

## THE PROGRAM OF THE STATISTICS DIVISION OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION

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The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) was established by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. The primary purpose of LEAA is to provide assistance to state and local governments to reduce crime and delinquency. The Act also empowered the agency to collect and disseminate statistics.

The Statistics Division of LEAA, formerly known as the National Criminal Justice Statistics Center has the responsibility of quantitatively describing and monitoring the criminal justice system and for providing timely information on crime and its impact on society. In order to achieve these dual goals, reliable statistical programs must be developed. The major tool for monitoring the criminal justice system is the division's offender based transaction statistics program. The task of measuring crime and assessing its impact is being centered around a national crime survey panel.

The crime panel is the largest single activity of the Division. Basically, the panel is an omnibus sample survey. The core questions of the panel will provide measures of the incidence of serious crime and the effect on its victims. Historically, crime incidence estimates have been derived from information known to the police. However, this type of measure cannot provide all the information needed for criminal justice planning and evaluation. 1/

The crime panel will be able to provide estimates of the incidence and the socio-economic and geographic distribution of crime by utilizing a general sample of households and businesses. By interviewing a general population sample, the shortcomings of police statistics can be overcome. There is no necessity for the respondent to "get involved," nor is there any reason to fear the police. On the other hand, there is the natural positive incentive to discuss the incident. This is not to suggest that there are no serious response problems, but these problems seem to be amenable to solution.

The crime panel will provide a variety of crime measures. First, the panel will provide a measure of criminal events. This event measure provides a single count for each event no matter how many different crimes were committed during the course of that event. Only the most serious crime is counted. Thus, if a rape occurs during the course of a robbery or burglary, only the rape is reported. If only an event measure were provided, the implications would be serious. Most authorities for example, feel that there are steps which householders can take to reduce the incidence of burglary. Simple rape on the other hand is a much more difficult problem. However, if a significant proportion of rape incidents are coincident with a burglary, it becomes possible to view the rape problem in a different perspective.

Similarly, an armed robbery with three victims is

counted in the same way as a strongarm robbery with one victim. The more precise differentiation between crime sub-types which the panel will produce will provide the kinds of data recognized as needed to develop strategies for crime reduction and overall criminal justice planning. Moreover, this information on the incidence of crime is the basis for the evaluation of any crime reduction program.

In addition to providing fresh estimates of incidence, the nation crime panel will also focus on the cost of crime. The direct costs of crime are many and varied: They include money and property lost through theft, the cost of medical attention, time lost from work and replacement services for persons injured. The panel will provide a measure of all these direct costs but of equal or more importance, it will provide the means of estimating indirect crime costs such as the flight of citizens from the cities. Restaurants, theatres, retail stores, other businesses and residential properties in the downtown parts of major American cities are being hard hit by the overall suburbanization of the society. Tax bases are shrinking, revenues have been reduced and other problems have resulted from this phenomenon. It would appear that a significant portion of this movement has been triggered by a fear of crime.

Some of this effect is a result of hyper-reaction of the population. Whether the reactions are rational or irrational, however, the effect on the urban quality of life is a major contributor to the current crisis in our cities.

By utilizing the latest sociometric and psychometric techniques adapted to mass surveys, we would be able to provide insights into the source of this public reaction and produce data which will suggest solutions. These data will provide both local and Federal authorities with valuable planning tools to determine program priorities.

The panel will also provide more direct input to criminal justice agencies by determining the attitudes of various segments of the population toward those agencies and the specific problems which seem most acute. This will provide justice agencies with the information needed to improve their effectiveness and their image.

Work involved in the development of this panel has uncovered a number of problems both methodological and philosophical. Conceptually, it is easy to determine a mix of events, which taken together legally constitute a crime. However, in the deeper sense this is not sufficient. Many people, for example, do not report events to the police because they do not consider the event to be a crime. Many violent activities which occur between relatives or close friends are often not considered crimes by the participants unless serious injury results.

One of the activities related to the panel will be a general population survey to assess public attitudes concerning the relative seriousness of actual events. The project will also examine the circumstances surrounding the event to be able to quantify those situations which the public considers extenuating circumstances.

The panel will also provide the capacity to conduct *ad hoc* surveys as well as the regular means of conducting methodological research. The panel design calls for interviewing approximately 10,000 households and a smaller number of businesses each month. While these monthly samples will have to be aggregated to provide crime incidence information, each is large enough to provide a national sample to use for gaining other information of interest to the criminal justice community.

