examined, including thirteen variables in a total 1,126 questions that cover some CTP modules and a review of the literature on various themes exploring demographic data such as age, social status and the advantages and disadvantages of choosing this profession or lifestyle. Then, it takes a closer look at the acquisition and maintenance of values and attitudes, group cohesion, the issue of inmate rehabilitation, job stress, motivation, supervisory support, empathy or the respondent's potential for helping relationships, to give a number of examples.

In closing this summary, it should be emphasized that throughout the entire process, participation was voluntary and could be terminated whenever the person wished and participant confidentiality was assured.

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## Introduction

Jailers, guards, correctional officers, peace officers in a correctional setting, and, for others: screws, turnkeys, badges – in French: *porte-clefs, gaffes, matons, argousins, gardes-chiourmes* – these words

and their pejorative connotations all have their geographies, their histories in time and are preserved in the public imagination, as in the case of the police, even though no one really knows very much about their origins nor why this is so. While the obsolete nomenclature no longer reflects current realities, it is traditional. Since the roles are no longer what they had been for over a century and a half, only the transition periods related to the generations still remind us here and there of the past. Besides, the prison vocabulary of the past is not as easily erased as a chalkboard.

A closed world, a fascinating world, a world of a thousand and one stories supplying our mental stock of images, and the last bastion of totalitarianism with its barracks, prison abounds in written works of every possible genre, yet few such works are actually devoted to the people who physically hold the keys. However, there is much to be said about these individuals who are overlooked in prison literature and by extension in the movies. A prison guard seldom has the good role. The image that emerges of their place and their functions in a society which finds it easy to cry for vengeance but hard to be the executioner is full of paradox. Transference, guilt about holding people in confinement, social altruism in the form of counter reactions or misconceptions, guards embody the material aspect of sentencing and its grasp on the ephemeral. Freedom.

The task here is not to present the history of prisons, the forms they have taken, the news items that regularly feed the media, their pathogenic survival or even their re-engineering by the society that manages them, because many things have been said and said again from the most varied angles and diverse motives. It is a question of examining the juxtaposition of an occupation that goes unnoticed with the issue of identity lying somewhere between recognition and belonging, the protection of the public and the rehabilitation of inmates. The other aspect of the duties is to protect themself, in a situation of forced coexistence, from the impact of the misery and human suffering whose latent and pervasive effects are present in all three work shifts. Days, evenings, nights, seven days out seven, with a continuous clientele that is always new and never voluntary.

Little is known about the correctional officer, they are the person who is entrusted with a citizen who has committed an unlawful act and been convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment under the law. They keep the time for a person who is held against their will because they have broken the social contract. Persons who have been convicted for their acts along with a host of other persons convicted for their acts, in a haphazard universe that can be dangerous and rather unrewarding if it is compared to the situation of nursing staff and patients. Handling very routine tasks, plagued by harassment and insults within an enclosed space that is supposed to be ever more transparent, it is inevitable that guards will experience clashes, antagonisms, fights, rivalry, rifts and ambivalence if only because of the symbolism of the fences, walls, uniforms, weapons, virtual schedule and the prohibition against freedom of movement, which are a constant reminder of the obligations of some and hence the reality of others.

Isolated from the rest of society by walls or a well-delineated boundary that frames the scope of their activities, it is difficult for them to legitimize or assert their identity and claim equality with their fellow police officers. More than any other, they live in permanent contact with crime in all its aspects, paced out year by year over a few hundred square metres.

The protection of the public through rehabilitation has an extremely long history that has not always been reflected in the ideology conveyed by the official line, which often runs ahead of the slow moving reality. And, besides, cog in the machinery of justice is also a person who lives in prison, a fact that is too often forgotten.

Our collective images of the prison world are based on two often divisive realities. On the one hand, there is the static role of the correctional officer some of whose most ordinary tasks persist over time: official counts repeated many times each day, searches, records of entrances and exits, meals, mail,

vocational and recreational activities, escorts, guarding as it was done in the last century. On the other hand, there is the human service orientation, the helping relationship, follow-up, formal and informal listening, combining security concerns and the extended hand inviting an inmate to take a chair. The problems are contrasting and not necessarily trivial. All this exists with the amount of tolerance and permissiveness needed to get along in what we will designate as a continuing power relationship. Orientation of knowledge, its paradigms and programs lead the power relationship in the direction of continual evolution and continuous debate.

Security, the maintenance of order, helping relationships, striking a balance between the enforcement of rules to maintain an artificial authority and the imposition, to some extent, of court-ordered measures – just who are these thousands men and women who have no power to release their charges, whose primary mandate is in fact to guard the inmates by constraint and deterrence in compliance with the sentence imposed in a given place? Where do they come from and how – yes, how? – does a person become a prison guard? To be sure, some will say, no one asks to be a prison guard. Holding one's neighbour captive in the name of the law is not one of the more customary activities or deeper aspirations of a human being. As a corollary, it is not uncommon for this job to be passed on from parent to son or daughter, as in the case of many doctors, lawyers, and movie actors, in keeping with the imitation principle cherished by Gabriel Tarde (1890). Make no mistake, the desirability and security of a job when unemployment is the only option comes from an extrinsic kind of aspiration, but why do people become plumbers, bank employees, bus drivers, gynecologists or physicists?

For correctional officers, the rules and regulations establish a structured framework in an artificial world; they serve to share the responsibilities that are held together by an ideology, which take the form of a philosophical discourse in which the ideas are logically arranged and human, moral, economic and political values converge towards a joint goal: the security of the public through rehabilitation of the offender. You also cannot ask an inmate to be joyful, happy and satisfied with their lot and possess the serenity to live behind bars in order to put an end to all their woes… Viewed in this way, ideology is an element that is essential to understanding that which is, an image that is not always easy to make concrete in a situation where routine often compensates for more or less palpable realities. However, the correctional officer's view of inmates cannot be solely conditioned by the structural and ideological framework in which they are placed. The reaction of a person who is confined contains its antitheses and, besides, there are some contradictions in requiring a correctional officer to watch, control, re-educate, communicate and socialize when they will not necessarily see the result in the short, medium or long term.

The sanction imposed by the law is one thing, its application is another. A judge never lives with a convicted person, does not feel their suffering, their anger or their resignation. But the guard does. Day after day, face to face, year by year and probably for longer than most of the inmates with whom they will have deal in their career. This requires from them an unusual adaptation to a reality that has become almost abstract and routine in appearance because a human being cannot remain constantly on the alert and at the same time be in a desperate position towards others, especially when those others are locked up against their will. The person learns, then, using their strengths and their weaknesses, to come to terms with their environment.

A sense of responsibility and the necessity of communicating, a correctional officer's work requires motivation, discipline and the ability to assess human behaviour rapidly in a given context.

This is what we will try to show in this first report, with the support of over 350 bibliographical references, remembering that the quest for knowledge in criminology, organizational and criminal psychology must never lead to the creation of instruments for social control but must instead serve science and the betterment of humanity.

# Methodology

Viewed as a form of mathematical modelling, this study of recruits' adaptation to correctional officer work required at the outset a thorough knowledge of the field; a very rigorous methodology allied with theoretical principles validated by 19 scales and codified measuring instruments whose psychometric features, which are presented in each case, referred to earlier, validated studies, including six new scales. The six new scales were pertinent to the research being conducted by the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) for our specific needs (Tellier & Serin, ibid).

By codification we mean an exhaustive inventory of data, relevance, systemic analyses, interpretations and classifications. The use of rating scales is required to avoid the bias resulting from self-disclosure and in order to characterize the various underlying variables in each of the themes presented here.

Four questions underlie the general responses or generalizations arising from conceptualization proper to the individual. Each of these responses, including their linguistic nuances, have been textually classified by keyword and in terms of the vocabulary used by the respondent.

To limit duplication and overlap for some questions, we chose questionnaires adapted to Canadian realities. A complete study of new recruits' attitudinal changes before and after their training and then as they adapted to their institution, that is, with verbs changing from anticipation to distance in time, required an in-depth analysis of the variables underlying their attitudinal and behavioural adaptation. It has also been important to avoid going off track by constructing a group of responses based solely on quantitative results and also not to get into an assembly-line production of data. The validity of a model depends far more on the consistency of the linkages, the soundness of a hypothesis and its specific nature than it does on piling up questionnaires and overloading the intent of the analysis.

Moreover, the sample involved a degree of randomness related to the respondent's desire or lack of desire to remain with the study over a 15-month period. The randomness become more evident as time passed, but could be felt more definitely beginning with the third month at the institution since the split occurs between the times when the person shares their aspirations (*expectation phase*); what they learns as they begin the training process (*learning phase*); and, lastly, when their classroom learning and the application of that knowledge in the field is reconfigured (*findings phase*). We will also pay special attention to those who abandon the training for personal reasons or because of failure.

