

# Sociology 3395: Criminal Justice & Corrections

## Overheads Class 24:

### Corrections in Canada: History, Facilities & Populations

- \* In this chapter we look at: (1) The history of Canadian corrections
- (2) Profile the prison population
- (3) Tough issues (coping/violence/suicide)
- (4) Inmates' legal rights

#### **(1) History:**

- \* Canada only recently increased its use of prisons
- \* The earliest prisons operated on either the “Pennsylvania system” (segregation) or the “Auburn system” (working together).
- \* Canada followed Auburn approach/ architecture
- \* First prisons provincial/ taken over by federal government (1868)
- \* Early prisons harsh/ discipline severe
- \* Early 1900's parole, staff training, and inmate classification emerged, along with policy of normalization (education/vocational programs)
- \* 1935 medical model of corrections adopted/ increased # of facilities
- \* 1963: reintegration model became influential
- \* 1990's: reintegration merged with risk assessment

- \* Women first housed in Kingston Pen: separate facility built (1934). Harsh treatment/ sexual abuse common.
- \* Numerous commissions urged separate regional facilities/ programs
- \* 1994 strip-search incident in Kingston/ Arbour Commission criticized CSC and finally facilitated new regional facilities

## **(2) Profile of the Adult Correctional Population:**

- \* 2000-01: total correctional caseload= 151,500 (40% federal; 25% provincial/territorial; & 25% remand/temporary)
- \* Incarceration rate (133/100,000) dropped 5% since 1991.
- \* Lowest incarceration rates in East/ highest on Prairies
- \* Most admissions for non-violent offences (except Man./Sask.)
- \* Provincially/territorially 75% incarcerated for 3 months or less (Quebec shortest median / Sask. Longest)
- \* Federally 47% incarcerated 2-3 years; 21% 3-4; 4% lifers
- \* Males = 95% of federal/ 91% of provincial admissions (mostly males between 18-34). Aboriginals over-represented.

### **(3) The Role of Correctional Institutions:**

\* Corrections intended to make society safer. 3 philosophies:

- (1) Custodial model (emphasizing security measures)
- (2) Rehabilitation model (emphasizing treatment)
- (3) Reintegration/ risk reduction model

### **(4) Correctional Institutions:**

\* In 2000 there were 52 federal correctional institutions across Canada (12 minimum, 20 medium, and 10 maximum security)

\* There are also 5 new regional correctional facilities for women and a growing number of Aboriginal healing lodges

\* 151 provincial/territorial institutions across Canada (52% correctional centres, 27% jails/ detention centres, 16% alternative minimum security, and 5% remand).

\* Determining security classifications: likelihood of escape, danger, & violating institutional rules

\* Old classification: Maximum security (likelihood of escape/harm)  
Medium security (likelihood of escape/not harm)  
Minimum security (no likelihood of escape or harm)

\* Facilities: *Maximum security* (high walls/guard towers: 20% of federal inmates/provinces higher)  
*Medium security* (fences/ more movement/programs)  
*Minimum security* (could walk out)  
*Multilevel* (combines 2 or more of above in 1 institution)

\* New CSC Classification: Levels 1-7 (lowest to highest security).  
Separate classification for women.

### **(5) New Generation Correctional facilities:**

\* “Linear” facilities provide opportunities for trouble with limited supervision

\* New “Podular” facilities emphasize direct, continuous observation, interaction with staff, have reduced violence & escapes

\* Women offenders commit different & fewer offences than men (e.g. less violence). Special attempts have been made to reintegrate them into community

\* Aboriginal offenders younger, less educated and more violent

### **(6) Prison Life:**

\* Inmates live in “total institutions” under constant supervision, with little privacy, stifling regimental uniformity, & submission to institutional goals.

\* Farrington (1992) questions this, but prisons remain largely as stated

\* Inmate society involves a subculture of unwritten rules

\* Clemmer (1958): “inmate code” & the “prisonization” process

\* Sykes & Messinger (1960): the “prison code” (i.e. solidarity)

- (1) Don't interfere with inmate's interests
- (2) Don't lose your head
- (3) Don't exploit other inmates
- (4) Don't be a sucker, make a fool of yourself, or support guards

\* Cooley (1992): traditional prison code doesn't exist today. Now “informal rules of social control”:

- (1) Do your own time
- (2) Avoid the prison economy
- (3) Don't trust anyone
- (4) Show respect

\* Results in: (1) partially unstable environment  
(2) inmates' relative status

\* Inmate code breaking down : more violence and gang loyalties (CSC attempts to separate)

\* Womens' experiences differ:- emphasis on developing/maintaining relationships (“pseudo-families”)  
- self-injurious behavior  
-separation from children significant

### **(7) Prison Violence:**

\* While statistics unreliable, prison violence declined in 1980's/ grew since 1990.

\* The suicide rate in prisons is very high/ CSC implementing suicide prevention program in response

## **(8) Prisoners' Rights:**

- \* Until 1960's/70's "hands off doctrine" granted prisoners few rights
- \* In 1970's prisoners' rights movement/ court decisions resulted in courts granting prisoners (1) right to be heard; & (2) right to an impartial hearing (usually when disciplined or sent to solitary confinement)

### **Conclusion:**

- \* Today we have reviewed:
  - the history of Canadian corrections/facilities
  - the prison population
  - the realities of prison life
  - inmates' emerging legal rights