Research into related data collection problems began in the winter of 1970. Small research projects were conducted in Washington, D. C., and Baltimore, Maryland, to evaluate question wording, victim recall, and other response problems. 2/ The results of these experiments were sufficiently positive to warrant going ahead with a research study aimed at the general population. Three such studies were scheduled for January 1971. One was a national survey appended to the Bureau of the Census' Quarterly Household Survey Panel. The other two, conducted in the LEAA pilot cities San Jose and Dayton, had a two-fold purpose, one to further refine the survey techniques 3/ but more importantly to provide baseline data for the evaluation of the pilot cities program itself.

Because of the large sample size required to provide crime estimates, the panel will be used as an omnibus vehicle to provide *ad hoc* data as required for planning, research or evaluation.

Because of the long lead time, planning is already underway to develop methodology to increase the routine utility of the panel. Preliminary investigations are already underway to examine the feasibility of regularly or periodically measuring such things as drug use, activities related to organized crime, juvenile crime and white collar crime.

The division's methodological research for the next several years will emphasize the development of survey information which can be routinely collected utilizing the crime panel.

#### UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS

Through a discretionary grant program administered by the division, almost a million dollars has been distributed in the past two fiscal years to encourage the states to set up central state reporting of UCR data. These state agencies then become responsible for quality control of the data within the state, thus the state-level agency is able to provide far closer supervision of the individual police agencies than the FBI would be able to do. The division is also encouraging new developments in the collection of UCR data. For example, one state is experiment-

ing with the idea of obtaining sample data from police agencies. By utilizing samples, more detailed information can be obtained on individual events and more sophisticated cross-classifications can be developed at a reasonable cost. The division will also be working with individual police agencies and through Project SEARCH to develop uniform event reporting forms in a machine-readable format. With the development of these forms again more sophisticated information about crimes will become available. Of more importance, uniform arrest forms are being developed so that arrest registers will become available. In addition to making the Uniform Crime Reports more useful, the standardized arrest registers will facilitate the development of statewide offender based statistics programs.

#### TRANSACTION STATISTICS

As we attempt to assess the quality of the administration of justice, we encounter an information void in justice processes as they relate to the suspect or offender. It is our intention through various projects planned in 1972 to have the data to answer such vital questions as the following: What is the time element between various transactions in the process? Which outputs of agencies are inputs to other agencies? What is the drop-out rate at various points in the process? What is the caseload at each point? What are the characteristics of the offenders who re-enter the system? Which offenders drop out at various points? Which offenders experience greater time delays? What are the offenses that cause the greatest delay from one point to another? These questions must be answered separately for adults and juveniles as well as comparatively. These data, which will be made available can be used to predict events within the system, evaluate programs and practices of various agencies and plan new programs.

In order to provide this kind of information, we have encouraged states to develop "transaction statistics" systems. Since the basic unit common to all justice processes is the offender or the suspected offender, the transaction statistics system tracks the offender as he passes through the system and records the pertinent data for each criminal justice transaction. Thus it becomes possible to examine the processes of the entire system.

In fiscal 1971, we directly funded a number of states to develop at least modules of such systems. Our long-range goal is to develop the software and procedures for a national system which will include summary information from the state systems and Federal records.

One of the major efforts funded by LEAA over the last several years is Project SEARCH. This project which now consists of a consortium of 20 states was established among other things, to develop a prototype state statistics system. As an outgrowth of this prototype statistics system, we have launched a five-state effort to implement these systems. The system will be refined in an operational mode where many problems and questions

relating to statewide transaction statistics systems will be resolved. Through this relatively small-scale effort, standards and guidelines will be established so that other states may use these as models for their own state systems. 4/

Moreover, to aid in the development of transaction statistics by the states, we must be prepared to aid the states as they assume responsibility for their own criminal identification functions. This is essential in an offender based statistics system since rapid positive identification of an offender is a must if we are to be able to determine recidivism patterns. It is only through the examination of these patterns compared with prior "treatment" that success rates can be determined and predictors developed for the justice process. The conversion of records to machine readable format is also necessary in order to fulfill this need. This will be done in conjunction with the conversion of records for the exchange of criminal histories through Project SEARCH.