The significance of taking the sample from a pool of all new recruits in the five regions was based on 249 participants; the kind of relationships the group has maintained from the outset at the staff college and then later with the prison population and on the three shifts; the impact and the many repercussions of the duality of coming to terms with institutional security and the helping relationship; the specific nature of the correctional officer's work and the various aspects of working in a closed environment; the restrictive interactions between a formal task description and the many unknowns; environmental and daily visibility; the confrontation between what the individual has learned and the reality and, lastly, public recognition for a correctional officer's work compared to other sectors in the criminal justice field, all while observing the cultural and ethnic characteristics of each region. We are aware, however, that the questionnaire, which could be completed in whatever timeframe the individuals chose and where and when they chose, does not reflect certain sensory variables such as non-verbal body language. The words supplement our understanding, which is intended to be as comprehensive as possible as is the case for interviews.

As another point of departure for our methodology and the achievement of optimal objectivation, one of our primary concerns was not to neglect speculation about certain assumptions and time to distance ourselves from my own experience of the prison environment. A steering committee consisting of regional representatives, career management representatives and union and labour relations leaders

was officially invited to attend a presentation on this research project in November 2001. Each jurisdiction was informed by letter of the operational launch of the research beginning on September 1, 2002. On September 23, the first questionnaires were distributed, starting with the Atlantic region.

In order to avoid distortion, in terms of the process, the questionnaires were presented by the research at the first CTP class depending on their respective region. Later classes were taught by the instructors on site in accordance with the memorandum of understanding and the procedure limited to the text provided by myself. This was supported by a set of *PowerPoint* transparencies explaining the six research phases in detail. Each questionnaire was coded with a number corresponding to the region and was distributed in an envelope marked with the recruit's last name and first name. Only the *PRE A Questionnaire* had to be signed first in order to make the participant's acceptance official. After completing the questionnaire, each recruit placed it in a sealed envelope and forwarded to Research Branch at National Headquarters by internal mail.

In closing this introduction to our research methodology, it should be stressed that, although many research papers have been produced in the correctional field in the last twenty years, a number were eliminated from our bibliographical references, some because they date back to a time when programs were still in the experimental stage, others for contextual or legal reasons or because of developmental details specific to each country and thus not in tune with the Canadian reality, or, lastly, because the databases often did not change, causing the repetition of certain biases in addition to the negative effects of the performance measurement method characteristic of researchers, which too often boils down to the number of time an individual is cited in a text.

## Themes Studied

### *1) Recruit Profile Information*

Several demographic profile variables will be gathered for the correctional officer recruits that may account for changes in their attitudes towards corrections. The variables relate to the recruits' date of birth, gender, marital status, number of children, the region of selection, language(s) spoken, race, highest level of education, criminal justice related educational specialty, length and type of related work experience, where they learned of the employment opportunity and the skills they feel they possess that will best assist them in their future responsibilities.

### *2) Health and Lifestyle*

The questionnaire was designed to assess a number of variables pertaining to health and lifestyle. The variables include consumption of tobacco, alcohol and over-the-counter drugs/medication, over a given period (Pre A, Post, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year). Each questionnaire registers whether habits have changed over time in terms of use and the perception that the person in question may have of the progressive changes in his immediate environment.

To take the example of tobacco, we do not stress the effects of nicotine dependence and by analogy emphasize that stress is greater among users than among non-users (Territo & Sewell, 1999; Terrott, 1999; Swinnen, Moors & Govaert, 1994; Ostfeld, Kasl, D'Atri & Fitzgerald, 1987). It remains to be discovered whether there is a significant correlation between the non-use of nicotine or antihistamines and their use post-C.T.P., after 3 months, six months or 1 year in institution.

### *3) Advantages and Disadvantages of Correctional Work*

A rejection of unemployment, a desire for fringe benefits or a chance to work in the justice sector are the factors of the recruits' decisional balance assessed by this study regarding their reasons for choosing to become a correctional officer and their perceptions of the benefits and downsides of being a correctional officer (Wright et al., 1997; Jurik & Winn, 1987; Janis & Mann, 1977). These perceptions can be found elsewhere, in the United States (Bayse, 1995; Jacobs, 1981) or in Europe (Senn Gromelle & De Agazio, 1999; De Coninck, 1997; Krommenacker, 1992).

The stability of this kind of employment also lets employees be almost certain that they will spend their entire career in the service, possibly changing departments if the opportunity occurred. To answer these questions, respondents must list the advantages and disadvantages that, in their opinion, are associated with this work. Since the answers are open-ended, every word in the text is indexed and then catalogued for each participant.

## *4) Attitudes Towards Correctional Work*

A high level of insecurity in conjunction with routine daily tasks that become second nature over time, the prison environment produces a set of behaviours and attitudes in constant interaction (Wener, 1989). There are six components to this environment: the recruit's joining the service (selection, recruitment, training, placement and the one-year assignment); activation (compensation, appreciation of the work, involvement and eventually a career plan based on promotion via competitions); quality of life (job security, improvement of working conditions, fringe benefits); progress in contact with the various duties and tasks to be accomplished; dialogue with the immediate environment (inmates and staff); and the image of the profession (Britton, 2003; Shaffer, 1997; Morgenbesser, 1992; Archier & Sérieyx, 1986). The image and recognition are validated by an identity which, in itself, cannot be offset by improvements in work practices, salary or corporate objectives. Aspirations are formed behind the everyday routine and disillusionments along with them (McShane, 1991; Mangrum, 1981). Society's image of the correctional officer occupation accordingly required restructuring responsibilities and the meaning of the Mission.

This question contrasts *TRUE* and *FALSE* but uses the common sense of perception; some questions like number 12 refer the respondent to a suggested contingency:

*"Working in corrections would be O.K. as long as you didn't have to deal with offenders directly."*

Developed by Robinson, Porporino and Simourd (1992), *Attitudes towards correctional work* evaluates a person's general interest in the field of corrections. The 12-item scale is scored in a binary format (*False* = 0, *True* = 1). Higher scores reflect greater interest in correctional work.

The scale yielded an internal consistency value of .79 (Simourd, 1997). A three-factor solution was obtained for the ACOR, which explained 50.2% of the scale's variance. Factor 1 refers to an individual's preference for a career in corrections/offender contact. Factor 2 tapped perceptions of the public's view of correctional work, and Factor 3 could be interpreted as assessing the challenge of correctional work.

## *5) Attitude Towards Inmates*

Although it has been thoroughly restructured since its beginning, prison is still what it has always been: a place where human are imprisoned by human. And, since it is the opposite of the absolute epitome of life in the face of the inevitable, freedom before death, prison concept cannot evolve. This is even more impossible since the word imprisonment includes everything that ensures its survival: supervision, confinement, dissuasion, protection, control, identification number, standards, regulations, prohibitions and, consequently, punishment. However, punishment requires learning a behaviour, an attitude, being

conditioned, in which case it is not always easy to keep it objective over time and towards everyone. This non-evolving nature of prison inevitably leads to numerous contradictions in the definition of the roles of all those who work in this environment because, behind the panoply of suffering, the evolution of human rights has sparked many other arguments.

Before implementing the working tools appropriate for offenders' needs, we questioned the potential and ability of man to change, to choose between doing and not doing. The result: reintegration, rights, respect for others, helping relationship but through an all-seeing perspective. Hence the inconsistency between restraining and listening, dissuading and helping. In short, attitudes towards this unusual work, and even if it is not always obvious, are very educational.

As Mbanzoulou (2000) Herzog-Evans (1998) Silberman (1995) and Syr (1992) wrote, correctional officers are the only staff members to be exposed to inmates on a continuous basis, according to standards governed by the rule of law and in a strictly regimented setting although a number of circumstances in their daily life cannot be confined to simple rules. Moreover, many situations in a closed environment give rise to incidents that cannot be reported systematically (Bomse, 2001; Hepburn, 1984). One negative and polysemous effect at the least is that, correctional officers not only regularly have to deal with situations involving risks related to their immediate environment and for which they are accountable, but also face sanctions should they violate those rules. The margin for manoeuvre is thus quite restricted and, with the arrival of new professionals over the last twenty years, this is even more true, since guards are no longer the only people in direct contact with the prison population. This inescapable development often leads guards to fall back on talk of security and organization of coercive conduct (Lanthier, 2003; Josi & Sechrest, 1998; Ben-David, 1992; Klofas, 1986).

