

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

Joe Hudson
University of Calgary
Calgary, Alberta

Julian V. Roberts
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, Ontario

Abstract — This introduction to evaluation research on the criminal justice system provides a summary of the criminal justice system in Canada, discusses problems relating to research in the area, and introduces the articles contained in the issue.

Résumé — Cette introduction à la recherche d'évaluation sur le système pénal résume le système pénal au Canada, discute les problèmes touchant la recherche, et introduit les articles qui font partie de ce numéro spécial.

THIS THEME ISSUE OF THE *Journal* had its beginning with a proposal made to the executive of the Evaluation Society by one of the editors almost 4 years ago. As it turned out, that proposal languished in some bureaucratic void until resuscitated and endorsed by executive action slightly over a year ago. The publication process moved quickly since then, as evidenced by this issue.

Contacts, inquiries, and solicitations were made to evaluators across the country known or thought likely to be involved in criminal justice work. While no effort was made to obtain contributors with diverse academic and professional backgrounds, considerable variation has in fact been achieved. Represented here are evaluators with backgrounds in law, sociology, public administration, criminology, social work, business, and psychology. Perhaps surprisingly, criminologists are not predominant among the contributors. Considerable

balance is also demonstrated in the attention given to the major components of the justice system — police, courts, and corrections. Regrettably, we were not as successful at achieving our intended aim of wide geographic representation. Only Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario are represented. We hope this will be rectified in the next stage of this project, the publication of a book on Canadian criminal justice evaluation research, sponsored by the Canadian Evaluation Society.

This introduction will first provide some details of the structure of the Canadian criminal justice system, to lend context for those readers not familiar with what might seem to be a rather foreign field of inquiry and practice. We then turn briefly to the articles that follow.

ISSUES

Over the last several decades, crime and the operations of the criminal justice system have become a major concern for many Canadians, as evidenced by actual and perceived growth in the volume of crime, the number of persons handled by the system, and the expenditures required to apprehend, adjudicate, and deal with sentenced offenders. Not surprisingly, then, program evaluation research efforts have played an increasingly important role in bringing information to bear on important policy and program initiatives, and in this way have helped to deal with citizen concerns, and problems confronting system officials and those persons caught up in system operations. The series of evaluations that follow deal with the nature and consequences of programs operating within the three components of the justice system. In doing so, they confront basic assumptions about the manner and extent to which different programs work by using systematic procedures to collect information for use in making decisions. This process can be complicated, expensive, and time consuming, certainly more so than intuitively “knowing” simple answers to difficult questions.

System Structure

The federal nature of the Canadian state means that a complex set of administrative arrangements characterize the criminal justice system. Most generally, the federal Parliament has authority to make the criminal law, and the provinces are responsible for administration. But this apparently clear distinction is muddled by the fact that the federal

government also has responsibility for operating correctional institutions called "penitentiaries," and the provinces are responsible for the operation of other institutions called "prisons." The distinction between the two is based on length of sentence, with penitentiaries handling offenders sentenced to incarceration for a period of 2 years or more and prisons handling those sentenced to incarceration for less than 2 years.

All courts are established and administered by the provinces, although the power of appointment of superior, district, and county court judges rests with the federal government. The ostensible aim of the federal/provincial division is to create a balance between national standards and local considerations.

Policing services are provided largely through provincial governments via either municipal police forces, provincial police forces (Ontario, Newfoundland, and Quebec), or contractual agreements with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Similarly, almost all prosecutions under the Criminal Code (with the exception of the Food and Drug and Narcotic Control Acts) are handled by the provinces. Offenders sentenced to community sanctions, such as probation or fines, are handled by provincial authorities, and in some provinces separate parole boards have been established to serve inmates being released from provincial institutions. Those offenders released on parole or mandatory release from federal penitentiaries are handled by the National Parole Board, and parole supervision services are provided by the federal corrections agency, Correctional Service Canada.

Growth in Crime Rates

Crime rates for several categories of offense have risen steadily in Canada in recent years. Although total Criminal Code offenses increased by only 7% between 1985 and 1989, crimes of violence rose by 26% in this period. This increase is reflected in assault and sexual assault statistics. Assaults rose by 28% between 1985 and 1989 (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1990). More dramatic growth is evident in the area of sexual assault. The rate of incidents recorded by the police per 100,000 people was 56 in 1983. By 1988 this rate had risen to 112, representing an increase in the number of incidents from 13,851 in 1983 to 29,111 in 1988 (Roberts, 1991). Moreover, these figures represent incidents reported to and then recorded by the police and are therefore subject to a number of limitations.

