

PRISONER STATISTICS - NATIONAL AND STATE  
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### INTRODUCTION

The growth of prisoner population in State and Federal institutions is one of the critical areas of public administration. The total number of adult prisoners confined in these institutions at the close of 1939 was 179,818. By 1959, the number rose to 207,513, an increase of 15.4 percent. Should the current trend continue, conservative estimates based on projections of the U.S. population place the prisoner population at 263,140 in 1970 and 318,632 in 1980. (Table 1)

These estimates show that in the next ten years we can anticipate a 26.8 percent increase in prisoners confined. In twenty years, the number of prisoners confined will increase by over fifty percent (53.6). With this potential on the horizon there is a growing awareness among correctional administrators that there is a continuing need for adequate statistical data on prisoners.

Prisons are now coming under the scrutiny of management conscious leadership. Though some administrators continue to "push buttons" on the basis of tradition and the particular urgency of the situation, greater numbers are setting into motion new or revised policies for the custody and treatment of prisoners based on meaningful statistical and research resources.

We recognize that correctional programs are one of the last welfare frontiers to accept the sophistication of statistical inventories, and operational and experimental research. Outdistanced by the mental health field, especially with respect to institutional programs, correctional departments are fast becoming cognizant of this lag and their current pace should close the gap in another decade.

This paper is aimed at describing recent developments in the National and State prisoner statistics operations. After this descriptive statement we will turn our attention to five major considerations. Finally, we will briefly discuss research avenues in the prisoner field.

#### National Prisoner Statistics

Ten years ago, the Bureau of Prisons undertook the responsibility for the National Prisoner Statistics program. Begun in 1926 by the Bureau of the Census, this series represents the longest continuous national collection of criminal statistics in the United States.

To some extent my appearance here represents in part a "progress report" on the National Prisoner Statistics program since it was December 1951 when a preliminary statement was presented at the Boston ASA meeting. (1)

The last ten years can be summarized by showing how the Bureau of Prisons has achieved four major objectives. (2)

The first of these was to obtain the cooperation of all State institutions for adult offenders in reporting detailed data on court commitments and discharges. Since 1952, all the States and the District of Columbia have fully cooperated in the program. Beginning with the current year, 1960, the program will cover Hawaii and possibly Alaska.

The second objective was to streamline the

reporting system. Improved consistency and reliability have been realized by revising the forms and reducing the number of cases to be reported. Whereas the Bureau of the Census collected data on each admission and each discharge which represented as much as a quarter of a million cases, today the Bureau of Prisons limits the collection to court commitments and prisoners released for the first time on their sentence. This change reduced the processing workload to about 140,000 cases, a drop of 44.0 percent.

A third objective was to speed up the processing of data so that it would be available for analysis on a current basis. Part of this was achieved by reducing the workload noted above. However, the immediate problem was to absorb the coding and punching of admissions and discharges.

The solution was the establishment of a Coding and Punching Unit at our Federal Reformatory for Women, Alderson, West Virginia. Because of our excellent experience in training young men in a modern data processing unit at the National Training School for Boys, we felt certain that the Alderson Unit could, under civilian supervision, process the National Prisoner Statistics data. The Alderson Unit has met our expectations and currently handles all punching requirements of the Bureau's Research and Statistics Branch.

Concurrent with the Alderson Unit's development there has been a steady growth in the utilization of punch cards furnished by State correctional statistics offices. This unique State-Federal cooperative system is based on the premise that where the State and Federal government are collecting essentially the same information on prisoners, it is better to depend upon the central correctional statistical office for all information pertaining to prisoners than on the widely scattered State institutions. Also, because of statistical controls provided by a central office, information provided by one agency tends to be more consistent and reliable.

The roll call of States now participating in this unique program is formidable. At present Alabama, California, Michigan, Ohio, New York, Washington and Wisconsin furnish the Bureau of Prisons with punch cards for the National Prisoner Statistics program. In the coming year Florida, North Carolina and Pennsylvania plan to furnish cards. Other States considering similar proposals are Iowa, Indiana, Minnesota and Nebraska. In addition to these so called "punch card" States, effort is made to handle statistical matters with the Department of Correction where central record keeping systems exist. With the continued centralization in such Departments of statistical data on prisoners, we now have 90 "reporters", compared to some 150 ten years ago. These 90 "reporters" furnish data on some 230 separate State and Federal institutions for adult offenders.