The SEARCH states will develop as a preliminary step standard event reporting forms and standard arrest reporting forms which can be adopted by those states who are in the early stages of developing a transaction statistics system.

#### CORRECTIONAL STATISTICS

Transaction statistics will not soon provide all of the information needed on the justice processes. For example, many states are not now involved in the system and there is excessive lead time from the planning stage until comprehensive data become available for all parts of the criminal justice system. In the foreseeable future, this system will also only handle transactions related to serious (fingerprintable) offenses. Therefore, the Division will have to develop interim programs and support existing activities to provide much needed data for planning and evaluation. A project is now in the advanced planning stage which will utilize a sample of the institutions included in the jail census we conducted last year. While the previous study concentrated on the physical aspect, this study will concentrate on inmates.

For every inmate in the jail on the "Day of record" such information as age, sex, race, offense, reason for incarceration, time already served, time remaining, limited criminal history, place of residence and employment status before incarceration, marital status, number of dependents, personal income in preceding year, family income, educational attainment and enrollment status will be recorded. With these data available for a probability sample of all persons in jails in the United States, researchers for the first time will be able to assess the impact of jail on inmates and to some extent, the socio-economic consequences of incarceration.

To increase further the understanding of local incarceration, we are conducting a study of juvenile detention centers to look at the physical aspects of juvenile facilities as well as study inmates of these institutions to focus on the

same kind of characteristics for juveniles as in the follow-up Jail Survey.

Also in the development stage is a census of state correctional facilities. This census will provide much needed information on the programs, descriptions of the facilities including age, capacity, population and such characteristics of the staff as number, educational background, professional skills, and racial composition. We expect this program to go into the field by early 1972 with results becoming available by year's end.

Another project is National Prisoner Statistics. In fiscal year 1971 work was begun to rejuvenate this venerable system which in recent years was the responsibility of the Bureau of Prisons. Funds were provided to the Bureau to publish data collected through 1970. In FY 72 we will begin to publish data from the system.

The NPS program will involve the establishment of a data base of all inmates in state adult correctional institutions. Each agency will report admissions and releases on a monthly basis. As the states create their own central statistics bureaus, the states will be asked to provide summary data rather than individual records from each of the institutions.

Another interim program of interest is the Uniform Parole Reports. This work is coordinated by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. We expect that beginning in 1972 funds will be provided to keep the program viable. Moreover, we expect that modifications will be made to make it compatible with the National Prisoner Statistics program.

Another pressing need is to coordinate this program with statistics concerning probation, but at this time there is no structured system for reporting probation information. A project now being funded will be a start in this direction. The NCCD has proposed to conduct a study directed toward filling the need for administrative control and research investigation for all types of probation programs. The proposed project will be a model using the San Francisco Bay Area Probation Departments. The project will develop a research system for describing and evaluating a wide variety of program elements to which juvenile and adult offenders are assigned. The system will be geared to meet the needs of adult offenders are assigned. The system will be geared to meet the needs of adult and juvenile probation with a general research methodology that is applicable on a nationwide basis. It will be designed with a goal of eventual integration into a nationwide correctional statistics program. This correctional system will be the final segment of the total offender based transaction system.

#### COURT STATISTICS

While there is a paucity of data concerning corrections at the national level, there is absolutely no data concerning the courts. In fiscal 1971, the first step was taken toward a national court

statistics program. A Court Organization Study is now underway to examine the organization, jurisdiction, manpower, caseloads and practices of all state and local courts - civil, criminal, juvenile, and other courts of specialized jurisdictions. Such a study is requisite for a national court statistics program; first, proper analysis of data collected in a national court statistics effort can only proceed from a detailed understanding of the court system; and secondly, information collected in the system study would meet the methodological need of providing some of the necessary parameters for designing an optimum, stratified sample of the courts. In FY 1972 we will begin conceptualizing a national data collection program including coverage of trial courts of general jurisdiction and state appellate courts. Coverage will provide information about the most serious stage in an offender's contact with the judicial process - the felony trial. However, the overwhelming majority of criminal cases never reach the felony trial stage, thus for most offenders, the ultimate stage of contact with the criminal justice system is the lower court. Such courts will also be included on a representative sample basis.