The most important of these concerns the fact that many, if not most, crimes are not reported to the police. Even for a very serious crime such as sexual assault, more incidents are unreported than are reported. Thus, the Canadian Urban Victimization Survey (Solicitor General of Canada, 1985) found that only 38% of acts of sexual aggression were reported to the police. Even when incidents are reported, a certain percentage of them are declared unfounded by the police and are not pursued. The unfounded rate varies considerably from crime to crime, but for some crimes it is substantial: for infanticide it reaches 40%; for manslaughter it was 14% in the most recent year (1989) for which data are available (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1990). The eminent criminologist Leon Radzinowicz (Hood & Sparks, 1978) estimated that only about 15% of all crimes committed in England are officially recorded by the police; there is little reason to believe the figure for Canada is very different. In short, crime rates, particularly crime rates for certain offenses, have been rising, and even these figures underestimate the true extent of the problem.

Opinion surveys have demonstrated that the Canadian public believes crime is a major national problem. A 1984 survey reported that nearly one in five of those surveyed rated crime as the most important social problem in Canada. At the same time, however, other studies have found that citizens consistently overestimate the amount of crime in the country, particularly the amount of violent crime committed. Thus Doob and Roberts (1982) found that four-fifths of a representative sample of the Canadian public overestimated the percentage of all crimes that involve violence. While the actual figure of crimes recorded by the police that involve violence is approximately 5%, fully 80% of the public estimated this figure to be between 30% and 100%. As well, although Canadian crime rates are modest in comparison to those in the U.S., the Canadian public has a tendency to feel that rates in the two countries are comparable. Not surprisingly, then, members of the public fear crime and feel vulnerable. This is particularly true of women, the less affluent, the elderly, and those who live alone.

System Processing

The operations of the criminal justice system resemble a funnel, with high attrition of cases as they move through the system. For example, a large volume of crime is never reported to the police and therefore does not appear in official crime statistics. Of crimes

reported to the police only a minority result in a criminal charge, and even then many charges are dropped or withdrawn before a trial. This process of attrition is best illustrated by considering recent statistics for cases of break-and-enter provided by Linden (1987). Not all cases of break-and-enter are brought to the attention of the police, and police do not proceed with all cases brought to their attention. Attrition proceeds in this way such that for every 43 offenses that occur, only one person is sentenced to a period of imprisonment. The relatively small number of cases that actually reach criminal trial commonly result in conviction on the basis of plea negotiations between the prosecutor and defence counsel. For those convicted and sentenced, a fine is the most common criminal sanction imposed, followed by probation.

Even given the relatively low rate of incarceration, considerable growth in the use of prisons and penitentiaries has occurred: The average provincial inmate population increased by 8% over the period 1981/82 to 1985/86, and the average federal inmate population increased by 26% over the same period. This meant that in 1985/86 a total of 16,358 inmates were being held in provincial institutions and another 11,214 in penitentiaries. In 1985/86 the typical inmate admitted to a provincial prison was 27 years old, and almost one-third of all these admissions were for failure to pay a fine. The average age in 1985/86 for federal inmates was 30 years, with approximately half sentenced for either robbery or break-and-enter (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1986).

Financial Costs

System costs have increased in line with volume of cases handled. Expenditures on criminal justice have risen from \$293 million in 1961 to \$3,824 million in 1980 (Griffiths & Verdun-Jones, 1989, p. 34). In 1979/80 Canadians spent over \$2 billion on police services and another \$1 billion on corrections. From 1981/82 to 1985/86 total expenditures on adult corrections, controlled for inflation, increased by 36% to approximately \$1.4 billion. Almost four-fifths covered the costs of correctional institutions. In 1984/85 the gross annual cost of keeping an inmate in a federal penitentiary was reported to be \$40,672, whereas the cost of supervision on parole or mandatory supervision was \$4,508 (Canadian Sentencing Commission, 1987, p. 359).

Criminal Justice Research

Evaluation studies of criminal justice programs and policies in Canada are principally funded by provincial or federal governments. Since the federal government has jurisdiction over criminal law and procedures, evaluations addressing national programs and legislative policy statements are usually funded by either the Department of Justice or the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Within the Department of Justice, two major organizational units take responsibility for program evaluation work. On the one hand, the Bureau of Program Evaluation and Internal Audit carries primary responsibility for conducting, commissioning, and disseminating the results of evaluations done by in-house staff or commissioned to academics or consulting firms. On occasion, however, the Research Section of the Department also takes responsibility for conducting and commissioning evaluation research on program and policy initiatives falling within the ambit of the Department.

Within the Ministry of the Solicitor General, evaluation work can take place in several different domains. The Ministry is made up of a number of operating agencies, including the R.C.M.P., Correctional Service Canada, the National Parole Board, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, all of whom have evaluation units in place to carry out or commission studies on operating programs. In addition, the Secretariat of the Ministry has specialist staff in the areas of police, courts, and corrections who commission or conduct evaluations on substantive programs falling within their respective domains.