Thus, the second theme could just as well have been entitled: attitude, belief and standards in relation to inmates but we have kept to the official title of the questionnaire developed by Melvin, Gramling and Gardner (1985). However, to characterize our intent properly, a brief definition of attitude is in order.

Attitude is a generally long-lasting disposition to react favourably or unfavourably to one object in particular (cognitive component). Beliefs, in the generic sense of the term, are thought-structures developed and anchored over time, first through learning and then by experience. Norms explicitly concern rules governing behaviour within a group, and it cannot be sufficiently stressed that a norm applies exclusively to behaviour and its chief characteristic is consensus, whether implicit or explicit (Farkas, 1997).

Almost entirely anecdotal, there exists little research about the use of coercitive force in corrections toward inmates (Hemmens & Stohr, 2001; Marquart, 1986). Two points to retain. Firstly, in 1996, a study of 617 correctional officers in the State of Arizona, Griffin (2001) showed that the greater the officers' perception of their own authority (self-assurance and self-confidence), the less they felt the need to use force. The second point : the increased presence of women correctional officers. Their arrival had the effect of negating the male stereotypes surrounding the use of violence and breaking down subcultural norms (Lawrence & Mahan, 1998; Jurik, 1988).

*Attitudes Toward Inmates* is a 34-item, five-point Likert-type scale[1] ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*, developed by Melvin, Gramling and Gardner (1985); positive scores suggests that inmates are viewed as normal persons capable of positive change, whereas negative scores reflect the view that inmates are basically deviant individuals. The scale has good test-retest reliability (r = .82 between pre- and post-test) and excellent internal consistency. The scale appears to be free of response distortion, for example, social desirability. In a number of comparisons, the ATP scale differentiated among key groups namely, reform/rehabilitation groups, inmates, students, community sample, law enforcement officers and correctional officers, in the predicted directions, thus providing

evidence of construct validity. Coefficient alphas for the other four samples were: defence attorneys (α = .93); correctional officers (α = .95); law enforcement officers (α = .94); and university students (α = .95) (Melvin et al., 1995).

1 Note on the Likert scale

This is the first Likert-type scale in the questionnaire (*Likert's Organizational Profile, 1967*). This type of additive tool offers benefits and drawbacks across a continuum of responses and anonymously. Its distinguishing feature is that it is less confrontational than an interview. The statement, formulated in the active voice, expresses an opinion, not a fact. It is intended to be brief and adapted to the sampling vocabulary in order to keep the respondent's full attention. The individual can take as much time to answer as he wishes. This tool can also be used simultaneously by a large number of respondents, which is not the case for an interview. Because it is standardized, it is easy to grade. Another point noted in the literature is that social desirability leads the subject to respond at the centre of the scale and not at its ends (generosity error). In this way, the latter has a tendency to overestimate the qualities of the object studied (Wozniak et al., 2000).

## *6) Support for Rehabilitation*

Paradoxically, in the world of prisons, it has long been the practice to inculcate or reinculcate society's dominant values into an individual who has distanced themselfves from those values and this is done through excluding that individual (Metz, 2002; Goff, 1999; Toch, 1997). However, and as Papatheodorou (1991) notes, the reintegration of an offender into society occurs primarily through their reconciliation with the social norms of their society. Unfortunately, in the penitentiary environment, the gap between theory and the duties of guarding prisoners, the lack of research on staff generally and putting the human-service orientation into practice at the first level generates ambivalence within that environment (Lovell, 1988). This ambivalence is even more striking because it can be strengthened by the resistance to change found in all walks of life, by the views of a generation of guards who, not so very long ago, was asked only to ensure public safety through the confinement of wrongdoers or by sentence disparities (length of sentence, type of crime).

Apart from developments in penitentiary treatment and like many inmates who place the responsibility on many interveners (through minimizing, denial, cognitive distortion, rationalizing or denial of criminal behaviour), it must be said that only those who are returned to prison are seen again. This has led to a reductionist and simplistic view of recidivism, which some perceive as a failure to implement policies. The "failure" is argued by the latter who do not try or wish to understand what influences recidivism (Leiber & Woodrick, 1997; Petersilia & Deschenes, 1994; Chauvenet, Benguigui & Orlic,1993). A difficult rehabilitation is a variable that will not necessarily be taken into consideration. However, the relatively vague concept of recidivism about which academic polemics have long raged (repetition of the same crime, perpetration of new crimes or temporal intervals) is not without having serious repercussions for correctional officers. The real meaning of the work, the impact and economic cost of the programs put in place and the perpetual dialogue between the prism of theory and practice in conjunction with the realities of prison life are recurring and unavoidable themes, which any new recruit must to quickly learn in order to perform their duties.

The nine (9) questions concern support for rehabilitation, as opposed to the individual's perception of crime and prophylactic measures (belief in the value and implementation of prevention programs). The questionnaire calls on common sense rather than knowledge or experience since it is addressed to recruits (Paboojian & Teske, 1997).

As mentioned earlier, the individual's perceptual orientation may fluctuate from day to day because it remains tenuous and reactive to a host of independent variables (take the example of an internal incident that will inevitably have consequences in the short and medium term, or a murder by an inmate while on parole). We have no means of controlling the attitudinal shadings and words that are going to change from moment to moment.

Another interesting fact since the last decade and one that is also no stranger to public opinion in terms of media presentation of certain news items is that there seems to be a more punitive tendency towards offenders (Stalans, 2002; Farkas, 1999).

Misconception, disinterest, or the pendulum swinging back, *Support for Rehabilitation* is a nine-item scale created by Cullen, Lutze, Link and Wolfe (1989) to measure the individual's orientation towards rehabilitation. The nine statements are scored according to a five-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. Summing the items yields a total score, with higher scores reflecting stronger support for rehabilitation. The scale was developed from a 55-item instrument that assessed attitudes towards various aspects of criminal sanctioning (Freeman, 1999; Cullen, Skovron, Scott & Barton, ibid; Cullen & Gilbert, 1982);. It has been used with correctional staff and other criminal justice employees. Internal consistency values across samples were .79 (Cullen, et al., 1989), .84 (Cullen et al., 1985), .86 (Gillis, ibid), .72 (Larivière & Robinson, 2002) and .82 (Simourd, 1997).

Support for the scale's validity included correlations with a punishment scale (r = -.48), a punitive orientation scale (r = -.39) and death penalty endorsement (r = -.44) ( Cullen et al., 1985) (Gillis, ibid).

## *7) Deterrence*

The history of deterrence shows three kinds of sanctions, involving elimination, affliction and remedial methods. Initially, sanctions, by means of executions, exile, deportation or hard labour, were radical. The second kind, emerging from humanistic currents, focused on the deprivation of liberty, fines, seizures or community work; the last kind to emerge involved correctional treatment and programs related to the various criminal typologies and needs of the individual.

Five questions concern the individual’s core belief in punishment (Stalans, ibid; Marquart, 1986). Here, the failure aspect is replaced by a stronger belief in punitive action in contrast to other professional categories as is the case with parole officers (Lane, 1997; Krepps, 1981; Andrews & Kiessling, 1980); or the person’s gender (Koflas, ibid; Zupan, 1986).

In the research conducted by Larivière and Robinson (1996), the mean length of experience of the officers in the sample was 11 years; for this group the punitive approach was 76% and rehabilitation, 53%. However, many influencing factors are similar in other studies (Shaffer, ibid).

This is a five-item sub-scale from the 13-item Punishment scale developed by Cullen F.J., Cullen J.B., and Wozniak (1988). The items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*. The reported Cronbach's Alpha of this sub-scale is ($\alpha$ =.80).

## *8) Human Service Orientation*

Presented in the form of eight True/False responses, this questionnaire gives a more detailed profile of the helping relationship in the field of social work. The scale was developed by Robinson, Porporino, and Simourd (1992) as part of a study on staff commitment in a prison setting. The eight-item scale serves as a general indicator of an individual's preference for working with people and contributing to society.

The two-factor solution explained 47.2% of the variance in a sample of 477 correctional front-line staff, including 250 correctional officers (Simourd, 1997).

Factor 1 pertains to the interest shown by the latter in working with people and factor 2 their interest in contributing to society. The responses are dichotomized between *False* = 0 and *True* = 1 so that higher scores indicate a greater propensity towards the human service approach. In a sample of correctional staff, the internal consistency of this scale ranged from .70 (Simourd, op.cit) to .73 (Robinson, Porporino & Simourd, ibid). However, the alpha obtained for this measure by Gillis (ibid) was very low (.46), indicating that the scale was not very reliable for assessing human service orientation in a sample of the instructors associated with professional training.