With this program we will provide information on the number of criminal cases presented; the number of dispositions without trial: Number of trials with and without juries; and some information on trial outcomes and sentences. All of this will be presented by type of offense, type of court and possibly by a limited number of offender characteristics - age, sex, race. Information will be presented on an annual or perhaps quarterly basis at the U. S. level, and by city size groupings. Concurrently, work will begin to attempt to develop information on charge reductions, pleas, plea bargaining, type of defense and delay in judicial process.

#### EMPLOYMENT AND EXPENDITURES

The 1970 Omnibus Crime Control Act requires that beginning in FY 73 block grant funds to the states will have to be "Passed through" to units of local government on the basis of the proportion of funds spent by the local units of government. In order to ascertain this ratio, a Census of Criminal Justice Agencies will be undertaken to provide accurate data on expenditures by local and state governments for criminal justice purposes. As a side benefit of this census, we will get a more accurate picture of the manpower structure within the state and local criminal justice system. This information in the past two years has been gained partially on a sample basis and this will continue in the intervening years between censuses.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

In addition to its programs related to the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on crime and criminal justice, the Statistics Division has a number of other programs.

#### DICTIONARY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE TERMS

Under the direction of the Division, a Dictionary

of Criminal Justice Terms is being prepared. This dictionary will provide for the first time, definitions for criminal justice terms and concepts. This effort will involve isolating the various elements which taken together will reflect the meanings of a word or concept. For example, recidivist can have a number of different meanings. However, from a technical standpoint this is not acceptable. One definition of a recidivist is a person who has been in contact with criminal justice system who subsequently commits a crime. This definition of course does not permit accurate measurement since there is no definitive way of ascertaining that a subsequent crime has been committed unless the offender is apprehended. A more common working definition and one frequently used by law enforcement is someone who has been arrested for a crime and is subsequently arrested again. Correctional people often refer to recidivist as one who has been released from the prison system and was subsequently convicted of another crime and returned to prison. There are a number of elements then which go into the possible meaning of the word: arrest, conviction, imprisonment, and others. The dictionary will select a preferred meaning, utilizing combinations of those elements.

The dictionary will also provide the basis for the development of a standardized classification system for criminal justice statistics. There is a clear need for such a classification system. As the Division moves toward the Federal system, all states having statistics centers would report limited standardized information to the Division for comparative analysis and publication.

#### DIRECTORY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AGENCIES

The Division has also developed a directory of all criminal justice agencies. This directory, which is now available on computer tape, will be published as bound copy in fiscal 1972. The directory will be constantly updated to provide a current listing of agencies in the justice system. Moreover, additional information is being built into the directory which will identify with more precision the types of agencies. For example, information from our court survey will be coded into the directory so that we can look at courts by caseload, case mix, type of jurisdiction, etc.

#### STATISTICS DATA BASE

In order to derive maximum utilization of information collected by the Division and other statistical data relevant to criminal justice, the Division is establishing a computerized statistical data base. A prototype of this data base will be operational by the beginning of Fiscal 1972. By the middle of the fiscal year, the entire system should be in place with terminal access to the data base in all of the State Planning Agencies, large metropolitan police agencies, state correctional agencies, schools of criminal justice, as well as in LEAA. The data base will contain information from the decennial censuses, the Uniform Crime Reports, Survey of Employment and Expenditures in Criminal Justice and summaries of LEAA grants. As the statistics become available, the data base will be expanded to include information

from the crime panel, and from the transaction statistics program.

The bulk of the staff time in the Division is devoted to the design of surveys, monitoring their execution, the analysis of resulting data and the preparation of publications from the data. The Division also develops standards for state statistical activities and provides technical assistance to the states. As the principal data collecting agency in criminal justice, the staff coordinates related statistical projects of other agencies. This coordinative function is of distinct advantage to the Statistics Division because it permits us to become aware of related projects and guide them in such a way that they will provide data of maximum utility to LEAA and the criminal justice community.

1/ For a description of methodology, see Dodge and Turner's paper "Methodological Foundations for Establishing a National Survey of Victimization," this section.

2/ See "Victim Recall Pretest (Washington, D. C.)" and "Household Survey of Victims of Crime Second Pretest (Baltimore, Md.)."

3/ See "The San Jose Methods Test of Known Crime Victims," LEAA Statistics Division, July 1971.

4/ A complete description of the program may be found in Wormeli and Kolodney's paper, "Computer-Linked Transactional Records for Criminal Justice Statistics."