Our fourth objective has been to bring up-to-date the summary and detailed NPS reports. Partially realized through the tabulation by mechanical means of prisoner population movement and prison

TABLE 1  
SENTENCED PRISONERS CONFINED IN STATE AND FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS  
FOR ADULT OFFENDERS, BY SEX, DECEMBER 31, 1939 TO 1980  
(Data subject to revision)

Year (a)	All institutions (b)			Federal institutions			State institutions (b)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Projected:									
1980..	318,632	307,800	10,832	34,893	33,797	1,096	283,739	274,003	9,736
1975..	293,527	283,455	10,072	32,086	31,057	1,029	261,441	252,398	9,043
1970..	263,140	254,050	9,090	28,591	27,659	932	234,549	226,391	8,158
1965..	232,566	224,446	8,120	25,038	24,207	831	207,528	200,239	7,289
1960..	214,569	207,086	7,483	22,982	22,220	762	191,587	184,866	6,721
Actual:									
1959..	207,513	199,889	7,624	22,492	21,610	882	185,021	178,279	6,742
1958..	205,643	198,208	7,435	21,549	20,774	775	184,094	177,434	6,660
1957..	195,414	188,113	7,301	20,420	19,678	742	174,994	168,435	6,559
1956..	189,565	182,190	7,375	20,134	19,375	759	169,431	162,815	6,616
1955..	185,915	178,790	7,125	20,088	19,367	721	165,827	159,423	6,404
1954..	182,901	175,907	6,994	20,003	19,305	698	162,898	156,602	6,296
1953..	173,579	166,909	6,670	19,363	18,743	620	154,216	148,166	6,050
1952..	168,233	161,994	6,239	18,014	17,457	557	150,219	144,537	5,682
1951..	165,680	159,610	6,070	17,395	16,897	498	148,285	142,713	5,572
1950..	166,165	160,357	5,808	17,134	16,672	462	149,031	143,685	5,346
1949..	163,749	157,663	6,086	16,868	16,410	458	146,881	141,253	5,628
1948..	155,977	149,739	6,238	16,328	15,886	442	139,649	133,853	5,796
1947..	151,304	144,961	6,343	17,146	16,648	498	134,158	128,313	5,845
1946..	140,079	134,075	6,004	17,622	17,150	472	122,457	116,925	5,532
1945..	133,649	127,609	6,040	18,638	18,112	526	115,011	109,497	5,514
1944..	132,356	126,261	6,095	18,139	17,502	637	114,217	108,759	5,458
1943..	137,220	131,054	6,166	16,113	15,546	567	121,107	115,508	5,599
1942..	150,384	144,167	6,217	16,623	16,053	570	133,761	128,114	5,647
1941..	165,439	159,228	6,211	18,465	17,947	518	146,974	141,281	5,693
1940..	173,706	167,345	6,361	19,260	18,631	629	154,446	148,714	5,732
1939..	179,818	173,143	6,675	19,730	19,121	609	160,088	154,022	6,066

- (a) Number of prisoners confined in State and Federal institutions for adult offenders by sex for years 1939 to 1959 are actual except for small estimates indicated in footnote (b).

Projections for the years 1960 through 1980 were obtained by two steps. First, it was assumed that the proportion of prisoners aged 15 to 64 appearing in the 1950 population of State and Federal institutions for adult offenders would continue in subsequent years. These proportions were applied to the years 1955, 1956 and 1957 and rates of prisoners per 100,000 of the civilian population were computed for the same years. These were averaged and became the basis for the second step. In the second step the 1955-56-57 rates of prisoners per 100,000 of the civilian population for specific age intervals were multiplied by the projected United States population including Armed Forces overseas (Series IV) for the years 1960, 1965, 1970, 1975 and 1980. (Series IV implies the following assumptions as to fertility: The 1955-57 level of births will decline to the 1942-44 level by 1965-70 and continue at that level to 1980.)

No other factors were taken into account when computing these estimates.

Material based on Bureau of the Census publications: Special Reports, Institutional Population, 1950 and Current Population Reports, P-25, Nos. 146, table 3; 187, tables 1, 2 and 3; 193, table 3. Prisoner data from National Prisoner Statistics bulletin No. 24, July, 1960 and from unpublished data on file at the Bureau of Prisons.

Basic computations developed by Miss Karen Dunkin under direction of James A. McCafferty.

- (b) Includes estimates for State prisoners confined in Georgia for years 1939 to 1946 and 1948. Estimates on females were made for Georgia for years 1939 to 1948, for Mississippi 1939 to 1944 and for Alabama in 1941.

Source: Research and Statistics Branch, U. S. Bureau of Prisons, Washington 25, D. C., August 9, 1960.

personnel data, summary bulletins covering these areas are published on an annual basis. In addition to the prison population and personnel bulletins there is the executions report which in recent years has served as the major source for data on the trend of capital punishment in the United States.

