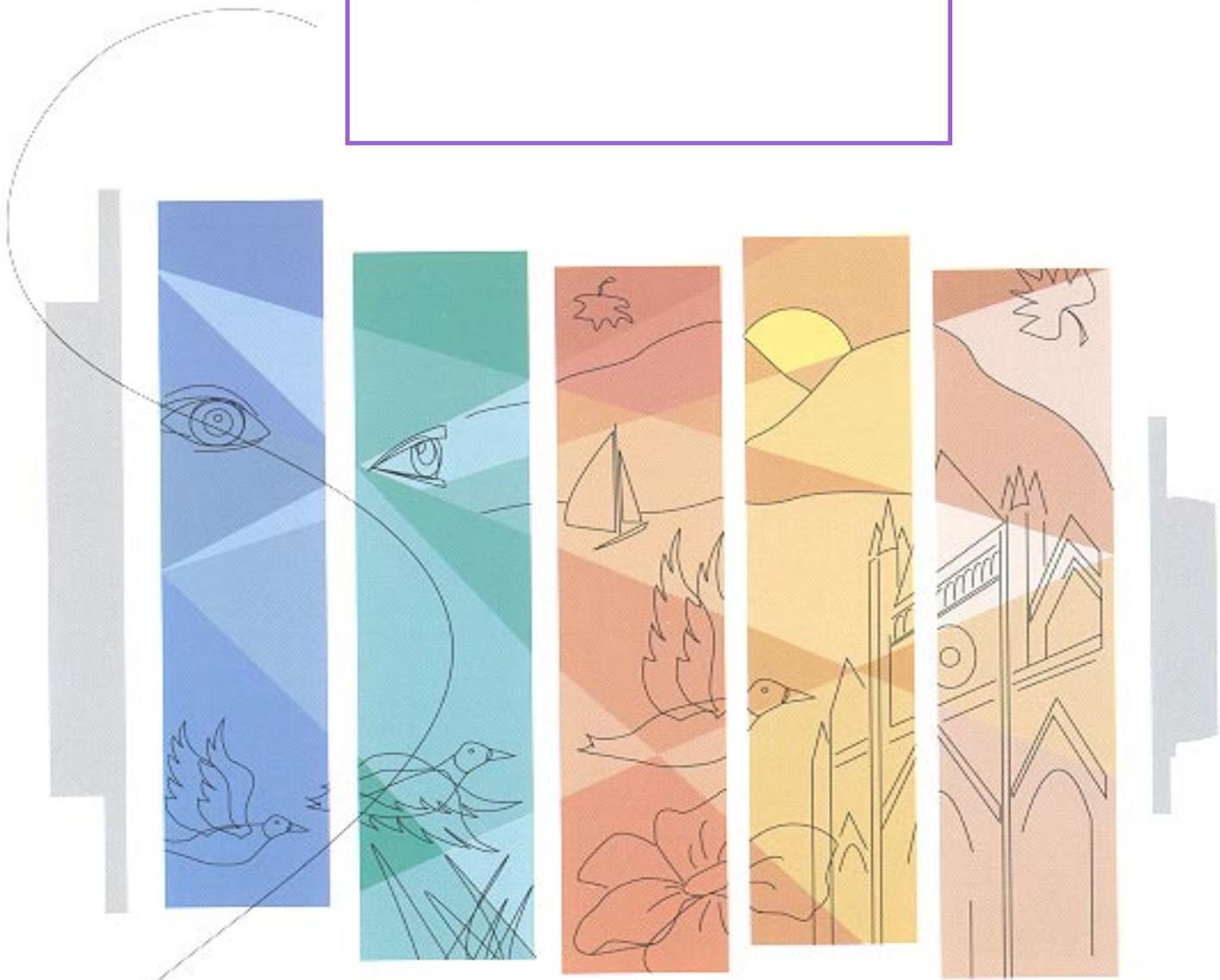




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Literature Review on the Factors Related to Escape from Correctional Institutions



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Introduction

Correctional institutions are intended to provide safe, secure and humane containment for convicted offenders who pose a potential threat to the community. For the protection of the community, the single most important responsibility of correctional institutions is to prevent escapes or other unauthorised "walkways". Although it has been understood that not all convicted offenders pose an equal threat to society, and not all institutions are the same with respect to the security measures they provide, the occurrence of escapes are cause for serious concern both among correctional staff and the public in general.