In addition to the Department of Justice and the Ministry of the Solicitor General, there is a third party with an important influence over criminal justice evaluations in this country. In the Office of the Comptroller General there is the Program Evaluation Branch, which performs several functions. First, it offers advice to the individual departments that either carry out or commission particular evaluation projects. Second, it coordinates the various evaluation projects in which the federal government is engaged. Third, it provides information about evaluation studies conducted by the federal government, including those in the area of criminal justice.

The dissemination of evaluations done or sponsored by federal and provincial government departments and agencies seems deficient in that many of the studies end up in the archives of the sponsoring government

department, with no listing of criminal justice evaluations routinely published or circulated widely. No institutional memory exists.

Alternative approaches to disseminating the results of research are found in the United Kingdom and United States. The British Home Office routinely publishes reports in a continuing series titled *Home Office Research Studies*. These often involve evaluation research and are widely circulated throughout the country and elsewhere, with individual reports reprinted to meet demand. Additionally, the Home Office publishes an annual research program containing descriptions of ongoing research, plans for research to be undertaken, and a listing of research and statistical publications available. Similar practices are followed in the United States, where the National Institute of Justice within the Department of Justice catalogues completed research, advertises publications, and distributes them on request.

The situation in Canada presents a stark contrast. Take the case of an individual researcher planning an evaluation of a criminal justice program. In order to determine what evaluations have been done on the subject, he or she must carry out a literature search. However, unless evaluations have been published in a scholarly journal, they are unlikely to be captured by a conventional bibliographic search. The investigator is then obliged to contact federal and provincial government departments. But even trawling these sources is likely to be insufficient. Turnover of personnel is frequently high in sociolegal research sections, and therefore the individuals who directed, carried out, or commissioned a particular evaluation may well have moved on. Furthermore, cataloguing procedures for research publications in government departments are far from systematic.

What can be done to remedy this rather dismal state of affairs? One possibility is for the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics in Statistics Canada to begin playing a role. Part of the Centre's mandate is to facilitate the exchange of information relevant to the criminal justice system. To date, this has been interpreted to mean the dissemination of statistical publications. But there seems to be no reason why the cataloguing of criminal justice evaluations could not also become an important part of the Centre's responsibilities. An annual catalogue of evaluations completed, along with information about the sponsor, methods used, and results obtained, would probably be relatively inexpensive to produce and would provide an important service to researchers and policy-makers alike. A Canadian criminal justice corporate memory would begin to exist.

THIS ISSUE

Although differing in terms of focus and scope, methods, and stage in the criminal justice system examined, all of the articles that follow share a concern with bringing empirical facts to bear on questions about the way programs are implemented and the consequences of their implementation.

The first article in this issue, by Julian Roberts, gives an excellent overview of Canadian criminal justice evaluations by presenting the results of a content analysis of evaluations published in Canadian criminology journals over a 30-year period. Among the points noted by Roberts is that two-thirds of all the published evaluations dealt with corrections, and of these almost half dealt with institutional offender rehabilitation programs. Perhaps surprising to evaluators outside of criminal justice program areas, where little use is made of randomized designs, Roberts reports that one-quarter of the evaluations reviewed made use of an experimental design.

The second article, by Rick Linden, presents a meta-analysis of evaluations done on three crime prevention and policing initiatives: police-based strategies and programs, community crime prevention programming, and community policing programs. The different program efforts are briefly described, evaluation methods outlined, and results summarized.

The article by Joseph Hornick, Barbara Burrows, Donna Phillips, and Barry Leighton provides an interesting complement to Linden's paper by dealing in some detail with the evaluation of a community policing initiative undertaken in the City of Edmonton. This report on the Edmonton Neighbourhood Foot Patrol Program presents the methods used and results obtained on three key questions: the extent to which citizen users of the Foot Patrol Program were satisfied, the extent to which there was a reduction in the number of repeat calls to police, and the impact on level of police job satisfaction.

The article by Rita Gunn and Rick Linden addresses both police and courts, presenting the results of an evaluation done in Winnipeg on the effects of the 1983 sexual assault legislation, Bill C-127. Using a variety of data sources, including police records, Crown files, court documents, Sexual Assault Centre files, and interviews with officials involved in processing cases, the investigators attempt to identify changes in the handling of sexual assault offenses before and after introduction of the legislation.

The article by Wanda Jamieson and R.R. Ross then moves directly into the courts, specifically in the form of evaluating a victim/witness assistance program established in seven sites throughout Ontario. These authors describe a client-user survey undertaken to assess the degree of satisfaction with program services and to identify those services requiring improvement.