The progress in publishing detailed data on court commitments and first releases has been at a slower pace. Since 1950, three reports have been issued. One of these covered court commitments for the year 1950 with summary trend tables for the years 1942 to 1950. The other two reports were on first releases, one of these for the year 1951 and the other covered the years 1952-1953.

Two reports are in process. One covers court commitments for the years 1956-57 with trend data for the period 1942-1957. The other presents first releases data for the years 1954-55-56. These should be available in early fall.

There are two new proposals on the horizon of the National Prisoner Statistics program. The first of these is the plan to carry out a Prisoner Population Survey at the close of 1960. Originally this Survey was proposed for June 30, 1960; however, it was delayed when it was determined that this would conflict with the 1960 decennial census of the U.S. population. The Survey when completed will provide urgently needed information on the characteristics of sentenced prisoners confined in State institutions for adult offenders.(3)

The second proposal is aimed toward the collection of minimal data on prior commitments beginning with calendar year 1961. Remembering the experience of the Bureau of the Census as well as several State prisoner statistics programs which have collected such data for several years, it was determined to keep the request on recidivism as simple as possible. The proposal requires only a YES or NO answer to the question -- "Has this court commitment ever served a sentence in an adult correctional institution?" If so, the answer would be YES, if not, the answer would be NO. (4)

Based on a sampling of States which operate central correctional statistics offices, we are certain that this simple request can be answered by all participants in the NPS program.

The last ten year period might be best described as a "shoring up of a sagging program." In the next ten years the NPS program should be consolidated and the efforts of the many persons who cooperate in it will be reflected in the publication at frequent intervals of detailed reports on court admissions and first releases.

#### State Prisoner Statistics

The historical development of present-day prisoner statistic systems presents no single pattern. Generally, their origin can be traced to the centralizing of welfare functions at the State level which oftentimes incorporated correctional institutions into Boards of Welfare or Departments of Institutions. Because of the many specialized State welfare programs, information resources had to be developed in order to determine the number and characteristics of individuals who became the responsibility of public welfare programs. Some of these statistical services have become highly sophisticated due in part to

the Federal Government's role in the "grant in aid" programs since adequate statistical data had to be provided as part of the conditions of financial aid. In recent years these State statistical offices have expanded their programs to include highly significant research efforts.

In instances where Departments of Corrections were incorporated into Boards of Welfare or similar State agencies, the research and statistics offices of such Boards rather timidly, and sometimes with little forehand knowledge, entered the correctional statistics field. In almost every instance the State statistical office was faced with little cooperation and in some cases complete antagonism by one or more of the prisons operated by the State. Prisons, generally speaking, have been one of the last public agencies to accept administrative direction from the executive departments of the State. However, with the growing public concern about prisons, the opening of the prison gates to the press and interested groups and continued progress in prison management, there has been a swelling need for reliable facts about prisoners, personnel, programs and plants. (5)

In many States, correctional administrators saw the need for reliable statistics on prisoners and eventually invited the central statistical office to conduct feasibility studies prior to establishing a statistical program. Such studies brought about widespread recommendations, many of which entered into matters outside the collection of statistics. For example, administrators learned that unnecessary and duplicate forms could be eliminated and that other forms needed modification. In order to take advantage of such changes it was necessary to centralize records collections in the institutions so that an integrated and uniform set of administrative-statistics forms would be suited to mechanical handling with modern data processing facilities.

In the prison field the establishment of acceptable forms and instructions for filling them out paved the way for the collective understanding of prisoner records and their ultimate purpose within and among the prisons. In a sense, the administrative statistical forms provided an entering wedge for more overall control of prisons and certainly furnished an important link in the chain of good prison administration. (6)

In 1950 there were about 10 centralized State correctional statistics offices. Today there are 25 with half of these utilizing modern data processing equipment. In addition to prisoner statistics, several of these offices have developed comprehensive collections of probation and parole and adult and juvenile court statistics. California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Washington have been leaders in this comprehensive approach. (See list of State correctional statistics offices at end of paper.)

#### Basic Operational Patterns of Criminal Statistics Systems

In any discussion of prisoner statistics there is need to fit it into the general scheme of criminal statistics operations. Among the fifty States and the District of Columbia there are three basic operational patterns in handling criminal statistics. These can be best described as (1) concentric; (2) fragmented; and

(3) a compromise between the concentric and fragmented operations.