Despite the importance of understanding the phenomena of escape behaviour, there has been a paucity of empirical research addressing factors which are related to escape from correctional institutions. While most research available has been American, there have been relatively few Canadian studies (Basu, 1983; Guenther, 1983; Wharry, 1972). These studies have analyzed escapes from various institutional security levels (i.e., minimum, medium and maximum) and have examined the propensity to escape for different classes or types of inmates (i.e., young offenders, male adult offenders, female adult offenders).

The studies on factors related to escape behaviour have also used different methods of analysis. Two commonly used approaches are the quasi-experimental design which typically focuses on archival data and compares a group of non-escapees to escapees, and the other is a simple descriptive approach to analyzing the characteristics of inmates involved in escape incidents. Finally, it should be underscored that much of this research is outdated and sometimes experimentally inadequate.

There have been only a few studies focusing specifically on factors related to walkaways from minimum security institutions. These studies have usually defined a walkaway as an escape (Basu, 1983; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; and Murphy, 1984). Although being similar in most aspects, the important difference between what has been termed a "walkaway" and an "escape" is that the former takes place in a setting without the presence of a perimeter security system (i.e., fences, PIDS - Perimeter Intrusion Detection Systems, etc.). For all practical purposes, walkaways take place from minimum security institutions. These minimum security facilities operate in an open environment providing institutional and community programs, activities, and services. Moreover, these institutions essentially operate without security officers, particularly in the evenings, since the inmates confined to them are not considered a serious risk for potential escape. Typically, the inmates are either nearing their release on parole or are already on some form of conditional release. The definition of a walkaway is also extended to apply in those situations where individual inmate does not return to an institution while, for example, on day parole, or in a community work program.

The focus of research which has examined factors related to escape from correctional institutions generally has fallen into three categories. First, a considerable number of studies have examined static factors (Anson and Hartnett,

1983; Basu, 1983; Cowles, 1981; Holt, 1974; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Loving et al., 1959; McNeil, 1978; Morgan, 1967; Murphy, 1984; New York Department of Correctional Services, 1982 and 1986; Scott et al., 1977; Shaffer et al., 1985; Stone, 1975; Thornton and Speirs, 1985; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1975; 1978; 1979; 1980; 1981; 1982; Wharry, 1972) Second, other studies have examined situational or dynamic factors (Anson and Hartnett, 1983; Basu, 1983; Duncan and Ellis, 1973; McNeil, 1978; Morgan, 1967; Murphy, 1984). Thirdly, psychological characteristics of inmates who have escaped from correctional institutions are also frequently looked at (Chase, 1973; Fisher, 1977; Green and Martin, 1973; Loving et al., 1959; Morrow, 1969; Murphy, 1984; Pierce, 1971; Scott et al., 1977; shaffer et al., 1985; White, 1979).

It should be noted that there is another body of research which has strictly addressed security concerns of institutions with respect to escape behaviour (Camp and Camp, 1987; and Capano, 1987). Some of the security areas which have been examined are types of fences, walls, alarm systems, patrol systems, towers, and so forth.

With respect to identifying characteristics of "escapees", research has demonstrated that static variables are good predictors. As well, situational/dynamic variables are useful since they are subject to change and can be used to identify appropriate preventive interventions. For the purpose of this paper, we review the range of static and dynamic/situational factors that research has examined in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the phenomena of walkaways and escapes.

Static Factors

Property Offenses

Static factors have been the most frequently examined in the escape literature. These factors include demographic variables (e.g., age, sex, etc.) as well as prior criminal history variables (e.g., criminal record, offense type). A number of studies have indicated that inmates who escape from correctional institutions are more likely to have histories of property offenses rather than offenses against persons (Basu, 1983; Cowles, 1981; Holt, 1974; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Murphy, 1984, Stone, 1975; Thornton and Speirs, 1985; and Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978 and 1980). In one study (Holt, 1974), it was observed that 94% of the inmates from an escapee group were property offenders compared to 68% of the inmates from a control group of non-escapees. Another study (Murphy, 1984) found that 68% of escapees were property offenders compared to 48% for the non-escapees. Of note is the fact that there seems to be not clear explanation in the literature as to why this relationship persists (i.e., the relationship between property offenses and escapes).