## *9) Social desirability*

Ten Yes or No questions reveal the subject's group social skills in terms of themselves (potential, ability, perception, and personality traits). Other research has already addressed this theme (Wozniak et al., ibid; Houston, 1999; Super et al., 1993).

This scale is intended to provide a general indication of whether participants view themselves in a favourable manner. *Strahan and Gerbasi's Scale M-C1(10)* (1972), is a shortened *Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale* (Crowne & Marlow, 1964). Tested across various samples, Strahan and Gerbasi (op.cit) obtained Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficients ranging from .59 to .70. Support for use of this scale exists in the fact that it has been used in a previous study by Simourd (ibid) of CSC correctional officers, though no psychometric properties were reported. The scale itself consists of ten items that are answered either yes or no by the participant.

## *10) Sources of Motivation for Correctional Work*

As in many work contexts, a number of types of behaviours and attitudes engage essential values, values that may be controversial and that, here too, will evolve in a relatively brief time as a function of certain environmental forces (Péchillon, 1998; Plecas & Maxim, 1987). Without digressing from this topic, which itself could be the subject of several papers, we may note that they consist of two groups:

1. ***Final values*** which are based on existential objectives divided into two sub-categories :
    1. Personal values : to cite just a few examples here, enjoyment of life, health, happiness, family, personal success, friendship, love; and
    2. Social and ethical values : advocacy for peace, ecology, social justice (Jex et al. 1991).
2. ***Instrumental values***
    1. Ethical and moral values : honesty, loyalty, solidarity, respect, trust and personal accountability in a given context; and
    2. Competitive values : culture, money, appearance, courage, ability to work as a team.

Far from being unchanging and apart from their temporal subjectivity, values tell us what is good, viable, beautiful or desirable. Norms govern rules of conduct adopted by consensus. However, it is values in terms of assessment criteria that accept or reject the norms (Dolan & Garcia, 1999).

The *Source of Motivation for Correctional Work* will be used to evaluate the recruit's extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. This six-item questionnaire will be used to find out what motivates a person who wants to become a correctional officer. However, the scale does not take into consideration the availability of such jobs (effect of circumstance); the family-related imitation principle, always present in many fields (Tarde, ibid); failure in another job (policing, army…); abandonment and the reasons surrounding it in the first probationary year (Wright, 1993; McShane et al., ibid; Shusman & Inwald,

1991) or a qualified feeling towards the unknown with respect to this job (Morrison et al., 1992; Kropp et al., 1989; Mottaz, 1985).

The questionnaire was adapted from six items derived from Weiss' (1983) *Job Enrichment Questionnaire*. A 5-point Likert scale was also used where 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

## *11) Intrinsic Job Motivation*

Any organizational study on this topic will highlight the following two aspects: intrinsic and extrinsic job motivation, which have repercussions on a number of areas in social and work life. The six questions here do not refer to a system of rewards but the motivation for work. To take just one example, the statement: *"I try to think of ways of doing my job more effectively"* seems out of context in the daily routine experienced in the prison environment. An individual may in fact have this perception in their daily routine of the fairness or unfairness between his situation and that of others, which plays a prominent role in their satisfaction and motivation as well as in the performance they provides.

According to information, although it is very rare, this aspect can be seen in the autobiographical propensities of correctional officers on both sides of the border, such as, for example, Dickenson, in the United States (1999) or Yates (1993) who spent over 15 years with Correctional Services in British Columbia.

Intrinsic reinforcement relates to the job, skills and initiative while extrinsic reinforcement comes from an external source, be it salary, fringe benefits or a promotion (Froment, 1998; Lhuilier & Aymard, 1997; Latulippe, 1995; Cherniss & Kane, 1987; Montandon & Crettaz, 1981).

All approaches to job motivation operate with the implicit assumption that individuals must be encouraged and given supervision and support according to their needs, but must also be motivated to perform the various tasks, which is why recruitment continues to be a critical phase in staff management (Greiner & Schein, 1988; Green & Stutzman, 1986).

The *Intrinsic Job Motivation* scale developed by Warr, Cook, and Wall (1979) measures the recruits' level of intrinsic motivation. The scale consists of six items rated on a seven-point scale ranging from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. It has good internal consistency ($\alpha$ = .82) and adequate test-retest reliability (r = 0.65) over six months (Cook et al., 1981). Cook and his colleagues reported a mean of 36.25 (SD = 5.51) for a sample of blue-collar male employees in a manufacturing industry.

## *12) Correctional Self-Efficacy*

The theme of performance in an organization is also of concern to many government decision-makers and managers as well as union officials (Benkhoff, 1997). In this sphere, we find the phenomenon of alternation characterizing the routine: there is ritual and a lack of action but in return the officer must at all times be on the look out for the unexpected in the prison context. Being in constant contact with a difficult population, subject to aggressive, latent behaviours, both verbal and sometimes physical, is bound to generate tension and anxiety and negative feedback as well (Seidman & Williams, 1999; Wright, 1994). And, besides, no staff member receives as many requests, complaints and grievances from the inmates as a correctional officer does. This is a profession with an intense relational character, perpetually oscillating between the two extremes: security and respect for human dignity through rehabilitation. What appears obvious to a psychologist, a criminologist, an instructor or a teacher in the prison environment is not necessarily so for a correctional officer given the dual nature of his role in a very closed organization.

Apart from efficacy, there are also feelings of competence and self-satisfaction associated with the objectives that the individual sets for themself in their work in an environment that cannot be compared to any other (Ekstedt & Jackson, 1997; Ellis, 1993; Johnson & Price, 1981; Wicks, 1980).

The twelfth theme, The *Correctional Self-Efficacy* scale is an 15-item questionnaire developed for this study using a Likert scale, where 13 items were adapted from Getkate (1993) to reflect the training reality. Getkate had adapted his scale from the 17-item *General Self-Efficacy* sub-scale developed by Sherer and Maddux (1982). The scale employed by the latter sampled students in introductory psychology classes and examined a general overview of self-efficacy in terms of behaviour. A Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .86 was reported for this sub-scale and responses ranged from 1 = *Very Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Very Strongly Agree*. Note that the alpha value is a function of the mean correlation between the indicators of a dimension. The alpha value should be equal to or higher than ($\alpha$ =0,82) for the scale to be considered reliable.

## *13) The Empathy Scale*

First of all, faced with Gough's famous 434-question questionnaire, the CPI (*California Psychological Inventory*), created in 1957 and commonly used when dealing with empathy, I had to opt for Davis' considerably shorter questionnaire, with only 28 questions.

Linked to ethics and humanistic values (Jones, 1998), empathy consists in understanding, perceiving and experiencing another person's emotions. More specifically, it is the ability to imagine oneself in the other person's place. Originally called the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index*, this scale was created by Davis in 1980. Its principal database was a sample of 138 factory workers.

The questionnaire consists of 28 statements used to measure the individual's ability and willingness to understand the emotional states of others and, in this case, the recruits' empathy with inmates within the structured, closed environment of a penitentiary. The statements are also used to measure the four components of empathy:

1. Fantasy, which measures the ability to identify with fictitious characters;
2. Empathic concern, which measures the ability to be compassionate and concerned for others with respect to the difficulties they face;
3. Perspective taking, which is a cognitive measure of the ability to understand another person's point of view, among other things; and finally,
4. Personal distress, which measures a person's ability to feel the discomfort of others. (Poirier & Michaud,1992; Davis, 1983)

In the 1994 study (Larivière & Robinson, 1996), a nation-wide survey of federal correctional officers' attitudes towards inmates, 1970 correctional officers took part. From various angles and although there were contradictions, fewer than a quarter of the respondents displayed empathy towards the prison population; more than three-fourths exhibited a more coercive approach towards them and a little more than half supported the introduction of social rehabilitation programs.

A comparison of these results with those for other groups of professionals (parole officers, health services workers, psychologists, instructors and program officers) revealed no significant differences. However, differences did appear within the correctional officers group according to region (cultural expressions), the security level of the institution, gender and CO I or CO II classification (Walters, 1999; Britton, 1997; Walters, 1995). It was also noted that correctional officers who were at the start of their career (less than one year's seniority) generally had behaviours more inclined towards the

human service relationship than did their colleagues; women preferred a management style focused on the human service relationship (Farkas, 2001; Lawrence & Mahan, ibid; Jurik et al., 1987; Zimmer, 1982); and some visible minorities presented some interactions involving a more pronounced display of empathy than did their co-workers (Britton, ibid; Jackson & Ammen, 1996; Wright & Saylor, 1992).

The statements concern the respondent's thoughts and feelings in various situations. The respondent must indicate how well the statement describes him or her with the help of a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *Very Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Very Strongly Agree*.