Probably the two foremost proponents of the concentric approach are Dr. Thorsten Sellin who authored the famous Uniform Criminal Statistics Act, and Mr. Ronald Beattie, Chief, Bureau of Criminal Statistics for the State of California who has put many of the Act's proposals into practice. Though recent developments in California include the establishment of special Research Divisions in the Youth and Adult Authorities which illustrates a fragmentation approach, nevertheless, the California Bureau of Criminal Statistics continues to provide a good example of the concentric concept.

In the concentric operation the central statistical agency collects either in the field form (raw data) or in predetermined classifications such information which is needed for a single report on crime and its treatment. The publication, Crime in California, is an example of providing an overall report on criminal matters for an entire State. Until similar reports are available in other jurisdictions, it will be impossible to determine the amount of crime and the effectiveness of control and prevention.

The concentric pattern provides obvious advantages besides a single documentation of criminal statistics. It can provide certain guidelines for the collection of data. This would include establishing a unit of count which would be acceptable to all correctional agencies collecting statistics; preventing duplication of requests for data and providing one single agency for resolving criminal statistics matters. But the greatest advantage would be the centralization of all matters relating to criminal statistics. This would give executives, legislators and the public access to a single reservoir of criminal data.

Among the disadvantages are the inability to modify reporting systems too rapidly; the likelihood that the contributing agencies' statistical programs would operate at the same level, and the danger of unclear communication patterns between the central statistical collector and the operating agencies furnishing data.

In the fragmented approach, which is simply each operating correctional agency developing its own criminal statistics services, there are several good points. Among these are the possibility of experimentation in the collection and analysis of data. Because such programs are not hidden under a morass of statistical hierarchy, which can develop in a concentric pattern, they can be examined on their own merits. Also there is the advantage of a closer relationship of the statistical-information processes to the persons charged with the guidance and performance of agencies operating in the law enforcement and judicial correctional fields. In these instances, leadership has a more positive attachment to its own statistical program than if there were a single agency in the State responsible for all criminal statistical matters.

The disadvantages of the fragmented approach are evident. In the main these would be the lack of coordination and possible duplication in statistical collections. The opportunity for uneven development of the various fragmentary statistical resources. Another possibility ever present,

especially where statistical services depend upon political leadership, is the constant fear of reprisal for statistical indices which are unfavorable and with the danger of complete discontinuance of statistical services.

The concentric-fragmented approach combines the major characteristics of the separate concepts, however, there is a duality in functions. The central agency is responsible for collecting and analyzing all criminal statistical matters while separate operational agencies also build up sizeable staffs and equipment to carry out approximately the same objectives. This type of development will occur especially when the central statistical service fails to provide the amount and type of data required by the operational facility.

It would be worthwhile to explore the possibility of placing in each operational agency professional staff who can serve as the resource and liaison person to the administrator on statistical-information matters. Certainly, such individuals could be called on to assist in programming statistical and research problems in the agency through cooperative effort with the central statistical office. If there were several correctional agencies, these individuals might collectively represent an inter-departmental committee on correctional statistics matters and might serve as an advisory group for the central criminal statistics agency.

Prisoner statistics can be developed along any of these three operational lines. With the ever increasing complexity and interdependence among agencies seeking to control and prevent crime, the combined concentric-fragmented approach with the suggestion noted above, appears to offer a hopeful solution.

#### Major Overall Considerations

##### (a) Utilizing comparisons in criminal statistics

We live in an age of comparison. Criminal statistics, because they are the only indices for determining the effectiveness of police departments, courts, probation and parole agencies and correctional departments, are continuously compared. Prisoner statistics, which represent one small part of the criminal statistics picture, receive their share of study.

Because prisoner statistics are somewhat easier to collect than other criminal statistics, there has been a tendency to overuse prisoner data without relating the data to the story behind the figures. Take the matter of State-to-State comparison of prison population. The National Prisoner Statistics program provides a complete inventory of all prisoners received, confined and released by State and Federal institutions for adult offenders. However, because of the varying policies among the States with respect to the type of institution where sentences can be served, not all adult prisoners are enumerated by the NPS series. On the other hand, a few States use adult institutions for confining a substantial number of misdemeanants and youthful offenders.