Prior Institutional Escapes

It has been frequently observed that escapees are more likely to have a record of prior prison escapes (Cowles, 1981; Farrington and Tarling, 1985; Hilbrand, 1969; Holt, 1974; Murphy, 1984; Stone, 1975, Thorton and Speirs, 1985; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978; and Wharry, 1972). When comparing escapees with non-escapees, Murphy (1984) noted that escapees were three times more likely to have escaped from a correctional institution as a juvenile than non-escapees. In another study, Holt (1974) pointed out that 38% of the escapees had escape histories compared to 17% of the control group of non-escapees. Moreover, Holt suggested that the time period since the inmates' previous escape is important. He reported that the inmates who had escaped had a record of more recent escapes compared to the non-escapee group. Finally, prior escape record is a good indicator, or predictor, used in risk assessments for classifying inmates at various security levels (Correctional Service of Canada, 1989; National Institute of Justice, 1987).

Race

A frequently cited variable related to likelihood of escape in the American literature is race. Most studies have observed that escapees tend to be predominantly white (Cowles, 1983; Murphy, 1984; Morgan, 1967; Holt, 1974; Stone, 1975; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978; 1980; 1982). Murphy's (1984) study revealed that while whites comprised 75% of the escapee population, they represented only 40 of the general prison population. In another survey, the Virginia Department of Corrections (1980) reported that 72.7% of the inmates who had escaped were white males. By analyzing escapees in proportion to the general prison population, Holt (1974) indicated that whites were one and one-half times as likely to escape than blacks. Finally in Cowles (1983) survey, a moderate positive correlation between escape behaviour and race was found. That is, whites engaged in escape behaviour more frequently than blacks. He noted that approximately half of the inmate population in American corrections was black and that whites were generally over-represented in the escape population.

Some studies have provided theoretical perspectives such as the traditional "prisonization" and "deprivation" theories to explain prison escape behaviour (Cowles, 1983). With respect to the United States, it is speculated that blacks are less likely to escape from a correctional institution than whites because their socio-economic conditions on the outside are considered similar or even worse than those within the institution (Cowles, 1983). Similarly, Hilbrand (1969) stated that inmates escape because they are ensured further incarceration and loss of freedom when they are recaptured. He referred to this speculation as the "institutionalization" theory. Here, the inmate is apparently dependent on the criminal justice system to such a degree that he fears the freedom gained by returning to the community. It should be noted that this theoretical speculation has not been empirically tested. That is, there has never been any systematic comparison of the socio-economic conditions of white or black offenders who escape as proposed to those who do not. Moreover, no study has ever directly surveyed offenders as to their motivations for escape.

Age

Studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between the age of the inmate and likelihood of escape. These studies demonstrate that "escapees" tend to be a younger group of individuals compared to "non-escapees" (Anson and Hartnett, 1983; Basu, 1983; Guenther, 1983; Holt, 1974; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; New York Department of Correctional Services, 1982; 1986; Morgan, 1967; Scott e. al., 1977; Stone, 1975; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978; Wharry, 1972). More specifically, most of these studies have indicated that the average age of an escapee tends to be under 30 years. The New York Department of Correctional Services (1986) pointed out in their study that 79% of escapees were under thirty years of age and that the average age of an escapee was 26.1 years. In another study, Morgan (1967) found that significantly more inmates escaped who were under 25 years old. Cowles' (1981) research, however, found that escapees tend to be older than non-escapees (e.g., over 30 years of age). Cowles' inmate sample consisted of 401 escapees and 425 non-escapees from Missouri Division of Corrections. It is noteworthy that the offenders' age has been used as a reliable predictor, and used in objective risk assessments for classifying inmates at various levels of security (Correctional Service of Canada, 1989). It has been suggested that as the offender becomes older, he or she slowly desists from criminal involvement.