- The index consists of four sub-scales. The score for each is the total score of the responses.
- Fantasy > 1, 5, 7, 12, 16, 23, 26
- Empathic Concern > 2, 4, 9, 14, 18, 20, 22
- Perspective Taking > 3, 8, 11, 15, 21, 25, 28
- Personal Distress > 6, 10, 13, 17, 19, 24, 27

## *14) Pre/Post Correctional Officer Recruit Perceptions/ Expectations of Training*

Learning is the cornerstone of staff training within an organization, the matching of what the individual hopes to obtain from his professional training and, in this case, what the *Correctional Training Program* has or has not given him in the way of learning opportunities. Twelve (12) questions underline the subject's expectations by the very make-up of the group, teamwork and the many difficulties related to all that is new. The recruits will have a learning experience together in which they will be confined in the same place for the first eleven (11) weeks. Recruits are asked about their training expectations and satisfaction with the knowledge and skills they have acquired about various requirements of the correctional officers' work, including personal safety, offenders, the training curriculum and the instructors. The *Correctional Officer Recruits Perceptions/Expectations of Training* is a 12-item measure ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

Following the expectation period, although it is not administered until the eleventh week of training, the Post phase of the questionnaire invites the recruit provide a graduated response in terms of his previous learning.

## *15) Pre/Post Credibility*

This 6 item questionnaire deals with the college phase.

The *Credibility scale* (6 items; M = 60.15; SD = 7.08; alpha = .95) was adapted for this study from Getkate and Gillis (ibid), who in turn adapted it from Kouzes and Posner (2002). The scale is used with the recruits to assess their instructors in terms of various criteria such as trust, competence and group facilitation. Possible responses range between 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

After the training period at the college and the one following it in the perception/expectation mode, the year that the recruit will have to spend in a penitentiary institution involves rigid and demanding structures that will inevitably place him in a context where more seasoned staff sets the tone (Bouchard, ibid). Placed in a situation where he will have to choose between the principles that have been inculcated into him in the first three months of training and the application of that training to the performance of his new functions, there is no doubt that the individual will avoid confrontation. Acting otherwise could be interpreted as zeal in the face of certain realities inherent in the prison environment

with all the consequences that could ensue.

## *16) Organizational Commitment*

Throughout its long history, the organization has been associated with the phenomenon of social domination in situations where individuals and groups are closely intermingled (Morgan, 1991), and that is why no institution can exist without standards and rules. Like the group, the organization is based on specific objectives in accordance with a pre-established hierarchy. Every organization thus engenders both structural and technological constraints that will not fail to have an effect on the behaviour of the individual as well as that of the group, whether or not it is unified (Carlier, 1997; Zaccaro & Dobbins, 1989; Miles, 1975; Duffee, 1974).

To transcend the image of its representation, many organisations, wether public or private, have an ideological base that is called the mission. The mission is not just a set of rules and standards relating to practice but the practice itself (Carrothers, 1992; Lallieux, 1991; Robinson, Simourd & Porporino, 1990; Fizes, 1981). Even then, one has to be able to identify with that mission. In the Correctional Service of Canada, the mission is not a kind of indoctrination, but a humanistic philosophy based on the values of Canadian society and the rule of law.

At the heart of any organizational structure, commitment and loyalty are the moral obligation felt by a person to continue working in the organization, an obligation that is not necessarily rational or emotional in nature (Dejours, 2000; Houston, 1999; Farkas & Manning, 1997; Penley & Gould, 1988). We can then speak of the individual's acceptance of the values of working together, the ability to resolve conflicts, an harmonious orientation towards action or the development of human resources according to policies based on respect for human dignity.

Commitment and loyalty refer also to moral and ethical dimensions and the need for recognition of the social and public utility of the work of a correctional officer who often faces an identity crisis when compared with other professional sectors working in the same setting (Bettache, 2000; Freeman, ibid; Cario, 1992; Raelin, ibid).

The ideological and humanistic representations proper to every organization are succeeded over time and to varying degrees by the relaxation of standards. These standards, as we saw earlier, compel the individual and thus the group to follow an imposed course of action. This is what we will agree to call the phenomenon of anomie related to the reality in the field.

While our world presents many highly competitive changes, prison is what it always was: an obscure yet openly criticized place of confinement for as long as it has existed. Things have changed a great deal, to be sure, but there is always a guard and the person who is guarded. Despite the changes over time, the role of the correctional officer, a peace officer if ever there was one, has never been a gratifying symbol as that afforded to a police officer. There cannot be meaningful change in an environment whose central interest is to protect the public by locking up people. The two worlds are opposed yet pass between themselves the portion of evil that resides in every human being. In these worlds, there is a loss of control and there is collusion, and there are the codes of conduct where each side believes that it can close itself off in order to better protect itself from the other within his world: a subculture.

In the Collins English Dictionary (2002), "subculture" is defined as follows:

*"Subculture as a subdivision of a national culture or a enclave within it with a distinct integrated network of behaviour, beliefs, and attitudes."*

It is a social inheritance from one generation of guards to the next, resulting from low self-esteem, sometimes exacerbated by the clientele and sometimes by the way society represents guards. Since Peterson et al., (1977), we find the same questions about organizational commitment and its opposite, the things that create and feed the subculture: code, esprit de corps, formal and informal control, the deprivation associated with the prison environment, the absence of the feeling of a job well done, shift-work, little opportunity for advancement, a lack of motivation caused by the reduction in overtime, fragmented relationships in terms of support from the hierarchy, supervisory gaps, group conflict and taking of divergent positions (Jehn, Northcraft & Neale, 1999; Frone, 1990), refusal to become involved with measures established by new policies (Robinson, Porporino & Simourd, 1992; La Van & Banner, 1985); or because not only does a guard feel rejected by the inmate but even sometimes by the ever-increasing staff (Sims, 2001; Garland, 1998; De Coninck, 1997; Shaffer, ibid; Hartland, 1996; Philliber, 1987).

In our pluralistic societies, a group needs homogeneity and, despite the importance this research project puts on tracking the recruits from the first day of their selection and over a period of 15 months, we had to consider this composite subculture from the guards' side and its persistence over time. One assumption is that this subculture could quickly and informally take effect right from the initial weeks following assignment to the institution. This is why it is difficult to assess it even though the self-revelations in the questionnaires are kept confidential. Partially hidden but pervasive, this subculture offers new employees a very quick means of becoming part of the group and to the alternation of their training, which in itself will be taken from a distance, like a normative evolution. The recruit is no longer in college, but in the field.

The subculture is rewarding and offers a feeling of security and comfort (Webb & Morris, 2002; Jones, 1999; Lombardo, 1981). While scattering responsibilities, the group's subculture promotes the inhibition of all (Abdennur, 2000; Wallach, Kogan & Bem, 1962); facilitates interactions without apparent shocks or problems. As a corollary, those who distance themselves from this subculture by their resistance to it or because of a more optimalist vision in terms of behavioural or attitudinal openness, will not remain in this kind of job. They will climb other ladders, perhaps even in other sectors of the department. Thus, it would be easy to think that a person who stays where he is shows a tacit adherence to the subculture, but, as will be seen later, this is not always the case.

Such informal adherence is also found, in the same way, in policing and the army and is symptomatic of closed environments. To this, we may add the daily confrontation between the guard's role and the type of clientele subject to that role. The role is one that is encountered by no other professional group. Criminologists, psychologists, social workers, nursing staff, teachers and instructors are not continuously drawn into this type of confrontation (Senn Gromelle & De Agazio, ibid; Rosine, 1992), with a constantly changing clientele that presents problems of a pathological nature, which can be very serious. Like the prison population and the halo effect, this is also seen in connection with certain criminal typologies such as sex offenders (Flora, 2001; Spencer, 1999; Bengis, 1997; Weekes, Pelletier & Beaudette, 1995).

Because of the latent confrontation between the guards and the guarded, which must be generative of a multitude of variables inherent in the prison environment and is characteristic of correctional officers if only because of the uniform, the subculture is also strengthened by the lack of on-going training (Alejandro, 1990; Stor Guillmore, 1990).

In the face of this organizational commitment and although it is hazardous to venture into behavioural cataloguing, a number of authors have regrouped certain typological characteristics among correctional officers, whether towards inmates in general, co-workers or the penitentiary administration in all its forms (Bouchard, 2002; Griffin, 2001; Farkas, 2000; McMahon, 1999; Jones, 1998; Robinson & Larivière, 1996; Sparks, Bottoms & Hay, 1996; Carter, 1994; Kauffman, 1988). The behaviours are

identified as positive, ambivalent or negative. Montandon and Crettaz (ibid) are concerned with five main attitude types: persons who are fair, those who resemble educators, those who are repressive, those who are ritualistic and those who are indifferent.