To illustrate the first situation, we turn to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. At the close of 1959, according to the most recent National Prisoner Statistics population bulletin, Pennsylvania shows 7,924 prisoners confined in the

Bureau of Correction institutions. (7) On the same day according to a separate Bureau of Correction publication, Pennsylvania's county jails reported there were 1,247 prisoners serving maximum sentences of two years or over, including one prisoner serving a life term. Another 2,033 county prisoners had maximum terms under 2 years and of this number it is estimated that one-third or 677 prisoners had sentences of over one-year and under two years in maximum length. (8)

In the National Prisoner Statistics bulletin the rate of prisoners confined per 100,000 of the civilian population in Pennsylvania was 70.1. However, if all of the county prisoners with sentences of over 1 year had instead been confined in the Bureau of Correction institutions the rate would have been 87.1. (See table 2)

TABLE 2-PRISONERS CONFINED IN PENNSYLVANIA  
BUREAU OF CORRECTION AND COUNTY PRISONS:  
DECEMBER 31, 1959

Institutional facility	Prisoners serving sentences	Rate per 100,000 of the civilian population
Total prisoners.....	9,848	87.1
Bureau of Correction institutions.....	7,924	70.1
County Prisons:		
*With sentences --		
Maximum over 1 year, under 2 years..	677	6.0
Maximum over 2 years	1,247	11.0

\*Excludes 928 prisoners serving minor judiciary sentences.

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of Prisons, National Prisoner Statistics, No. 24 and Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction, Directorate of Research and Statistics Census of Pennsylvania Prisoners by County, December 31, 1959, table 14 and correspondence with Mr. John Yeager, Director of Research and Statistics, Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction. Rates based on Population figures appearing in U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P-25, #210, Provisional.

To illustrate the second situation, we find in the State of Maryland approximately one-fourth of the prisoners received from court into four State institutions have sentences of one year or under. In 1959 a total of 3,896 prisoners were received from court in Maryland adult institutions with a rate per 100,000 of the civilian population of 131.1. By dropping one quarter of the prisoners who had sentences of one year or less, the 2,922 court commitments provide a substantially lower rate of 98.4 per 100,000 of the civilian population. (9)

These two illustrations demonstrate the difficulty of comparing State prisoner figures without knowing the policies of the States with respect to sentencing. To further complicate the matter we need to know the extent to which probation is used. For those who are sentenced to prison we need to know the regulations and legislation surrounding release procedures. It is obvious when the median time served for first releases in 1956 ranged from a low of 9 months in Vermont to 31 months in the District of Columbia and Illinois

that the reasons for these figures must be determined through the analysis of commitment and release procedures, sentence lengths, and the philosophy of the prison officials who reflect the temper of the people in their concept of the meaning and purpose of imprisonment. (10)

Prisoner statistics are a useful tool if used with caution. However, without the related statistical data on crime and corrections, such as those collected by the police, courts and probation and parole agencies, prisoner data provide only a portion of the picture.

#### (b) Criminal Career Statistics

Prisoner statistics have their part to play in the proposed criminal career statistics programs suggested by Dr. Daniel Glaser of the University of Illinois. (11) One of the major obstacles in such a program is the difficulty of maintaining a continuous follow-up record on individuals who have violated the law. The basic problem appears to be a universal acceptance of a unit of count, that is the individual or the case, and adequate identification for statistical purposes from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. At present each time an individual violates the law numerous identifying numbers are applied as he proceeds through the halls of justice. Some States are attempting to have a single identification number adopted for prisoners who enter the adult correctional system. Eventually such States could expand this one number concept to cover all law violators. But what about persons from other States with previous records who are arrested and convicted for the first time in a State which maintains a career record system? Or the recidivist who goes elsewhere and is lost to the State attempting to follow up those individuals who are involved in subsequent criminal activity?

One answer would be for each State to adopt a criminal career statistical number. However, this would furnish the possibility of fifty-one separate numbers plus that of the FBI fingerprint identification number. Perhaps the answer is the adoption of a single national criminal career statistical number such as the FBI fingerprint identification number. At the speed in which electronic data processing equipment is being developed we may be forced to accept the single number concept if we are indeed serious about developing career criminal statistics programs. (12)

#### (c) A Comparative Inventory of Law Enforcement-Judicial-Correctional Processes

It has been 29 years since this country has had a comprehensive report on law observance and enforcement. The famous Wickersham Reports issued by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement in 1931 needs to be re-written and updated.

Twenty-one years ago the Attorney General's Survey of Release Procedures, a six volume report, was issued. This needs to be carried out again.

To some extent the Journal of the National Council of Crime and Delinquency, and Law and Contemporary Problems series issued by the School of Law, Duke University, and the Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science of the Northwestern University together with recent criminological texts help greatly to give us a contemporary picture, but fall short of the overall comprehensive view provided by the Wickersham Reports and the Attorney General's Survey of Release Procedures.

No small task, such studies would demonstrate the meaningfulness of various criminal statistics systems and thereby place prisoner statistics in the proper perspective as an indicator of the State's ability to control and prevent crime.