Prior Confinements

Another consistent finding in the literature is that escapees have a more frequent history of prior confinements than non-escapees (Basu, 1983; Holt, 1974; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Murphy, 1984; Scott et al., 1977; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978; wherry, 1972). Most of these studies define prior confinements as including both juvenile and adult periods of imprisonment. Holt's (1974) findings indicated that inmates with high escape rates and more prior incarcerations. In Murphy's (1984) study, escapees were significantly more likely to have a juvenile commitment than non-escapees. Similarly, research conducted by the Virginia Department of Corrections (1977) observed that escapees have more prior incarcerations as juveniles than inmates from the general population. Nonetheless, in Morgan's (1967) sample of escapees, more inmates escaped who had only one commitment than those who had previous commitments. It was not clear, however, whether the sample he used was representative of the inmate population. Although Morgan did not provide an explanation for his anomalous findings, it can be speculated that the inmates who had only one previous commitment found it more difficult to adjust to the institution. At this point, the picture may not be perfectly clear, but the general pattern of prior confinement being associated with escape seems fairly well established.

Sentence Served

Time served before escaping has been identified as a significant variable in the research literature. It has been postulated that some offenders will escape as soon as possible in order to avoid a lengthy period of confinement. In one study, fifty percent of escapees had served less than one year of their local jail or prison terms before they had escaped (New York Department of Correctional Services, 1986). McNeil (1978) reported that most escapees in his sample were those who recently arrived at the institution. One Canadian study which examines escapes from medium and minimum security institutions, reported that inmates having served less than 25% of their sentence are more prone to escape than those who have served more than 25% of their sentence (Wherry, 1972). Moreover, Morgan's research (1967) observed that significantly more inmates escaped who had served less than half their sentence than those who had served more than half. Finally, two other studies have shown that the majority of escapees typically serve only between three to four months before they escape (Hilbrand, 1969; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979).

Other Factors

Less frequently cited static variables in the escape literature are marital status, juvenile criminal history, education, length of sentence, number of dependents, and prior parole and probation violations. In one study, Morgan (1967) noted that there were more single inmates who escaped than married inmates. However, Coles' (1981) research finds the opposite relationship. That is, inmates who escaped were more likely to be married than to be single. Also, Stone (1975) and the Virginia Department of Corrections (1978) report similar findings to Cowles'. The Kentucky Bureau of Corrections (1979), however, reported no significant relationship between marital status and escape.

Two studies cite juvenile criminal history as a significant variable related to escape (Murphy, 1984; Shaffer, Bluoin, & Pettigrew, 1985). They argue that escapees tend to have an extensive general criminal history than non-escapees.

With respect to education, Morgan (1967) noted in his research that more inmates escaped who had achieved a secondary diploma than those who had lower grade levels. Basu (1983) recorded similar results. He reported that escapees tend to have more secondary education than non-escapees.

Scott et al. (1977), Stone (1975), and the Virginia Department of Corrections (1978) demonstrated that escapees tend to have longer sentences compared to non-escapees. With respect to the Virginia Department of Corrections (1978) study, the average sentence length of an escapee was 6 to 9 years. From these studies, it is probable that escaping offenders were unwilling to spend a lengthy period of time incarcerated. Morgan (1967), however, reported that significantly more inmates escaped who were serving sentences of five years or less, than those serving longer sentences. Moreover, Holt (1974) found sentence length to be a non-significant predictor of escape.

Loving, Stockwell, and Dobbins (1959) and Morgan (1967) reported that escapees tend to have no financial dependents. However, in this respect, the Kentucky Bureau of Corrections (1979) found no such relationship.

Finally, four studies have examined prior parole violations as being related to escape (Basu, 1983; Murphy, 1984; McNeil 1978; and Holt, 1974). These studies have fairly consistently shown that escapees tend to have more breach of parole, or general parole violations than non-escapees.

Dynamic/Situational Factors

Family Problems

Studies on escape behaviour have rarely examined situational/dynamic factors. From the studies that have examined these factors, one finding has been prevalent; a disruptive or unstable family situation has been significantly related to escape (Basu, 1983; Hilbrand, 1969; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; McNeil, 1977; Smith and Milan, 1973; Duncan and Ellis, 1973; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1975; Wharry, 1972). Family problems which have been measured include the following: divorce, separation, illness or death in the family, economic difficulties, problems with relatives, and so forth. It has been hypothesized that inmates will often escape in order to go home and attempt to alleviate family problems. McNeil (1977) reported that escapees tend to have significantly more problems with their wives or steady girlfriends than non-escapees and non-escapees to support his finding. He also found that escapees received less visitors monthly compared to non-escapees. A sample of escapees examined by Duncan and Ellis (1973) found that these inmates tended to have family difficulties. Examples of information on the escapees' files which were evaluated are the following: the inmate was not permitted to attend a relative's funeral, the inmate was not permitted to visit sick relatives, and the inmate was not able to deal with family problems at home. Although these often reflect administrative sanctions, they are at least indirectly related to escape in that they refer to family problems as noted above.