The final four articles deal with corrections programs. The first of these, by James Hill, D.A. Andrews, and Robert Hoge, presents a meta-analysis of treatment programs serving young offenders. These authors draw attention to the popular slogan that "nothing works," and then present the results of a review of 45 studies of juvenile correctional treatments that appeared in professional journals between 1975 and 1984. They conclude by noting that in fact, a variety of interventions are effective.

Mamie Rice, Grant Harris, and Vernon Quinsey then present an evaluation case study of a correctional treatment program for persons convicted of sexual offenses against children. In a candid manner, these authors describe the treatment approach implemented, initial expectations of positive results, and the generally negative findings of treatment efficacy.

The two final articles deal, respectively, with terminal points in the criminal justice system — parole decision-making and parole supervision. In their article Ronald Corbeil, Sheila Faure, and Donald Lemaire describe the approach used to evaluate Bill C-67 as this involved changing features of automatic day parole review and detention carried out by the National Parole Board. Considerable attention is given to the planning for these evaluations along with the results achieved. The last article, by Joe Hudson, presents a meta-analysis of evaluation studies conducted on parole supervision. Almost all of the 13 studies described in this paper used rigorous, randomized designs to address three questions: what are the effects of early institutional release to parole; what are the results of different-sized supervision caseloads; what are the consequences of receiving different amounts of parole supervision?

Some more general observations can be offered about the focus, design, and methods used in this series of articles. Most generally, three types of matters are addressed. First are those articles taking a meta-evaluative focus by reviewing, assessing, and summarizing a

number of evaluations carried out at specific points in the criminal justice system. Included in this category is the article by Roberts, which presents an analysis of evaluations published over a 30-year period in the two principal Canadian criminology journals. A similar but somewhat more modest effort is contained in Linden's article dealing with policing strategies and initiatives. The third article taking a meta-evaluation approach is the one by Hill, Andrews, and Hoge, which reviews the efficacy of correctional treatment programs for young offenders. Finally, Hudson's article reviews evaluations of parole supervision. A second set of articles focuses on the evaluation of a specific criminal justice program — neighbourhood foot patrol, victim/witness assistance, child molester treatment. Finally, two articles deal with the evaluation of legislative changes — Bills C-67 and C-127.

Consonant with their focus, the articles either relate to specific communities (Winnipeg, Edmonton, and seven communities in Ontario) or adopt a national and international perspective on the respective program efforts addressed.

None of the individual evaluation studies presented here made use of a randomized design, although a large number of the studies covered in the four meta-evaluation articles did use random assignment to treatment and control conditions. Of the nine designs covered in the five articles dealing with the evaluation of particular programs and legislation (those by Hornick et al., Gunn & Linden, Jamieson & Ross, Rice et al., Corbeil et al.), four amount to single-group, after-only or one-shot case studies; three are single-group, before-after studies; one is a comparison-group, before-after study; and one is a comparison-group, after-only study. Detailed tabular information follows. Those articles using more than one type of design are keyed alphabetically according to order of presentation in the text.

Single group, after-only	Single group, before-after	Comparison group, after-only	Comparison group, before-after
Hornick et al., (c)	Hornic et al., (a)	Rice et al.	Hornick et al., (b)
Jamieson & Ross	Gunn & Linden		
Corbeil et al., (a) (b)	Corbeil et al., (c)		

Regarding data collection sources and procedures, four of the five program evaluations relied on official/administrative records and either phone or in-person interviews; one study made use of a mailed questionnaire.

In summary, the articles in this special issue of *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation* reveal some of the nature and type of evaluation research being done on the criminal justice system in Canada. We hope this issue will help to further promote research into the operations of the criminal justice system in Canada with respect to both implementation processes and outcomes.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (1986). *Adult correctional services in Canada*. Ottawa: Supply and Services.
- Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. (1990). *Canadian crime statistics*. Ottawa: Supply and Services.
- Canadian Sentencing Commission. (1987). *Sentencing reform: A Canadian approach*. Ottawa: Supply and Services.
- Doob, A.N., & Roberts, J.V. (1982). *Crime and official response to crime: The views of the Canadian public*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Griffiths, C., & Verdun-Jones, S. (1989). *Canadian criminal justice*. Toronto: Butterworths.
- Hood, R. & Sparks, R. (1970). *Key issues in criminology*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Linden, R. (1987). *Criminology: A Canadian perspective*. Toronto: Holt Rinehart.
- Roberts, J.V. (1991). *Sexual assault in Canada: An analysis of national statistics*. Ottawa: Department of Justice.
- Solicitor General of Canada. (1985). *Female victims of crime: Canadian urban victimization survey #4*. Ottawa: Supply and Services.