Perhaps in the 1960's we will see a task force assigned to the problem of determining contemporary law enforcement, judicial and correctional practices in the United States.

(d) Handbook on Criminal and Delinquency Statistics

With the general interest in crime and delinquency and the various efforts to measure this phenomenon, various public and private organizations are developing at a rapid pace statistical resources, many of which provide data which are non-comparable to other jurisdictions. These organizations need assistance, but unfortunately have no where to turn but to persons and literature which provide the standard statistical processes. Criminal statistics are a subtle field and persons who have no acquaintance with the undercurrents of such statistics find themselves swept under in a whirlpool of contradiction.

Serious attempts have been made to provide the correctional field with useful systems for developing criminal statistics programs. For example, A System of Criminal Judicial Statistics for California, by Mr. Ronald Beattie, provided for the judicial statistics field what is needed in the prisoner statistics area, (13) as well as for probation and parole services. As the need increases it will be met in such a way that those who are interested in following through the crime phenomenon will be able to make useful comparisons.

Perhaps as a companion volume for the inventory of law enforcement-judicial-correctional processes we need a Handbook on Crime and Delinquency Statistics. This Handbook should be divided into two parts. The first part would provide a complete study of the history and resources, as well as their recommended future direction, of criminal and delinquency services.

The second part of this compendium would provide basic codes and definitions for criminal statistics data. This proposal would assist various jurisdictions in utilizing uniform definitions and codes. Those jurisdictions which adopted similar procedures would be able to make regular comparisons by the exchange of punch cards or magnetic tapes. With the use of common codes, readers of documents containing criminal statistics would be able to make more meaningful comparisons.

(e) Human and Material Resources

Today there are more criminal statistical programs operated by technically qualified individuals than there were a decade ago. However, we are still unable to meet the demand for well trained correctional statisticians and analysts. The correctional field which is now making its impact on college training programs necessarily must require that academic work include courses in statistical areas which relate to corrections. The subject matter of corrections is too unique to permit the average statistician to gain any proficiency except by a trial and error method.

Though correctional statistics systems can train statisticians in the subject matter field, this is a long tedious process with the rewards sometimes tenuous. Eventually academic programs will include training in statistics which qualify

the individual at an undergraduate level to handle criminal statistics programs. And there is the possibility that the specialty may be further divided into police court, probation, parole and prisoner statistics.

Graduate programs should include major study in criminal research areas. Persons exposed to this systematic study will greatly enhance our efforts.

Until this more methodical program is developed for training criminal statistics personnel, we must continue to take our risks with individuals who feel they like statistics and the subject matter, crime and delinquency. For research personnel we will have to depend upon foundation grants and publicly supported correctional research programs to provide the testing ground for new researchers. Indeed, not a little of the research going on today is providing the training of future competent researchers.

With adequate personnel, there is the need for adequate equipment to process data quickly, efficiently and economically. In the prisoner statistics systems, the punch card is the basis for maintaining control. Some of these systems can be likened to a vast accounting system where the unit of count is the person rather than the dollar. Today, with vast prison populations, the only sensible way to handle this inventory is through a machine processing system.

Some of these systems are rudimentary and contain only the basic elements needed to carry out assignments. Others are remarkably sophisticated. Of this last group, Ohio is probably outstanding.

A little over three years ago it was determined that for the most economical operation of data processing one central computing unit should be established. This was done in the Ohio Department of Finance. Here under the able leadership of Mr. Donald Smeltzer, some 100 employees work three shifts keeping Ohio's statistical house in order. Using the latest in electronic equipment, the Data Processing Center programmers working with knowledgeable individuals in the other State Departments provide all required information. This centralization of data processing operations illustrates one way to obtain maximum use of expensive computers.

In other States, especially in the prisoner statistics area we find the Boards of Welfare or even the Corrections Departments maintaining equipment to good advantage. But many times such Boards of Departments cannot afford the cost of advanced equipment and therefore must depend upon basic machine components which provide answers at a slower pace and sometimes too late to be of any value.

Personnel and equipment requirements will for a long time concern criminal statistics operations. Prisoner statistics as a part of this greater field may have to provide the leadership toward obtaining well trained personnel and adequate equipment.

Research in the Prisoner Area

Prisoner population furnishes the possibility for three major areas of research: operational or functional, experimental and applied.

Using Dr. Elmer Johnson's definition of operations research as "a scientific method of providing executive departments with a quantitative basis for decisions regarding the operations under their

control", (14) it can be seen that for this purpose we have substantial foundation for research in the statistical collections now available in several States. These potential reservoirs have been overlooked to some extent; however, where they have been utilized the results have been most encouraging. For example, Wisconsin's study of sex offenders, parole violation and the famous Huber Law could not have been accomplished without the heritage of a consistent and reliable data collection program.