In Wharry's (1972) study, it was found that 11 of the 15 escapees who were surveyed had personal problems, mainly related to family. Moreover, Basu's (1983) research has shown that escapees have poor family ties, and frequent marital difficulties. Finally, Hilbrand (1969) found that inmates who escaped were most often experiencing personal and family problems, and that they did not receive much mail, nor receive many visitors. Hilbrand referred to this as rejection from the family. Another situation Hilbrand frequently noted was that in which the inmates' wife or girlfriend had ended their relationship (e.g., receiving a "Dear John" letter from their wife or girlfriend).

Interestingly, Hilbrand noted that of his sample of escapees, a large majority were not found to be engaged in any illegal activities (although it is always possible they might have been involved in crimes which were undetected). The majority of them simply wanted to go home (Murphy, 1984).

Residency

The distance between the inmates' home (e.g., residency) and the institution where they are confined has been suggested as a significant variable related to escape. Two studies have indicated that escapees tend to have their homes further away from their correctional institution than non-escapees (Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Loving et al., 1959). Although only a few studies have analyzed this relationship, it is suspected that inmates whose homes are far from their institution have difficulties in maintaining family contact. As a result, this might contribute to the inmates' motivation to escape.

Prior Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Some research has indicated that both prior alcohol and drug abuse are related to escape (Basu, 1983; Murphy, 1984; Duncan and Ellis, 1973; McNeil, 1978; Morrow, 1969; New York Department of Correctional Services, 1989; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1981). The Virginia Department of Corrections (1981) reported that from their sample of 85 escapees, almost 70% had a history of alcohol and drug use. In McNeil's (1978) study, one third of the escapee group were prior alcohol abusers. This was statistically significant when compared to the non-escapee group. Moreover, McNeil found that 25% of escapees indicated that they were drunk when they escaped.

Morrow (1969) found an alcoholism rate of 42% for escapees, compared to 25% for non-escapees. Basu (1983) and Holt (1974), however, reported that base rates for alcoholism was high within the inmate population, and that prior alcohol abuse history could not distinguish between escapees and non-escapees. It is possible, and perhaps even probable, however, that differing definitions of what constitutes an alcoholic between various studies may account for differing results.

Further, Basu examined walkaways from minimum security institutions, while Hold examined both escapes and walkaways.

With respect to drugs, only a few studies have found a significant relationship between prior drug abuse and escape. McNeil (1978) indicated that prior drug abuse was significantly related to first time escapers. Holt (1974) examined women escapees and found the 64% reported prior drug abuse from the institutional group and 68% had prior drug abuse in the furlough group. The New York Department of Corrections (1989) found that 72% of escapees in their 1987 sample were prior drug abuser. Moreover, Basu (1983) argued in his research 1978; Morrow, 1969; New York Department of Correctional Services, 1989; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1981). The Virginia Department of Corrections (1981) reported that from their sample of 85 escapees, almost 70% had a history of alcohol and drug use. In McNeil's (1978) study, one third of the escapee group were prior alcohol abusers. This was statistically significant when compared to the non-escapee group. Moreover, McNeil found that 25% of escapees indicated that they were drunk when they escaped.

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Parole Problems

Another frequently reported factor found in the literature related to escape is that of parole denial (Duncan and Ellis, 1973; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Holt, 1974; McNeil, 1977; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1980; Wharry, 1972). Examples of parole variables which have been used include the following: no parole review scheduled, no parole date set, and parole date deferred. It is suspected that offenders who are denied conditional release have a greater potential to escape.