In the eyes of the two authors, the *fair* person would be the conformist correctional officer, one who would generally accept officially established methods and try to educate by example or through their desire to be fair to all. A fair officer views themself as a representative of the law, a law that is not questioned. Generally speaking, they think it is more sensible to require discipline and keep a barrier between the inmates and themselves. Crime, in their opinion, is the result of social inequality.

The *educator* accepts the official aims of prison but not the means. They are often attracted to a moralizing role but with some innovations. They believe that the inmate has received a poor education and they do not believe in barriers between staff and inmates, which maintain distances in a manner opposed to re-educational actions.

The *repressive* type does not believe in the official aims but accepts the means. They do not ask themselves any questions. They consider that inmates are responsible for their actions. An officer who displays repressive behaviour and attitudes is often the same officer who was fair but over time has come to content themselves with applying the regulations. Hardened, they avoid frustration by ignoring certain policies. A number of such guards find satisfaction in discipline and repression. If there is an incident, they will be the ones who demand a return to more coercive measures.

The *ritualist* for their part finds comfort in the safety of routine. They will never question the established order or even facts and actions contrary to common sense. The law is the law. They are proud of their uniform, badges, and the image they have made of themselves in their role.

The *indifferent* guard is one who does not support or no longer supports the aims of incarceration. This is often the one who took the job for the salary or the overtime and does not ask too many questions. They are the law.

In every organization there is a corresponding subculture dependent on the social groups that compose it, including its obvious presence in the hierarchy itself. Because of the lack of pertinent research on this kind of hierarchical subculture (Jermier et al., 1991), all levels of the pyramid are represented (Stojkovic & Farkas, 2003) and internal surveys clearly reveal its existence, whether in the police, the army or psychiatric hospitals. Hence the popular expression: "*wash one's dirty laundry in public.*"

A university education is the last relatively recent point for this subculture. Every one with a university education who wants to make their contribution to the organization will inevitably confront the group, and at that point they may either accept the subculture or quickly differentiate themselves from it by moving to other employment opportunities. According to Robinson (1992) Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979), the higher the level of education, the greater the expectations and the greater the disappointments. This explains the propensity of graduates to leave the organization in the first few years and sometimes even before the end of their placement.

Between 1998 and 1999, a ten-year longitudinal study of 212 respondents with university degrees perfectly demonstrated the parallel between the apparent commitment of a person to the organization and their own plans for a career outside the organization (Sturges et al., 2002).

To sum up, a subculture develops in organizations where certain processes are neither guided nor mastered. The logic of these processes does not necessarily bear a direct relationship to internal strategies. However, it should be stressed that it is easy to forget that the rehabilitation of inmates is conditional on the recognition of favourable work conditions for both groups (Krommenacker, ibid; Lombardo, 1985). This indicates that the subculture presents a number of indicators relating to the

probability of an event likely to have an impact on the organization.

With regard to the questionnaire, as we have seen earlier in connection with attitudes towards correctional work, the identification of an individual with the organisation that employs them is an inherent part of the aims and objectives. The *Organizational Commitment Questionnaire* was adapted from Mowday, Steers and Porter (ibid) and examines the degree to which an individual identifies with an organization and its goals and whether they wish to remain a part of that organization. The scale is comprised of 15 items and is scored on a 7 point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 = *Very Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Very Strongly Agree*. The summed score is then divided by 15 to provide an index to measure organizational commitment. The scale holds strong psychometric properties with reliability ranging from .82 to .93. In addition, 82 studies examining the organizational commitment scale reported an average internal consistency coefficient of .88 (S.D. = .038). Test-retest reliability for a two- and four-month period observed reliability ranging from .53 to .75 (Mowday, Steers & Porter, op.cit).

## *17) Pre/Post Group Environment Questionnaire*

Before looking at this seventeenth questionnaire, a brief review of what a group is, what it consists in and its purpose is in order. The basis of a group is two or more persons interacting together so that each individual influences and is influenced by the others. To form a group, four conditions are required. They are as follows:

1. The members of the group share a common goal or goals;
2. The means are shared;
3. Rules are made for the distribution of tasks; and
4. There is a system of control.

The *Group Environment Questionnaire* (GEQ) was developed by Carron, Brawley and Widmeyer (1985) to measure group cohesiveness on sports teams. The questionnaire was designed as a general rather than a situation-specific measure of cohesiveness. The 7-item questionnaire is comprised of four dimensions that assess perceived group cohesiveness including individual attraction to the group for social reasons, individual attraction to the group for task-related reasons, members' perceptions of the group as a social unit and members' perceptions of the group's unity in relation to tasks. The questionnaire contains positive and negative statements about the team and the individual's involvement with the team. Responses were rated on a 5-point continuum varying from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*. The Cronbach alpha values for the resulting 7 items and the four constructs identified in the GEQ were: Individual Attractions to the Group-Social (ATG-S) ($\alpha$ = .64), Individual Attractions to the Group-Task (ATG-T) ($\alpha$ = .75), Group Integration-Social (GI-S) ($\alpha$ = .76) and, Group Integration-Task (GI-T) ($\alpha$ = .70). The scale was modified to reflect the Correctional Officer Training Program. In a further study by Villeneuve and Savoie (unpublished), the GEQ was adapted to an organizational context with an acceptable reliability coefficient of between .67 and .83, the standard being ($a$ = 0.82).

The second questionnaire (*after participation*) reverses the order with a few qualifications that require the subject to indicate in his answers what they anticipated and what they see at the college. Comparison of the two tables may (if the questionnaire is completed conscientiously) provide us with a good correlation between the *before* and *after*. This questionnaire will be used again at the end of the three-month, six-month and one-year period in the institution, but this time will deal with correctional supervisors instead of instructors.

## *18) Pre/Post Correctional Officer Social Cohesiveness*

Same formulation as the preceding two questionnaires. The conjoined variance is employed to clearly delineate the responses and, if necessary, to cancel or duplicate them.

The *Correctional Officer Social Cohesiveness Scale* was developed for this study to measure correctional officer recruits' level of loyalty and fondness for the group. This scale is comprised of 7 items on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree.* Once again, the questionnaire is read at a temporal distance and the graduated responses vary accordingly. Same operation for the 3-month, six-month and one-year periods spent in the institution

## *19) Job Satisfaction*

In a time of transition from a world dominated by bureaucratic principles as earlier studied by Mooney or Taylor (1911), Riley (1931), Weber (1946) or Fayol (1970) to a computerized universe that requires new forms of organizational logic, values, in terms of work behaviour and although they may take many forms, constitute a set of beliefs that allow the human being to select a behaviour, a way to act for the survival and welfare of the group of whatever nature (Griffin, 2001; Bandura, 1997; Simmons, Cochran & Blount, 1997; Walters, 1996; Rogers, 1991; Jurik et al., 1987).

However, in the prison world, personal aspirations continued to be limited by the nature of the organization (Podsakoff, MacKenzie & Bommer, 1996), and the organizational culture of the CSC is not based on getting the most out of a product or stock market competition. It is part of the justice system, which, like many others, does not prevent it from being dissatisfied with the nature of some of the tasks to be accomplished that, by their repetition, inevitably create disillusionment (Phillips & McConnell, 1996; Lemire, 1995; Regoli, Poole & Lotz, 1981; Karlinsky, 1979). To mention only a few, there is the lack of autonomy allied to staff turnover (Brenton, 1991); progressive detachment from the duties to be accomplished and, little by little, toward the organization itself (Lambert, Barton & Hogan, 1999; Agho, Price & Mueler, 1992; Raelin, 1985); a career plan where limitations are highlighted by the lack of recognition (Slate & Vogel, 1997; Goss, 1991; Blau, Light & Chamlin, 1986); working conditions that in turn affect family life (Grant, 1995; Muirhead, 1994); feelings of inequality in relationships with other professionals (Fox & Stinchcomb, 1994; Reisig & Lovrich, 1998); tension at work that is never the same, with its medium- and long-term reactions and consequences (Grossi & Berg, 1991; Cheek & Miller, 1983); layers of administrative bureaucracy, power over which is too often tied to the existing management (Gordon, 1999; Breed, 1998; Pogrebin & Atkins, 1982); not to forget a spatially confused environment unique of its kind (De Coninck & Loodts, 1991; Hepburn & Crepin, 1984).

If the staff college in itself accounts for the development of a knowledge base in a specific area (more than 95 learning modules spread out over 13 weeks), the organization refers the person back to other realities: the realities of work *in situ* for an entire year.