Johnson further states that operational research provides an opportunity for generating "a constellation of facts", requiring "a multidisciplinary study", pooling together numerous ideas on a single problem and provides opportunity for demonstrating scientific methods for problem solving. (15)

Turning to experimental research, we have had an extensive experience in this area. Though some of the efforts could be termed operational in purpose, such research for the most part has tried to determine if one method of handling prisoners is more effective than another. The current study of the Effectiveness of the Federal Correctional System is an example of experimental research. In the literature there are many more illustrations of experimental research among prisoners. (16)

In this trilogy of research we turn to applied research which is the translation into regulations and law the findings of operational and experimental research. The implication of applied research is that once a particular principle is applied, there will be continuous evaluation of its effectiveness. To change a procedure without continuous study of its effects is foolhardy.

We will see more emphasis on research in the coming years. Every effort should be made to maintain a constant flow of communication between those involved in operational, experimental and applied research programs.

#### SUMMARY

It is anticipated that by 1980 the United States will have in its adult prisons 318,670 individuals, one half more than the 207,513 now confined. Prisoner statistics potentially is one of the most critical areas facing public administrators. Through management conscious leadership, vast prisoner statistics operations have been initiated and will continue to flourish. In 1950 there were 10 State central correctional statistics systems. Today there are 25 over half of whom have data processing equipment.

During the last decade the National Prisoner Statistics program successfully accomplished four objectives: (1) it has obtained cooperation of all States in reporting all prisoners serving sentences in State institutions for adult offenders; (2) streamlined the reporting system; (3) speeded up the processing system which included the unique provision for utilizing punch cards furnished by the States and (4) made some inroads in publishing current NPS data.

State prisoner statistics systems have moved in three directions: (1) concentric where all criminal statistics collections of which prisoner statistics is a part is handled by a single State agency; (2) fragmented where each correctional agency develops its own criminal statistics services and (3) concentric-fragmented which combines the major aspects of both systems; however, there

is a duality of functions.

A major consideration facing the criminal statistics field, of which prisoner statistics is a part, is the need to understand the difficulties of utilizing available criminological data for State to State comparisons. A simple rate of prisoners confined per 100,000 of the population needs an evaluation of the resources available for handling convicted law violators, the policies for admission to various institutions and for those sentenced to prison, the regulations and legislation surrounding the time to be served and method of release.

A second consideration is the proposal that career criminal statistics programs be established. However, two matters effecting such programs are the need for accepting a universal unit of count and a numbering system which would make possible a continuous and positive identification of individuals who violate the law.

A third consideration is the need for a comparative inventory of law enforcement-judicial-correctional processes similar to the famous Wickersham Reports issued by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement in 1931. Also there is need for another study on prisoners similar to the Attorney General's Survey of Release Procedures of 1939.

A fourth consideration would be the compilation of a Handbook on Criminal and Delinquency Statistics. The growth of criminal statistics systems are at such a pace that such a Handbook is needed to provide some basis of comparability among the systems. Prisoner statistics has followed fairly similar programs; however, in the fields of police, probation, parole and court statistics there are wide diversities. A Handbook would establish standard codes and collection patterns sorely needed if we plan to make State to State comparisons.

A fifth consideration is the need for developing personnel and for obtaining sufficient equipment to carry on criminal statistics activities. Criminal statistics agencies must turn to colleges for personnel requirements.

The expense of data processing equipment calls for an evaluation of current practices. Perhaps, smaller agencies should maintain simple machine units and give to an advanced data processing unit the larger tasks. One State, Ohio, has practiced this for three years.

Research in the prisoner population area is now occurring in the operational and experimental areas. Application of the principles learned from these areas merits the need for research on the effectiveness of such principles.

In conclusion, prisoner statistics which are a part of the vast universe of criminal statistics is becoming the intelligence tool for purposeful administration of correctional agencies. No longer can administrators depend upon hunches or subjective evaluations, but must turn to the empirical data collections made available through valid prisoner and related criminal statistics programs.