In one study, it was found the 34.3% of escapees had their parole date deferred (Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979). Holt's (1974) research indicated that of the escapees who were from direct transfers (e.e., inmates transferred from a reception unit to an institution of suitable security level), ten percent had parole hearing dates set, but most of these dates were more than a year away at the time of their escape. In Holt's study, only 17% of escapees had parole dates set, which was a significantly lower figure than that for inmates from the general prison population. The Virginia Department of Corrections (1980) indicated that 30.7% of escapees were not eligible for parole at the time of their escape, and 52% of escapees had been denied parole prior to escape. Hilbrand (1969) also showed that escapees had their parole hearings a lengthy time away from the time they escaped. Finally, in Wharry's (1972) study, it was observed that inmates who had not been granted previous temporary absences were more prone to escape than those who had.

Institutional Crisis Situations

Some studies have indicated that sexual assault and physical assault or confrontation with other inmates are related to escape (McNeil, 1978; Murphy, 1984; Loving et al., 1959; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Wharry, 1972;

Hilbrand, 1969). These factors are described as crisis situations that motivate the offender to escape. Murphy (1984) found the following variables significantly related to escape: sexual pressure, victim of assault, and gang pressure. However, he indicated that only a limited number of crisis situations were reported in his sample.

Hilbrand (1969) indicated that juvenile inmates are more prone to escape from potential sexual encounters and physical aggression. He also pointed out that in some cases inmates might escape because they have a vindictive motive to retaliate against someone on the outside. Loving et al., (1959) stated that threats or violence by other inmates contribute to a stressful situation which compels the inmate to avoid the situation by escaping. Further, Hilbrand, Duncan, and Ellis (1973) indicated that the owing and/or lending of money sometimes plays a major role in escape. They believed that many offenders escape to avoid a stressful or crisis situation (e.g., being assaulted for not paying money back). This view was confirmed by McNeil (1978), who observed that escapees had salient fears about other inmates, often related to owing money.

Duncan and Ellis (1973), the Kentucky Bureau of Corrections (1979), and McNeil (1977) reported that escapees tend to have problems or difficulties with staff (e.g., conflict with guards), and reported that communications with staff was a problem. McNeil pointed out that escapees seem to perceive most people as unfriendly. Anson and Hartnett (1983) noted that the inmates' relationship with staff and other inmates can be important in deterring escape. Finally, Allen (1968) focused on an array of stress indicators such as staff turnover, institutional adjustment, and staff stability, which might have contributed to the inmates' motivation to escape.

It should be pointed out that there have been instances in the United States where the appellate courts have responded sympathetically to claims of inmates who have escaped to avoid the threat of physical violence or homosexual rape (Fletcher, 1979; Gilmour, 1976). The defence of necessity and duress had been used in these situations (i.e., intolerable conditions and cruel and unusual punishment).

Institutional Misconduct and punishment

There had been some support in the literature that administering sentencing for serious institutional misconduct is related to escape (Hilbrand, 1969; Murphy 1984; Stone, 1975). Murphy (1984) found that escapees were more likely to receive punishment for a serious incident of misconduct than a sample of non-escapees. Stone (1975) found that the number of times an inmate was put in solitary confinement was also a predictor of escape. That is, his sample of escapees had been placed in solitary confinement more often than non-escapees. Stone noted, however, that some inmates used solitary confinement as a mechanism to escape institutional stress.

The Kentucky Bureau of Corrections (1978) also found that escapees tend to be in trouble with contraband more often than non-escapees. Hilbrand (1969) mentions that juveniles are more likely to escape when they receive a reprimand for misconduct, and perceive it as being unjustified or unwarranted. Finally, Duncan and Ellis (1973) indicated that 42.6% of their escapee group gave reasons

for their escapes which may be classified as administration action or inaction. Some of these included not being permitted to visit a sick relative, not being able to have visitors, not able to phone, and parole problems. By escaping, it was hypothesized that the inmate is avoiding or rebelling against certain aspects of receiving institutional disciplinary action.

Outstanding Charges

Some studies have reported that escapees have more detainers on file than non-escapees (Virginia Department of Corrections, 1975; Wilson, 1968; Wharry, 1972). Detainers include outstanding charges or impending trials for other offenses. In these cases, escape may be one method of avoiding further convictions that could result in more incarcerated time.