The development of awareness, the routine, the visibility of certain hierarchical deficiencies, restricted opportunities for advancement, generational conflicts, abandonment by some and cynicism by others, work tools depending on the increased use of technology a number of researchers have asked themselves whether there could be a causal link between a university education and the discontent arising from the lack of opportunity that impels the person to make a speedy demotivation (Patenaude, 2001; Cullen et al., 1993; Stohr, Self & Lovrich, 1992).

The question is double-edged. People with university degrees expect professional recognition and try to get ahead by using all available resources. The authors write that the university often neglects its role

by letting it be believed that a person will practice his specialty in an idealized, challenging world with unlimited resources and supervisors who will evaluate their abilities on the basis of their achievements. The result is that some, disappointed at not having been able to contribute to the organisation, will strengthen the subculture through their personal contribution and knowledge (Guérin, Carrière & Wills, 1999).

Following the example of a number of research studies in similar fields such as policing (Dantzker & Kubin, 1998; Dantzker, 1993; Warr, Cook & Wall's, 1979) *Job Satisfaction Scale* was selected to measure job satisfaction. The researchers define job satisfaction as a measurement of the degree to which the respondents are satisfied with the particular features of their job. The scale consists of sixteen items answered along a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 = *Extremely Dissatisfied* to 7 = *Extremely Satisfied*, and was tested on manual workers in two studies. More specifically, the scale can be broken down into three sub-scales: extrinsic, intrinsic, and overall job satisfaction. By taking into account the three components of an individual's job, a thorough report of job

satisfaction levels for an individual can be attained. The authors reported the overall Cronbach's alpha for their scale as ($\alpha$ = .86) and the individual alpha levels for the sub-scales extrinsic ($\alpha$ = .74 and .78); intrinsic ($\alpha$ = .79 and .85); overall ($\alpha$ = .80 and .82). Finally, the scale had a mean of 69.86 and 70.86 and a standard deviation of 14.18 and 16.02 for each study respectively.

## *20) Job Stress*

Since the discovery of this biological and psychological phenomenon in the 1930s, for which Canadian researcher Hans Selye was responsible, hundreds of studies have been produced every year on this increasingly fruitful topic, one that is central to our society. Before continuing, we should review some of its main features so we can better situate ourselves in the context of our research topic and thus avoid some of the most common mistakes.

Some prefer the word “stress” to “tension”, “constraint” or “situational reaction of alertness.” It is defined as a physical and emotional state of exhaustion the intensity of which varies in response to a given event. When used in French, the word “stress” is often considered an anglicism, even though it comes from the Old French “*estrece*”, which literally means “narrowness” or “oppression”, from the Latin root “*stringere”*, meaning to “tighten”. It is found in English in the 16th century (Légeron, 2001). The word has become fashionable and is all too often confused with a depressive state or depression (Neveu, 1995; Huckabee, 1992; Black, 1981).

In dealing with the concept of stress, especially in the workplace, one causal constant emerges. It relates to the organization of the work in itself. The dominant constant relates to the daily repetition of the tasks to be performed, regardless of domain, and involves many concepts of dissatisfaction, routine, fatigue and boredom (Dejours, ibid; Triplett & Mullings, 1997). It has three chronological phases:

1. Arousal: a period characterized by a new or unfamiliar environment. It is a response to an urgent stimulus;
2. If the situation continues, the individual becomes accustomed to it. This stage is called habituation;
3. The stage of habituation becomes exhausting both physiologically and psychically. This is the exhaustion phase.

In the immune system, stress is a completely normal physical reaction to a warning. It is produced by the adrenal glands for the purpose of reacting to an external situation. Faced with an event considered

new or threatening, stress makes it possible for the individual to deal with what he feels or anticipates, whether positive or negative (Légeron, ibid; Pépin, 1999; Boucher, 1997). As when an animal is placed in a stressful situation, the oxygenation of the organism increases and in turn presents various symptoms ranging from an accelerated heartbeat to digestive problems (Cohen & Williamson, 1991).

There is no bad or good stress. However, beyond stress, there are three types of feelings that come into play: everything that generates anxiety such as depression, anger and aggression. If this dynamic is not taken into consideration on the pretext that the individual should not give in to his feelings because of pressure from the group to which they belong, or because they ignore the prodromal signs or because of their professional duties is afraid to share them, it can, in the short or medium term have serious repercussions for their psychological equilibrium. Result: one-third of North-American workers are affected by stress (Fischer, 2001). This inevitably leads to illness and the social and economic impacts of absenteeism (Jauvin et al., 2003; Malenfant et al., 2001; Swinnem, Moors & Govaert, 1994; Shamir & Drory, 1982). Absenteeism is a way of allowing the worker to flee or control job stress in their own way (Lambert, 2001; Smulders & Nijhuis, 1999; Venne, 1997; Greene & Nowack, 1995; Blau & Boal, 1989).

At the same time, empirical studies on stress and tobacco use also show that stress is clearly higher among smokers than among non-smokers (Parrott, ibid; Compernolle, 1994). This variable is studied in this questionnaire with the part reserved under *Health and Lifestyle.* It is measured over a fifteen-month period.

Dangerous circumstances and hazardous working conditions on construction sites or in factories in Canada apparently let to 622 fatal accidents and 298 accidents in 1999 involving the loss of a limb (Occupational Injuries and Their Cost in Canada 1995-1999 – Human Resources Development Canada, 2003). An awful record, but without a single reported accident involving a correctional officer.

In contrast to some categories of employees such as taxi drivers, health service staff or teachers, correctional officers do not appear on the list of professions that are most exposed to stress and violence (Cunningham et al., 2003; International Labour Organization, 1998). Certainly, the tensions related to the prison environment are pervasive but they underlie a reality that is characteristic of correctional environments (Abdennur, 2000; Schaufeli & Peeters, 2000; De Coninck & Loodts, 1999). By comparison, the primary duty of a nurse dealing with a recalcitrant, aggressive and even violent patient is to care for that person. The nurse works in a health care location requiring patient management because of a need resulting from an illness or an accident. They are not trained to respond to aggression. This is not the case with the staff in a correctional institution where the population is held against its will for a period determined in advance. Certainly, this is not to minimize the violence or state of tension that prevails in penitentiary institutions but they are part of a work environment that is characteristic for them. The infrastructures, logistics, professional training, correctional operations and policies have been obviously established to avoid these effects (O'Donnell & Stephens, 2001; Launay & Fielding, 1989; Härenstam & Palm, 1988; Gerstein, Topp & Correll, 1987; Dignam, Barrera & West, 1986).

Prison, like any functionalist institution system (hospices for the elderly, cloisters, psychiatric hospitals or barracks) offers a mode of existence within a closed perimeter. There is a loss of marks of identity and a lack of personal space and intimacy (no office but controls). Everything is done in the same location, in accordance with a pre-determined scheme organized with very strict rules and excluding initiative and personal autonomy. It is also functional because the prison organization is designed to avoid conflicts. However, in seeking to avoid conflicts, it creates others (Fagan, 2003; Johnson, 2002; Terrill, 1999; Wright, 1999; Latullipe, 1995; Tellier & Robinson, 1995; Tom Liou, 1995; Cohn, 1991; Walters, 1991; Breen, 1986).

A penitentiary or prison is not a transition zone as is true of community surveillance but is definitely a place of confinement and thus inertia. The inertia influences all of the behaviours and attitudes of the staff in place. It is difficult not to recognize that the physical environment of places does not have an impact on the staff and what can then be said about the clientele? There is no rule of proxemics, these well-known laws of spatial relations that explain physical distances (proximity or distancing) in everyday relationships with others (Savicki, Cooley & Gjesvold, 2003; Demonchy, 2000; Froment, 1998; Hall, 1959). Seymourd (1980) refers to environmental determinism which leaves a significant mark on each and everyone of us.

Connected to both internal and external situations and, if statistical data is compared, the anticipation of an event and its sensory perception is the principal source of stress for all staff working in a prison environment (Tellier & Robinson, ibid; Brodsky, 1982; Roache, 1982). This subjective, widespread and temporal perception in closely connected to the individual's life experience, age, status, gender and ability to deal with it in an artificial environment, always under pressure.

The anticipation or memory of an event considered as a stressor, the simple fact of being exposed all year long to what some American authors commonly describe as an "e*xperience and compassion fatigue, unwanted consequence of working with suffering people*," can make an individual more vulnerable to stress (Digham & Thomas, 1996; Figley, 1995; Kassam-Adam, 1995). Various defence mechanisms then come into play, but that is not our interest here. In many cases, the effects of stress, of all sorts, on our staff members are far from being homogenous. The role, duties, accountability, responsibility, timeframes, authority to recommend or not to recommend, and lack of any security training contribute to making parole officers the group most exposed to stress (Slate, Wells & Johnson, 2003; Wozniak, 2002; Brown, 1987; Whitehead, 1987).