## FOOTNOTES

- (1) Henry Coe Lanpher and James A. McCafferty, "The National Prisoner Statistics Program," presented at the Annual Meeting, American Statistical Association, Boston, Massachusetts December 27, 1951.
- (2) These four objectives were discussed at length before the Harrisburg Chapter of the American Statistical Association, June 23, 1960.
- (3) James A. McCafferty, "1960 Prison Population Survey", Proceedings, American Congress of Corrections, 1960, pp. 67-81.
- (4) See NPPA Journal, July 1958, which is devoted to a complete study of recidivism. Also, James A. McCafferty, "Can We Find a Standard Statistical Definition for Recidivism?" Proceedings, American Correctional Association 1958, pp. 190-206.
- (5) James A. McCafferty, "Federal Criminal Statistics and the National Prisoner Statistics Program", p. 18, (unpublished).
- (6) *Ibid.*, p. 19 and 20.
- (7) U.S. Bureau of Prisons, National Prisoner Statistics, "Prisoners in State and Federal Institutions, 1959", No. 24, July 1960.
- (8) Pennsylvania Bureau of Correction, "Census of Pennsylvania Prisoners by County, December 31, 1959", Report CII, March 1960.
- (9) U.S. Bureau of Prisons, National Prisoner Statistics, No. 24 and estimates based on data appearing in Maryland Department of Corrections, 32nd Report, 1958, p. 60.
- (10) Data on median time served appears in National Prisoner Statistics, Prisoners Released From State and Federal Institutions 1954, 1955 and 1956, in process.
- (11) Daniel Glaser, "Institution Statistics", Proceedings American Congress of Correction, 1956, pp. 279-283.
- (12) For more discussion about the unit of count see James A. McCafferty, "The Unit of Count", Proceedings of the American Correctional Association, 1957, and Herbert Bryan, The One Number Concept in Crime Statistics, Proceedings of American Correctional Association, 1958, pp. 155-162.
- (13) Ronald H. Beattie, A System of Criminal Judicial Statistics for California, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936. Also same author, Manual of Criminal Statistics, New York: American Correctional Association, April, 1950.
- (14) Elmer H. Johnson, "Latent Functions of An Administrative Statistical System in Corrections", to be read at the American Congress of Corrections, Denver, Colorado, August 30, 1960.
- (15) *Ibid.*
- (16) For example, in the Proceedings of the American Correctional Association, 1959 see "Use of Research in Determining Administrative Policy" by Sanger Powers; "Social Role, Social Position, and Prison Structure" by Clarence Schrag, and "Social Organization and Inmate Values in Correctional Communities" by Stanton Wheeler.

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August, 1960

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- \*DPM California: Mr. Ronald Beattie, Chief, Bureau of Criminal Statistics, 505 State Office Building, Sacramento 14 and Miss Vida Ryan, Statistician, Research Division, California Department of Corrections, State Office Building, Sacramento 14.
- \*DPM Florida: Mr. R. B. Gramling, Deputy Director for Inmate Treatment, Florida Division of Correction, Doyle Carlton Building, Tallahassee.
- Georgia: Mr. Robert J. Carter, Chief Clerk, State Board of Correction, State Capitol, Room 415, Atlanta.
- Hawaii: Warden Joe C. Harper, P.O. Box 3289, Honolulu 17.
- DPM Illinois: Mr. Fred C. Fieker, Statistician, Department of Public Safety, Room 601, Armory Building, Springfield.
- Indiana: Mr. Robert O. Conklin, Supervisor of Field Services, Department of Corrections, 141 South Meridian Street, Indianapolis 4.
- Iowa: Mrs. Hazel C. Garner, Director of Statistical Services, Board of Control of State Institutions, Des Moines.
- Kentucky: Mr. Harold E. Black, Director, Division of Correction, Department of Welfare, Frankfort.
- DPM Louisiana: Mr. F. E. Stockwell, Research Statistician, Department of Institutions, State Capitol Building, Baton Rouge.
- \*DPM Michigan: Mr. Robert Glass, Administrative Analyst, Department of Correction Box 212-A Station A., Lansing 26.
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- \*DPM New York: Mr. Herbert Bryan, Chief, Research and Statistics, State Department of Correction Albany.
- DPM Nebraska: Mr. John Wenstrand, Statistician, Board of Control, State Capitol, Lincoln 9.
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- Rhode Island: Warden Harold V. Langlois, Adult Correctional Institutions, Pontiac Avenue, Howard.
- DPM Texas: Mr. J. C. Roberts, Chief, Bureau of Records and Identification, Texas Prison System, Huntsville.



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Juvenile Courts and Training Schools:

Mr. Richard Perlman, Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D.C.

Police Departments: Mr. Jerry Daunt, Chief, Uniform Criminal Reporting Section, FBI, Washington 25, D.C.

\*These States furnish the National Prisoner Statistics Program with punch cards.

EDPM - Electronic Data Processing machines - intermediate.

DPM - Data Processing machines.