Institutional Programs

Some research had shown that escapees tend to be uninvolved with institutional programs, or perceive the programs as being inadequate (Anson and Hartnett, 1983; Duncan and Ellis, 1973; McNeil, 1978). McNeil's (1978) study also noted that escapees who had a prior history of escapes had a low expectation of program involvement, and that they did not find the available job programs useful or satisfying. In contradiction, McNeil (1978) reported that first time escapers often found their job or program to be useful. Duncan and Ellis' (1973) study indicated that some of the escapees found the correctional services (e.g., medical) inadequate or not resent. From the few evaluations that have been conducted, there had really been no clear relationship demonstrated between program involvement and escape behaviour. Anson and Hartnett (1983) found that lack of prison resources was correlated with escape. This study also indicate that the adequacy of treatment personnel (i.e., institutional ratios of treatment staff to inmate) was related to escape. This included supervision as well as interpersonal contact with the inmate. It is suspected that the lower the level of supervision contact with the inmate, the higher the risk for the inmate to escape. However, it has also been speculated that too much contact with low risk/need offenders may be counter-productive (see Andrews, Bonta, and Hoge [1989] - e.g., it is suggested that correctional treatment tends to be most effective offenders with high risk/needs).

It should be pointed out that at least one study had noted that inmates who tend to perceive other inmates as receiving preferential treatment are more prone to escape (Hilbrand, 1969). In Harvey's (1981) survey, it was found that the lack of funding for hiring more staff contributed to an increasing number of escapes in a short period of time. Moreover, it was reported that the current staff were very inexperienced and received insufficient training.

Finally some studies have suggested that the institutional work assignment provides the best opportunity for an inmate to escape (Duncan and Ellis, 1973; Holt, 1974; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978). the probable reason for this is that their is obviously a lower level of supervision when the inmate is out on a work assignment. Interestingly, the Kentucky Bureau of Corrections (1978) pointed out that staff believed that the large turnover in the prison population in a short period of time influenced the

escape rate. One reason they suggested is that this upsets the stability of the institution.

Temporal Relations

It had been shown in the literature that escapes tend to occur in the warmer Spring and Summer months (Dahlem, 1974; McNeil, 1978; Murphy, 1984; Virginia Department of Corrections, 1978; 1980; Hilbrand, 1969; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979). In these studies, higher rates of escape were most likely between the months of April and September. June and July have been identified as particularly high risk months for escape (Murphy, 1984; Kentucky Bureau of Corrections, 1979; and Hilbrand, 1969), and weekends have been indicated as the period when inmates are most likely to escape (Dalhem, 1974; Hilbrand, 1969; Murphy, 1984).

Employment

A few studies have observed that escapees tend to be unemployed or had experienced job instability at the time of their offence (Virginia Department of Corrections, 1981; Morrow, 1969; and Murphy, 1984). The Virginia Department of Corrections pointed out that 45.4% of escapees had odd jobs and only 18.7% were steady workers prior to incarceration. Similarly, Murphy (1984) pointed out that about 78% of his escapee group were considered unemployed at time of their current offence.

Transfers

It had been speculated that receiving a transfer to a higher security institution is related to escape (Murphy, 1984; and Wherry, 1972). Murphy (1984) indicated that inmates were more likely to escape if they were transferred to a higher security institution from a placement at a minimum security institution. Likewise, Wherry (1972) indicated that inmates transferred to a higher security institution were more likely to escape than inmates not being transferred. However, there were no differences found for those persons transferred between minimum security facilities. It is speculated that inmates who discover that they might be transferred to a higher security level will tend to escape to avoid the transfer.

Conclusion

Although the research available on factors related to escape behaviour is sparse, often outdated, and sometimes experimentally inadequate, there have been some consistent findings that should not be disregarded. Static factors such as prior institutional escapes, prior confinements, history of property offenses, and age, have been noted repeatedly in the literature as being related to escape. Moreover, with respect to dynamic/situational factors, family problems, prior alcohol abuse, parole problems and institutional crisis situations have been frequently cited in the literature as being related to escape. Although static factors are examined in the escape literature more often than dynamic/situational factors, most studies emphasize the need for further research on the dynamic/situational dimension. Since there are usually environmental or situational motivators for escape behaviour, the task for correctional authorities is to identify these factors and introduce appropriate preventive measures. Thus, appropriate preventative interventions to deal with such issues as familial conflict can be put in effect in order to achieve a positive institutional outcome (i.e., non-escape behaviour). For the protection of society, it is imperative that correctional institutions take all steps possible to prevent escapes. Understanding the precursors to escapes is a valuable first step.

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