Stress resulting from a particular situation or caused by anticipation and because of their situation very often, the set-up of the physical environment that isolates them, staff members teaching in a prison environment also face very unique characteristics : cramp size of classroom; no background knowledge of the inmates participating in the class; and discipline/confrontation issues with the inmates (Tewksbury, 1993; Belcastro, Gold & Grant, 1982).

With the forced intermingling, mutual distrust, actions, reactions in prisons, risks anticipation, deprivation model (Maahs & Pratt, 2001), whatever the occupation in the prison environment, the Panopticon is the right architectural expression for the moral awareness personified by correctional officers (Gennardo di, 1975). No, in the prison environment, there are no decibels from heavy machinery or assembly line production. There are only men and women permanently confronting an environment of power, relationships of force, suspicion, fears of real, assumed or imagined risks. For that reason, it would be misleading to establish certain facts on the basis of a literature that is contradictory to say the least and extracted from the same databases. Take, for example, the case of stress in the institutional security rating. For Lasky, Gordon and Sreballus (1986), not only does such data have no meaningful role to play in the analysis of stress, but physical fatigue has never been a descriptive marker for overwork among correctional officers (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). For Masclet and Mineure (1999); Hurst and Hurst (1997); Gross et al., (1994); Patterson (1992) there is a negative correlation, however, between stress and the low self-esteem related to the profession regardless of sex (depersonalization effect). According to Tellier and Robinson (ibid), in a generic table showing five variables that predispose correctional officers to stress, the perception of danger in the presence of offenders was the most significant.

Older officers are apparently less affected by this phenomenon than younger officers. Is this a plausible explanation? The static role that prevailed until recently required less from the individual than the role which unites security concerns with a human service orientation control and empathy.

For others and according to research also conducted in the United States in the mid-1980s, it is in the maximum-security institutions that changes in blood pressure are greatest (Ostfeld, Kasl & D'Atri, 1987). To corroborate these statements, Härenstam and Palm (ibid) and Long et al., (1986) noted above-average rates of heart disease, high blood pressure and ulcers than for other justice employees. Cheek (1984) notes the lifespan of correctional officers is 59 years, i.e., 16 years less than the national average and also that the rate of divorce, alcoholism and suicide is particularly higher (Finn, 2000; Cheek & Miller, ibid).

Perimeter security based on technical arrangements may have replaced perimeter towers, but to no avail; the prison remains what it has always been. No tool, no matter how advanced, could replace a human being facing his fellows (Griffiths & Cunningham, 2000; Pollak & Sigler, 1998; Lindquist & Whithead, 1986).

Parker and Decotis' (1983) *Job Stress Scale* served as the source of items for the job stress scale. Their work used restaurant managers as the subjects of study, and the researchers originally divided the twelve-item scale into the two components of job stress: anxiety, and time stress. A seven-point Likert-type scale is used for responding to the scale where 1= *Very Strongly Disagree* and 7= *Very Strongly Agree*. The time stress component received an alpha level of .86(α = 0,86), while anxiety obtained .74 (α = 0,74).

What justifies the selection of this scale, though, is the fact it was used by Bazemore and Dicker in their 1994 study of juvenile detention workers, which obtained a mean of 30.05, a standard deviation of 11.65, and a reported alpha level of (α = .90). The same scale was also used by Bazemore, Dicker, and Al-Gadheeb (1994) in their study of the workers' punitive orientation and the variables that influence them.

## *21) Role Conflict*

Conflicts are endemic and, regardless of their nature since the 1960s (personal, group and internal or external organizational conflicts), they can be found in every organization both private and governmental (Klofas, Stojkovic & Kalinich, 1990). Conflicts can have a contagious effect on all levels of the organization. Role theory in social and organizational psychology states that an individual's behavioural and attitudinal contradictions are quite often sources of tension and dissatisfaction accumulated (Israel et al., 1989; Maslach & Jackson, ibid; Poole & Rigoli, 1981; Hepburn & Albonetti, 1980), and this can lead the individual not only to be less effective but also less committed to the organization (La Van & Banner, ibid; Jacobs & Grear, 1980).

In the matter of concern to us, we find, behind the seemingly unchanging image of prison and its antinomies, a distribution of professional duties, a hierarchical structure, divisions and ambiguity in the concept of role conflict spread out in this case over twenty-nine items related to the interactions between the instrumental performance of the work and the demands directly related to it. The concept also designates the congruency or incongruency, compatibility or incompatibility in the requirements of the individual's role within the organizational structure. Congruency or compatibility is judged relative to a set of standards and conditions that impinge upon role performance (Wanous, Reichers & Malik, 1984).

In a prison setting, there are four kinds of role conflicts:

1. The tense atmosphere among staff members and the inmate population (Cornelius, 2001; Regoli, Poole & Schrink, 1979);
2. The unpredictability of situations that can have their own chain reactions (Christian, 1999;

Ben-Zur & Breznitz, 1991);

3. The negative impact of offence reports since it is the application of discipline and the rules that governs the institution (Krommenacker, ibid; Mary, 1989);
4. Belief and disbelief in the helping relationship (Troy, Wortley & Stewart, 2003; Josi & Sechrest, 1998).

The questions present a syntactical inversion forcing the respondent to carefully graduate his response. A number of them underlie a negative aspect in the actual formulation of the phrase and it is up to the respondent to correct the meaning by the qualified grading offered to him.

The scale consists of 29 items including 14 that deal with role ambiguity : numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29; while the remaining 15 deal with role conflict: numbers 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28. Subjects are asked to indicate the degree to which the condition exists using a 7-point scale ranging from *Very Strongly Disagree* to *Very Strongly Agree.*

## *22) Supervisory Support*

These six (6) questions no longer deal with the instructors but the supervisors since the remainder of the questionnaire makes the link between the staff college and the first months in the institution. What is measured here is the cross-relationship between what the individual has learned and what he applies on contact with his new reality. This area could lead to certain observations about the relationship between the person's initial training and their very first reactions to an assignment in an institution.

Supervisory support consists of the degree to which an individual perceives their supervisor to be supportive through encouragement, motivation, providing assistance, and resolving disputes (Slate, Vogel & Johnson, 2001; Dollard & Winefield, 1998; Van Voorhis et al., 1991).

In order to create a scale that would adequately measure the above explanation of supervisory support, we have chosen the *Supervisory Support Scale* used by Van Voorhis et al., (op. cit) and Cullen, Link, Wolfe and Frank (ibid.) in their respective studies of correctional officers. The scale consists of six statements about the conduct of their supervisor towards them and other co-workers. Supervisory support was part of the broad category of "coping factors" in the studies. Coping factors were explained by the authors as a resource that enables individuals to resist or to overcome potential stressors in their work environment (Wahler and Gendreau, 1990; Cullen et al., 1985). Subsequently, it lends support to the notion that the employee-supervisor relationship in a correctional setting is important to measure. The participants are required to respond, on a 7-point Likert scale, indicating the extent to which they agree with each statement where 1= *Very Strongly Disagree* and 7= *Very Strongly Agree*.

Results from the Cullen, Link, Wolfe, and Frank (ibid.) study of correctional officers showed an alpha level of .82, which indicates high reliability. Moreover, a third study of police officers (Tom Liou, 1995; Cullen et al., 1985), using the *Supervisory Support Scale*, also demonstrated high reliability and an alpha of ($\alpha$ =.81) was obtained. Although high reliability is important when considering whether to use a scale, evidence of validity is an especially important finding, since it is a rarer quality.

The *Supervisory Support Scale* has this advantage as well as demonstrating similar results in the two occupations (correctional officers and police officers). The end result of this evidence gives not only greater support for the scale's reliability, but also its validity (Cullen et al., op. cit).

# Participants by Region

| Atlantic | Quebec | Ontario | Prairies | Pacific | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 (9%) | 59 (24%) | 95> (38%) | 29 (11%) | 44 (18%) | N = 249 |

### *Next Step*

The first empirical observation for the *Pre A*, *Pre B* and *Post* periods will be submitted in a second report by spring 2004 for all five regions. The tentative title is:

*An Examination of Correctional Officers Recruits During Training*. However, in order to avoid certain biaises created by the results of the recruits who are currently participating in this research, we will limit this to a preliminary data analysis based on the interpretation of that data.

A third and final research report will have the following tentative title:

*Correctional Officers and Their First Year: An Empirical Investigation* is expected in December 2004.

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